

Aberdeen City Council
School Age Childcare (SAC) Policy



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1. Why does the Council need this Policy?

- 1.1 Aberdeen City Council recognises that School Age Childcare services play a vital role within our communities, offering a variety of options which families can rely on to support their childcare needs before and after school, and during the school holidays. It is not currently a statutory service, like Early Learning and Childcare, however it is a crucial service for many families who rely on it to enable them to work or study and it contributes positively to the economic development of the city as well as helping to improve outcomes for children and young people.
- 1.2 Following the implementation of Early Learning and Childcare expansion, we have seen a natural increase in demand for School Age Childcare, as parents and carers look to secure continuity of wraparound childcare when their children start Primary School. In our most recent Early Learning and Childcare consultation with Parents and Carers (June 2023), 45.2% of respondents indicated that they will require School Age Childcare when their child(ren) starts Primary School.
- 1.3 Aberdeen City Council's policy is that all schools, will work with parents and School Age Childcare providers to provide a suitable location, to establish and support School Age Childcare, where there is sufficient parental demand and where it is viable and cost effective.
- 1.4 This policy ensures access to high quality registered services for all children regardless of need, background or ability as set out in the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 and it acknowledges the significance of children's rights, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child 1989 which was approved by the UK Government in 1991 and adopted by Aberdeen City Council in 1996.
- 1.5 The purpose of this policy is to promote improvement and embed quality within provision in Aberdeen, and to establish links between School Age Childcare and other local and national strategies and policies: e.g. *Realising the Ambition; Best Start: Strategic Early Learning and School Age Childcare plan for Scotland 2022-26; School Age Childcare Delivery Framework 2023; GIRFEC Practice Statement - Child's Plan – 2023; Care Inspectorate SIMOA (Safety, Inspect, Monitor, Observe, Act): Space To Grow: Indoor/outdoor settings*. It seeks to develop innovative and inclusive services in partnership with communities, schools, parents and carers, children and young people and a wide range of external agencies.
- 1.6 A key feature of this policy is to work with existing and future partners to best meet the needs of children, families and communities, including school communities.
- 1.7 This policy expresses a commitment to regularly engage with children to ensure that the following six principles of the National Children's Charter for School Age Childcare in Scotland are respected:
 - Kindness
 - Community

- Fairness
- Happiness
- Fun
- Choice

2. Application and Scope Statement

- 2.1 This policy applies to the provision of School Age Childcare in Aberdeen City Council owned/managed buildings.

3. Responsibilities

- 3.1 Overall responsibility for managing this policy is held by the Chief Officer – Education and Lifelong Learning.
- 3.2 The Chief Officer – Corporate Landlord also has responsibility for maintaining buildings, facilities management services and health and safety standards.
- 3.3 Registered School Age Childcare provisions are regulated by the Care Inspectorate and are subject to ongoing inspection to ensure they offer a quality service and meet the needs of children and young people attending.
- 3.4 Any instances of non-compliance with the policy should be reported to the Chief Officer - Education and Lifelong Learning.
- 3.5 Feedback on the policy should be communicated to the Chief Officer – Education and Lifelong Learning.

4. Supporting Procedures and Documentation

- 4.1 In order to deliver a high quality provision a School Age Childcare Agreement will be completed for each venue with local arrangements being taken into consideration. The document is available to download on the Council's website: [www.add-link once approved and uploaded.](#)
- 4.2 The National Framework for Delivery of School Age Childcare was published by the Scottish Government in October 2023, along with a Children's Charter for School Age Childcare, including a specific Charter for School Age Childcare in Aberdeen.
- 4.3 The National Delivery Framework outlines the Scottish Government's School Age Childcare commitments and the action areas for the next 3 years. Its key policy drivers are: Tackling child poverty; and improving outcomes for children and families, with

the Framework highlighting that an expanded childcare offering for School Age Childcare is crucial to the national mission to tackle child poverty, to promote family wellbeing, drive greater gender equality and to #Keep The Promise to our care experienced children.

4.4 The Vision is for a rights based, dynamic School Age Childcare offer for children and young people, which supports choice and growth, enabling families and communities to reach their full potential.

