

# STATES OF JERSEY

## Education and Home Affairs Scrutiny Panel Student Suspensions Review Sub Panel

**MONDAY, 26th OCTOBER 2009**

**Panel:**

Deputy T.M. Pitman of St. Helier (Chairman)  
Connétable G.F. Butcher of St. John  
Deputy M. Tadier of St. Brelade

**Witness:**

Mr. T. Barnes (Acting Chief Inspector)

**In Attendance:**

Professor P. Munn (Professor of Curriculum Research at the University of Edinburgh, Adviser)  
Ms. G. Bunting (Adviser)  
Ms. S. Power (Scrutiny Officer)

**Deputy T.M. Pitman of St. Helier (Chairman):**

Welcome. There is tea or coffee if you want a tea or ...?

**Mr. T Barnes (Acting Chief Inspector):**

Water is fine, thanks.

**Deputy T.M. Pitman:**

We may be joined shortly by 2 members of the public but they do not participate, well, they are not meant to participate within the hearing. For the record I do have to refer you to the statement on the desk, which I am sure you are aware of. You are covered by privilege for anything you say as long as you do not tell us anything that you know not to be true. I have always wanted to say the sort of thing to a policeman. **[Laughter]** For the record I will introduce myself as will the panel and then if you could as well? I am Deputy Trevor Pitman. I am chairing the sub-panel which is a sub-panel of Education and Home Affairs.

**Connétable G.F. Butcher of St. John:**

Graeme Butcher, the Constable of St. John.

**Ms. G. Bunting (Adviser):**

Gillian Bunting, ex teacher.

**Deputy M. Tadier of St. Brelade:**

I am Montfort Tadier, the Deputy of St. Brelade No. 2.

**Professor P. Munn (Professor of Curriculum Research at University of Edinburgh, Adviser):**

I am Pamela Munn from the University of Edinburgh where I am the Professor of Curriculum Research

and I am the adviser to the Panel.

**Ms. S. Power (Scrutiny Officer):**  
Sam Power, Scrutiny Officer.

**Mr. T. Barnes (Acting Chief Inspector):**  
Acting Chief Inspector, Tim Barnes, States of Jersey Police.

**Deputy T.M. Pitman:**

I will just start by thanking you for coming. I know it has been debated as to who was going to come but we are pleased to see you and hopefully you have got some information that will be of help to the panel. We would like to start by offering you the opportunity to give us your thoughts on the suspension issue and if there is anything in particular you want to put to us?

**Mr. T. Barnes:**

Our primary response to this issue is not an issue for the States of Jersey Police; it is an issue for the Education, Sport and Culture and other support agencies. In terms of actual suspensions that police have been involved with, i.e. in terms of any criminality or anti-social behaviour, I cannot provide exact figures but they are very, very few, our main source being the community police team. We have a very good working relationship with secondary and primary schools. They say it is not a significant amount of suspensions. We, the States of Jersey Police, do not see it as an issue.

**The Connétable of St. John:**

Is that in terms of youngsters that you deal with that are suspended from school at the time, that are committing offences?

**Mr. T. Barnes:**

Yes, correct. I have spent the majority of my police service - 24 years now - the majority of it has been on operational policing in the front line and it is very few and far between where we deal with young people in school time.

**The Connétable of St. John:**

Would that include truancy and that sort of thing, or suspensions? I mean, if you find a youngster that is causing a problem somewhere or other, would you normally ask or would your officers normally ask if they are suspended or are they playing truant or ...?

**Mr. T. Barnes:**

Yes, I mean the first question I would ask them is: "Why are you not at school?" if they are obviously a young person. Personally I have had the control room ring a school and get them to come and collect them from where I have located them.

**Deputy T.M. Pitman:**

If young people are seen around in school hours, are they approached if a uniformed police officer sees that young person? Because it could be something completely innocent like going to a doctor or whatever?

**Mr. T. Barnes**

Yes. Obviously I cannot answer for all 243 police officers but I would expect them to be approachable.

**Deputy T.M. Pitman:**

But is that the policy to approach ...?

**Mr. T. Barnes:**

I am not aware of a specific policy in terms of approaching young people in school hours.

