



Corporate Parenting - Key Tasks of Designated Senior Managers

**WORKING TOGETHER TO
SUPPORT CHILDREN &
YOUNG PEOPLE WHO ARE
LOOKED AFTER**

Key Tasks of Designated Senior Managers

1. What is Corporate Parenting?

- 1.1 Corporate Parenting is about the parental responsibilities that we all have towards our Looked After children.
- 1.2 Being a good Corporate Parent means we:
 - accept responsibility for our Looked After children and young people.
 - make their needs a priority.
 - seek for them the same outcomes any good parent would want for their own children.

Ref: *These Are Our Bairns* (see 3.1 below): page 3

2. Looked After Children

- 2.1 Children who are Looked After may be Looked After:
 - 1) At home i.e. living in their own home as a result of a supervision requirement arising from a children's hearing.
 - 2) Away from home i.e. living with a foster carer or in one of our children's homes (Inverurie, Fraserburgh and Peterhead).
 - 3) Through kinship care i.e. living with a relative.

3. Relevant Documents

- 3.1 ***These Are Our Bairns (2008)***
This sets out our roles, duties and responsibilities as Corporate Parents.
- 3.2 ***Core Tasks for Designated Managers (2008)***
This sets out the core tasks for the designated manager in every school who has responsibility for Looked After children and young people in their school.
- 3.3 ***Looked After Children and Young People: We Can and Must do Better (2007)***

4. Schools' Responsibilities

- 4.1 All schools must have a designated senior manager with specific responsibility for Looked After children and young people. This requirement has been in place since 2001, the publication date of ***Learning With Care*** (see Section 5).
- 4.2 All schools must know who their Looked After children and young people are and work closely with their care.
- 4.3 Looked After children and young people must have the same opportunities as all other children and young people including progression to further and higher education.
- 4.4 Attendance must be promoted and additional arrangements put in place where necessary to support learning. Any support should be readily accessible. Remember, being Looked After is an additional support need as set out in the Additional Support for Learning Act.
- 4.5 All schools must help Looked After children and young people achieve their full potential, promote well being and encourage positive behaviour. Evidence indicates that Looked After children and young people have lower attainment and are excluded more often than their peers. Schools must therefore have high expectations of Looked After children and young people.

- 4.6 Schools must ensure that Looked After children and young people's needs are met in such a way that does not single them out from other children and young people.
- 4.7 All schools must ensure that any plans and strategies for parental involvement include Corporate Parents and carers.
- 4.8 Where there are concerns schools must work in partnership with other agencies and ensure that a Co-ordinated Support Plan is in place where Looked After children and young people fulfil the statutory requirements.
- 4.9 Schools must ensure that policies such as anti-bullying and exclusion take into account the particular needs of Looked After children and young people. Decisions on exclusion must be considered very carefully and schools must assess the impact this would have on their engagement with education, their home circumstances or care placement and consequent life chances.
- 4.10 Schools must ensure that they effectively track and monitor attainment and engagement with education.

5. Core Tasks For Designated Managers

- 5.1 The core tasks have been set out by the Scottish Government on the document ***Core Tasks for Designated Managers in Educational and Residential Establishments in Scotland*** and the relevant part of the document is **Section 5.3** below.

- 5.2 All schools must ensure that they comply with the core tasks.

5.3 Context

Following the publication of the ***Learning With Care*** report a great deal of activity has been undertaken in early years establishments and schools in relation to improving the educational outcomes of Looked After children and young people. Having a designated senior manager within Scotland's schools who has a responsibility for all Looked After children and young people within their establishment and who understands about care and the impact of care upon education is critical to making joint working a reality.

The following set of core tasks relate to all early years establishments, local authority schools, grant-aided schools and independent schools across Scotland (including residential schools).

Schools from across Scotland vary in size, location and type. Some schools may have large numbers of Looked After children and young people (possibly 20 or 30) and some may have a small number (1 or 2); indeed some schools may have periods of time where they have no pupils who are Looked After. Nevertheless, it is essential that all schools have a named **SENIOR** member of the management team who has a specific responsibility in relation to pupils who are Looked After.