**Deputy T.M. Pitman:**

We had a representative from the Honorary Police earlier and he was aware of instances where suspended young people have been a problem. What do you feel about the liaison with yourselves and the Honorary Police? Is it good or bad or indifferent?

**Mr. T. Barnes:**

I personally think we have a good working relationship with the Honorary Police. Yes, I think it is a good relationship.

**The Connétable of St. John:**

If you are dealing with a youngster that either should be at school through truancy or whatever, when you contact the school do you get a fair amount of communication from them or do they throw up things like data protection or does that not affect you?

**Mr. T. Barnes:**

No, I have not been aware of any problems in our interactions with the schools. In actual fact, in preparation of this hearing this morning, I spoke to a community officer this morning who has just come away from a meeting at one of our secondary schools and M.A.S.T. (Multi Agency Support Team) which is a multi agency support team and like that officer reports we have a very good working relationship, a positive working relationship with the other agencies, being Youth Action Team, Children's Services and Probation. But I mean I must stress that our main role is, in terms of looking at any children that we do suspect of being involved in criminality or anti-social behaviour. In a lot of cases this is not necessarily the case. If the child is undergoing a chaotic lifestyle for whatever reason, it could be for a variety of reasons, it does not mean to say they are involved in criminality or anti-social behaviour which is our focus.

**Deputy T.M. Pitman:**

I highlighted a few weeks ago in the States that there were 640 instances, were there not, where the police have had to go and retrieve so-called missing children, which is an awful lot when it came down to just 25 young people, was it not? So, are you aware that any of those cases related to young people who were also suspended from school or is that data that you just would not get?

**Mr. T. Barnes:**

My immediate reaction to that is that it is a totally different situation. I am not aware of that group of persistent young offenders truanting or being suspended.

**Deputy T.M. Pitman:**

Right, so it could be but for you it is just a completely case. You are there to retrieve that child and then your work is done; is that ...?

**Mr. T. Barnes:**

Well, we try to but, as I say, that is a completely different issue.

**Deputy T.M. Pitman:**

Yes.

**Deputy M. Tadier:**

Mr. Barnes, did I understand correctly that you are effectively saying that there is not a link between school suspensions and delinquency?

**Mr. T. Barnes:**

What I am saying is there is not a link between ... we cannot see any tangible link between people that are suspended, pupils who are suspended from school and committing criminal offences or anti-social behaviour, that is what I am saying.

**Deputy M. Tadier:**

I understand that there are not necessarily children committing offences in school time but is it possible that suspensions could lead to delinquency say, after school because children do not have the homework and they do not have the infrastructure or the framework that other, let us say, well behaved children might have?

**Mr. T. Barnes:**

I think that is not for me to comment on as a police officer. I think there are other people in other professional fields that are far more learned than me to make such a comment.

**Deputy M. Tadier:**

I can give an actual example. I know that there has been a group of girls who we will not name for obvious reasons who I think some of them have been suspended and that they have been on the streets, putting themselves at risk and other people, and it is questionable whether that is because they are suspended or whether they happen to be suspended as well but that is certainly a fact, I know.

**Mr. T. Barnes:**

In that particular group of people you are talking about, that is where intervention, like early intervention is key, and that is where M.A.S.T. comes to the fore. We have a positive role to play in M.A.S.T. if those particular individuals are involved in criminality or anti-social behaviour. The police do not wish to alienate themselves from youths. We fully support the work of M.A.S.T. in terms of people who fit into that category.

**The Connétable of St. John:**

How long has that group been set up; M.A.S.T.?

**Mr. T. Barnes:**

I would not be able to give you an exact date but it is a good few years.

**The Connétable of St. John:**

Right.

**Deputy T.M. Pitman:**

It is within the last 5 years.

**Deputy M. Tadier:**

Just for the record, for people who may read the transcript later, could you explain just briefly what M.A.S.T. is and what it stands for?