It is recognised that the responsibilities associated with the designated senior manager role for Looked After children and young people may be fulfilled differently depending on the circumstances present in individual schools. The designated senior manager must, however, ensure that the core tasks are routinely and consistently undertaken within their school; this is particularly relevant where some tasks may have been delegated to other members of staff. It is important that the designated senior manager has a key function in developing school policy and practice.

Core Tasks

- The following sets out the core tasks which are considered necessary in relation to the role of the designated senior manager for Looked After children and young people within a school setting. All of the core tasks can be seen to fall within the ten standards for personal care that all schools should strive to offer to all pupils. These are set out in ***Happy, Safe and Achieving Their Potential - A standard of support for young people in Scottish schools***. A copy of the 10 standards can be found at ***Appendix H*** or: www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2005/02/20626/51543.
- Whilst ***Learning With Care*** focuses on the education of children and young people Looked After away from home, ***We Can and Must Do Better*** relates to the education of all Looked After children and young people. Therefore, the role of designated senior manager for Looked After children and young people within schools extends to **ALL** Looked After children and young people within the school; not just those Looked After away from home.

Communication

- The designated senior manager holds a co-ordinating brief in relation to **ALL** the Looked After children and young people in their establishment. Part of this includes a responsibility to ensure that fellow members of the senior management team are aware of which children and young people are Looked After.
- The designated senior manager must familiarise themselves with all local policies, procedures and guidelines regarding Looked After children and young people and ensure that these are both made available to all staff members and adhered to within their school.
- The designated senior manager must know which pupils in their establishment are Looked After and, in the same way as for all other pupils, maintain confidential files in relation to each of them; sharing relevant information on a need to know basis.
- The designated senior manager must consider who else in the establishment needs to know some details of a child or young person's background, how much of this should be disclosed and consider how best to take into account the wishes of the child or young person; including any desire for confidentiality which can be reasonably and legally accommodated.
- The designated senior manager should make themselves known to each Looked After child or young person and act as a reference point for that child or young person within the establishment.
- The designated senior manager, where appropriate, should consult and liaise with families and carers. In addition, the designated senior manager should act as the liaison person within the school for social work, education, local health services, and other relevant agencies.
- The designated senior manager must ensure that all adults sharing parental responsibility, including birth parents, for a child or young person receive copies of reports, invitations to school functions, and other documents, policies and prospectuses usually given to parents.
- The designated senior manager should establish a positive working relationship with the named nurse for the school in relation to Looked After pupils.
- The designated senior manager is the custodian of all circulars, legislation and information on Looked After children and young people.

- The designated senior manager will work with colleagues in the establishment to raise awareness of the needs of Looked After children and young people to ensure that when a Looked After child or young person joins the school teachers and other staff have an understanding of the context and additional responsibilities they have.
- The designated manager must know all of the residential establishments which have children and young people attending their establishment and develop working relationships with the relevant designated senior manager for Looked After children and young people within each residential establishment.

Meeting the needs of looked after children and young people

- The designated senior manager must liaise closely with other school staff, parents/ carers, social work services staff and other agency personnel involved with the child or young person, to ensure co-ordinated support arrangements are in place to maximise the child or young person's learning potential.
- The designated senior manager must ensure that the educational needs of the Looked After children and young people in their establishment are clearly identified and that the appropriate support plans are in place, and that these plans are closely linked to the child or young person's care plan. Additionally, the designated senior manager will closely monitor the implementation of these plans. The monitoring of attainment, achievement, attendance and exclusion statistics in relation to the Looked After children and young people in their establishment will be an essential component of this process.
- The designated senior manager must ensure that Looked After children and young people with additional support needs have appropriate Additional Support for Learning assessment and planning in place and that these are reflected in care planning documentation.
- The designated senior manager must ensure that there is an appropriate input to all statutory care plan reviews and Children's Hearings. In addition, the designated senior manager may also be asked to contribute to other meetings regarding Looked After children and young people, e.g. risk assessment/management meetings, informal planning meetings, etc.
- The designated senior manager should support the efforts of parents/carers and others to provide an educationally rich home environment for all Looked After children and young people within their establishment. The designated senior manager should consider parental involvement strategies within the school to ensure that the Corporate Parent has the opportunity to be involved in, for example, the Parent Council.
- The designated senior manager should encourage parents/carers and social workers to give priority to educational needs, and to help assess and balance the demands of education versus the need for contact arrangements (i.e. contact with parents, etc.) to take place within school hours.
- The designated senior manager must provide advice and guidance in relation to individual Looked After children and young people within their establishment and, where necessary, co-ordinate the pastoral needs of the children and young people concerned.
- The designated senior manager should institute measures within their establishment which are likely to help raise the attainment and achievement of Looked After children and young people, and monitor their effect as part of a general raising of attainment and achievement strategy.