**Mr. T. Barnes:**

M.A.S.T. is Multi-Agency Support Team and primarily our involvement is meeting schools with that team which comprises of the police in terms of a community officer. Normally the Youth Action Team would attend, although it was reported to me that they were not at the meeting that the officer spoke

about earlier. They are normally there. The Children's Service and the Probation Service. The whole point of that meeting is to look at particular individuals who have come on to the radar for whatever reason and, as I keep saying, if it involves criminality or anti-social behaviour, the other agencies are then aware of that young person's behaviour and they will then look at all sorts of strategic interventions in terms of trying to reduce that behaviour, like Probation Services, for example.

**The Connétable of St. John:**

In your opinion is there a way that that group could be strengthened in any way?

**Mr. T. Barnes:**

I do not think so. I mean what has been reported to me is that, you know, they do meet on a regular basis and have a full, frank discussion about particular pupils that are of note for whatever reason and they look at putting strategies in place to help them.

**Deputy T.M. Pitman:**

Because there are no problems with data protection within that group because I think I am right in saying originally the Youth Service had to leave at some part of the meetings when individuals were being discussed, although I think that might have changed now?

**Mr. T. Barnes:**

I am aware there has been recent activity with the Data Protection Commissioner, there was a meeting last week, involving such issues. I was not there so I cannot report.

**Deputy M. Tadier:**

Is it difficult to determine ... if a police officer does see children who should be at school and are not, is it difficult for them to intervene if there is not a tangible reason?

**Mr. T. Barnes:**

No.

**Deputy M. Tadier:**

No?

**Mr. T. Barnes:**

No, if I saw a young person ... bear in mind it is like the police are multi-faceted in terms of what we are dealing with so, like if the situation presented itself and it is a big if, depending on our resource levels and other competing demands that we are dealing with, like if the situation presented itself like it did with me a number of years ago, with a particular student, then I do not see any particular issue with that. We are trained to approach people and ask them questions to determine what the situation is. I mean, I will be honest it is not a high priority aim for the States of Jersey Police to approach every young person they see walking down the street.

**Professor P. Munn:**

Could you say something about the work of the community police? What kind of things they do with schools? I mean, you have talked about their involvement in these M.A.S.T. meetings. Do they do things over and above that?

**Mr. T. Barnes:**

I mean, traditionally they have. I was Community Policing Sergeant myself at one time, in charge of a whole team of Community Police Officers. I mean the main sort of ethos of community police is to get out there and to get to know people in their areas and be approachable, to be known. So, I mean,

traditionally we have gone into the schools and supported them. We have given them input on various issues like alcohol, drugs and that kind of thing. I mean a lot of the emphasis now is on the ... you have probably heard of "Prison? Me! No Way! Scheme" which is a very positive, well worked scheme which we support by putting personnel in there. They are now doing a lot of that in the schools, including year 6; the last year at primary school as well as the secondary schools as well.

**Professor P. Munn:**

So, would you work across all the schools in Jersey; primary and secondary special?

**Mr. T. Barnes:**

Yes, I mean, we do our best.

**Professor P. Munn:**

I know.

**Mr. T. Barnes:**

But, again, with competing demands and resource levels then ... you know, if I had my way we would go to every single school. Traditionally there have been school liaison officers at primary school level and at secondary school level.

**Professor P. Munn:**

Okay, thank you.

**Deputy T.M. Pitman:**

You talked about the community police but is that team up to the levels it should be because I know from being the youth worker in the Grand Vaux area, I do not think I saw the community policemen for 3 or 4 years and that was due to being pulled off and put on to other areas. Have you now got enough to run that team effectively?

**Mr. T. Barnes:**

Well, I mean, resource levels are under review at the moment where we are looking at where we are putting personnel. I cannot say any more than that, really.

**Deputy T.M. Pitman:**

Because it would seem to me, and maybe it is a naïve assumption, but surely that community is almost essential to what you do because it is going to stop problems developing in the future so it seems strange that that is not a priority for the police?

**Mr. T. Barnes:**

I have not said it is not a priority; what I have said is we are currently reviewing all our resource levels and looking at where we need to put resources. I agree with you, like, community policing is an important aspect of our role.

**The Connétable of St. John:**

The Acting Chief Officer sent a letter to the panel, to the Chair of the panel regarding, you know, early intervention which you have discussed slightly there. In terms of early intervention, what does the process involve from your point of view?