- The designated senior manager must ensure that the sending or receiving school is immediately contacted in circumstances where Looked After children and young people move school. In addition, the designated senior manager must also ensure that accurate and up to date educational records are transferred between establishments within five working days. This is particularly relevant when the child or young person moves to a school outwith the local authority.

Advocacy

- The designated senior manager must consult with Looked After children and young people regarding the key/essential information they wish to be shared with appropriate staff only, taking into account age and level of maturity.
- Where practical and appropriate, the designated senior manager is the advocate for Looked After children and young people within their establishment.
- The designated senior manager must ensure that their establishment has a policy on Looked After children and young people, covering pastoral support, raising attainment and achievement, dealing with confidential information, attendance and exclusion, etc.
- In relation to attendance and exclusion, the designated senior manager must ensure that this policy reflects current legislation and considers national guidance. Current national guidance on attendance is contained in ***Included, Engaged and Involved: Part 1*** www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/Doc/205963/0054747.pdf which considers the need for schools to take account of individual circumstances, including pupils who are Looked After.
- Current national guidance on exclusion ***Circular 8/03 Exclusion from School*** www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/Doc/47063/0023825.pdf notes that exclusion should be used only as a last resort and that, when deciding whether exclusion is necessary, must have regard to the particular facts and circumstances surrounding individual incidents and/or pupils. Given the negative impact that exclusion may have on the particular circumstances around a child or young person who is Looked After, the designated senior manager must ensure that any decision to exclude is taken within this context and only following careful consideration of alternatives. New guidance ***Included, Engaged and Involved: Part 2*** is being developed by the Scottish Government and will be circulated for consultation.
- The designated senior manager must ensure that all members of staff within their establishment are aware of the rights and responsibilities of all Looked After children and young people. In addition, the designated senior manager must ensure that all Looked After children and young people are involved appropriately in decisions taken about them and that their views are actively sought.
- The designated senior manager must ensure that all staff within their establishment guard against having low expectations of Looked After children and young people and that they are aware of the potential of Looked After children and young people being bullied or feeling stigmatised.

Learning and Development

- The designated senior manager should, as appropriate, regularly attend multi-agency training courses relating to Looked After children and young people.
- The designated senior manager is an advisor for establishment staff on issues to do with Looked After children and young people, including their role as Corporate Parents to all the Looked After children and young people within the establishment. The designated senior manager should ensure that staff receive appropriate access to training, information, time and support for their work with Looked After children and young people.

How will we know if we have made a difference?

- When pre-five centres, schools or other educational establishments are places where Looked After children and young people and care leavers feel happy, safe and valued, through teaching and learning approaches which are sensitive to their needs.
- When young people who are, or have been, Looked After make the transition from school into sustained placements in further or higher education, employment or training.
- When you can give a positive answer to the question “Would this be good enough for my child?”
- When there is no difference in the rate of attendance or exclusion of Looked After children and young people as compared to their peers who are not Looked After.
- When Looked After children and young people and care leavers are just likely as their peers to participate in out of school activities and wider school community activities such as sporting competitions.
- When Looked After children and young people and care leavers receive the additional support they require to participate in mainstream education, regardless of whether they are placed out of authority.
- When the educational outcomes for Looked After children and young people and care leavers, in terms of attainment and achievement, are the same as those for their peers who are not Looked After.

Ref: These Are Our Bairns: page 40