**Mr. T. Barnes:**

That is going back to the M.A.S.T. teams again. At those meetings, particular students to discuss and that is the early intervention. I mean, to our minds, early intervention is key because if you have got

those skilled professionals that can deal with the issues that present then hopefully it will stop a particular pattern of behaviour from a child. What we are saying is that it is few and far between in terms of pupils that are suspended.

**Deputy T.M. Pitman:**

Even in those rare instances then when suspended pupils or truancy pupils do come to your attention, how does it work with working with parents to try and improve the situation? I mean, what happens if parents are not available or guardians are not available, as I guess must happen? How do you deal with that?

**Mr. T. Barnes:**

Can you just repeat that question in the context of suspended pupils?

**Deputy T.M. Pitman:**

If I am a 15 year old suspended pupil and I am pulled in for thieving in a shop or whatever, or accused of thieving. What is the process then? How does that work with their parents becoming involved and is it just a case of you are read your rights and what the charges are going to be or is there any work with the police to engage the parents to try and curtail that problem?

**Mr. T. Barnes:**

Under P.P.A.C.E. (Police Procedures and Criminal Evidence Act), which is the equivalent of P.A.C.E. (Police and Criminal Evidence Act) in England, by law we have to make contact with an appropriate adult and that is in an order and the order is parent first. The parents should come on board straight away and they are expected to attend the police station and be present while that young person goes through interviews and any processes. Failing them, it would be an appropriate adult. Failing them, it would be a social worker or a Children's Service representative.

**Deputy T.M. Pitman:**

The Honorary Police were telling us it was quite common that parents could not be contacted so it would have to be another appropriate person. Is that your experience?

**Mr. T. Barnes:**

Well, in the context of suspended pupils, which is why I am here today, then no.

**Deputy M. Tadier:**

Mr. Barnes, what is P.A.C.E.?

**Mr. T. Barnes:**

Police and Criminal Evidence Act, but here it is Police Procedures Criminal Evidence (Jersey) Law. It is largely based on P.A.C.E. legislation which came into effect in 1984.

**The Connétable of St. John:**

You have said you do not deal with a great deal of suspended pupils but would you have an opinion as to what the schools might be able to do to reduce that number even further, from your point of view? Any actions that the schools take?

**Mr. T. Barnes:**

I think that really is a matter for Education, Sport and Culture.

**The Connétable of St. John:**

I was looking for an opinion.

**Deputy T.M. Pitman:**

From a police angle. You must have an opinion.

**Mr. T. Barnes:**

I do not, to be honest with you. Despite being a parent myself, I mean, I do not profess to be an educationalist. It really is for the schools to develop their policies and procedures. If there is an issue, to look at what they can do to improve situations. It is not for police officers.

**The Connétable of St. John:**

No, I mean from where we are coming from, having sort of spoken to Education on Friday, they use suspension as a last resort. Now, my thinking is if they took some more positive action at an earlier stage, would it improve the situation?

**Mr. T. Barnes:**

To my mind that is where M.A.S.T. comes in. That is the whole issue; is early intervention with a panel of experts from each of the areas? As I say, the police role is purely to look at criminality and anti-social behaviour and that is where we draw the line, really. As I say, we do not want to alienate ourselves. The police do not want to alienate ourselves from the majority of young people by being involved in the suspension process as it is not our role. Our role is criminality.

**The Connétable of St. John:**

No, that is right. I appreciate that you deal with the end result, if you like, but my thinking was more if you were thinking: "If Education did this, we might not have as much of this"?

**Mr. T. Barnes:**

I pass on that.

**Professor P. Munn:**

One of the things that has been adopted throughout the U.K. (United Kingdom), based on experiences in the Police Service and prison is restorative of justice and I wonder if you had a view on that. Going back to the issue about community police that we were talking a little about earlier, whether that is the sort of thing that the community police could bring their particular expertise to bear in trying to resolve issues before they did escalate too much.

**Mr. T. Barnes:**

But we are talking here in the context of suspended pupils.

**Professor P. Munn:**

Yes, indeed, I know but I think what we are trying to do is build up a general context of what happens when there are behavioural issues and problems so that interventions can happen to stop them getting worse.

**Mr. T. Barnes:**

Yes.

**Professor P. Munn:**

That is where we are coming from.

**Mr. T. Barnes:**

Yes, I mean, I think that is where the Honorary Police have a very important role to play. The majority



of young people, their first interaction with the criminal justice system is enough, you know?

**Professor P. Munn:**

Yes, sure.

**Mr. T. Barnes:**

That is where the Centenier, where they have deferred decision ... so, in other words the young offender appears at a parish hall inquiry for a relatively minor offence in the greater context of things. The Centenier will say: "Right, well you behave yourself for the next 3 months and that will be it." It would be a verbal caution. But if you come back within the next 3 months, you go to court for both things. I am not an expert on restorative justice. I am aware some work has been done on it in the Island.

**Deputy T.M. Pitman:**

Certainly quite a bit has been done within the Youth Service in developing that.

**The Connétable of St. John:**

Just for the record, can I ask you, do you think the honorary system is a good system for the community, where youth is concerned?

**Mr. T. Barnes:**

Yes, for the reasons I have just stated. You know, it gives that young person a chance, does it not? Particularly with the deferred decision system that is used.

**Deputy T.M. Pitman:**

Constable Butcher just wanted that quote for his own purposes **[Laughter]**.

**Deputy M. Tadier:**

Are there any issues about the transfer of information between the various agencies? So, is there any way it could be improved to maybe help you do your job better and to help schools?

**Mr. T. Barnes:**

That is where Emma Martins is currently giving input between different States departments to clarify officers' understanding of what can be passed. I mean, there is positive work underway, not just in terms of policing but all sorts of issues like health as well.

**Deputy M. Tadier:**

Can you give an example perhaps at the moment of how you might be hampered with data protection laws or the like?

**Mr. T. Barnes:**

Not off the top of my head, no.

**Deputy M. Tadier:**

No?

**Deputy T.M. Pitman:**

Has that involvement of Emma Martins come about for any particular reason, if that is taking place now?

**Mr. T. Barnes:**

I do not know. I am aware there was a conference, if you like, last week that she ran on that.

**Deputy T.M. Pitman:**

Just data protection, generally, not aimed at this policy?

**Mr. T. Barnes:**

In answer to Deputy Tadier's question in terms of flow of data.

**Deputy T.M. Pitman:**

Okay. Thank you. Anything else? Nothing from the advisers? Is there anything you want to ask, Gillian?

**Ms. G. Bunting:**

No.

**Deputy M. Tadier:**

I think it has been fairly comprehensive.

**Deputy T.M. Pitman:**

Yes, it has.

**Mr. T. Barnes:**

The main message I want to give is where it is a police issue, we are fully supportive of the other agencies and we will assist where we can but it is an issue in terms of criminality, anti-social behaviour, no further. That is what we see our role as.

**Professor P. Munn:**

For you it is fairly low down on the agenda. As far as suspended pupils are concerned it is not really a big issue for you in relation to criminality, yes.

**Mr. T. Barnes:**

Well, it is not. It is not an issue to us per se because what the organisation is saying is well, no, they are not dealing with loads of suspended pupils; that is why it is not an issue.

**Professor P. Munn:**

Yes, I think it is just helpful to get that clear, thank you.

**Deputy T.M. Pitman:**

It is good to have that opinion because obviously we are seeing some huge figures on suspensions. As we mentioned the other day, at one of the schools we will have 200 suspensions in a year, which again, cut down, that is not all the same; different people but if you are not seeing that knock-on effect into criminality, that is quite useful information for us to consider.

**Mr. T. Barnes:**

Yes, I can assure the panel that is the case.

**Deputy T.M. Pitman:**

Well, unless anyone has got anything else, we have surpassed ourselves by being very quick. So, I will thank you for coming.

**Mr. T. Barnes:**

Okay.

**The Connétable of St. John:**

Well prepared.

**Deputy T.M. Pitman:**

Indeed. Thanks a lot.

**Mr. T. Barnes:**

Thank you.