4.5 Further Supporting Documentation:

- Getting it Right for Every Child (GIRFEC)
- United Nations Convention on the Child (UNCRC)
- The Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014
- Aberdeen City Council Corporate Booking Policy

5. About this Policy

5.1 **Structure and Delivery of School Age Childcare:**

Aberdeen City Council Education and Lifelong Learning Service oversees the delivery, support and sustainability of School Age Childcare in all Associated School Groups (ASGs). It will continue to support the development of services as mixed models of provision, with private, parent run and local authority managed services and will make best use of the wide range of resources available to support provision. High quality, flexible and affordable School Age Childcare requires commitment from a number of stakeholders in order to promote the support and development of services.

5.2 **The Local Authority will, and encourage all stakeholders to:**

1. Promote the value of high quality provision as part of the wider Local Outcome Improvement Plan and Children's Services Plan priorities.
2. Support the development of high quality School Age Childcare as a priority to meet the Health and Social Care Standards: My support, my life (2017) up to the age of 16.
3. Acknowledge the contribution to the economic development of the city made by School Age Childcare by continuing to provide access to Local Authority owned/managed establishments for a nominal fee to external service providers.
4. Ensure that School Age Childcare services are developed following consultation with children, parents and carers.
5. Ensure that establishments and providers jointly participate in planning to deliver year round provision that meet the requirements of the Care Inspectorate, Environmental Health and other regulatory bodies.

6. Ensure that effective communication systems are in place to allow regular and positive discussion between School Age Childcare providers, heads of educational and community establishments, and other significant stakeholders.
7. Promote School Age Childcare provision as a positive aspect of the wider school community.
8. Ensure that each child's School Age Childcare experience promotes positive outcomes, effective interventions and constructive learning and development in line with Curriculum for Excellence four capacities to enable them to become successful learners, confident individuals, responsible citizens and effective contributors.

5.3 Good Practice Guidelines

Access to Premises

For a nominal fee (currently £500 per location per annum in 2024/25), Aberdeen City Council will provide Priority of Access to booking Council premises (in line with the Corporate Booking Policy). Aberdeen City Council reserves the right to vary the provision of appropriate accommodation for School Age Childcare provision within local authority premises, in order to meet the changing needs of schools and establishments over time. As far as is possible, access to non-Local Authority managed premises should be negotiated with the same elements present as below (section 5.4).

Communication

In line with the Agreement in Appendix 1, the appointed member of staff – Head, Depute Head or Manager of Establishment - and the Manager of the School Age Childcare provision will meet on a regular basis to monitor and review any pertinent procedures regarding shared use of the premises as well as discussing any issues arising. These meetings can be informal but should take place at least once per term.

In order to encourage better two-way communication and to help with safeguarding of the children, it is recommended that the School Age Childcare provider should provide the school office with a list of children registered to attend their setting. This list should be updated accordingly throughout the school year.

All children attending the provision will have a Personal Plan in place which pays full regard to GIRFEC Practice Statement - Child's Plan – 2023. In relation to multi-agency working, it may be beneficial to have a staff member involved in any review meetings, where appropriate, to maintain a consistent approach between the school and School Age Childcare provision. This should be in consultation with parents and carers.

Access to Resources

The provision may require access to some essential resources in order to deliver its services to the highest standard and in line with Care Inspectorate requirements. Through negotiation, and as far as possible, the provision may be able to share school / centre equipment. Should equipment be shared School Age Childcare providers

should make arrangements for payment for materials used and, within resource limitations, contribute to the replenishment, refurbishment and replacement of equipment.

5.4 **The School Age Childcare Agreement (Appendix 1):** ensures shared resource protocols are in place. A minimum requirement should include reference to the use of:

- Photocopier (Occasional use where available).
- Physical Play and Equipment, where negotiated, or provision of suitable storage for providers own resources.
- Areas for art, music, games and quiet time as per Care Inspectorate registration.
- Noticeboard for information and legal notices with dedicated area for display of children's work.
- Staff rest areas.
- Appropriate toilet areas, including disabled access.
- Use of suitable area for snack preparation.
- Use of dishwasher, if available, with clear responsibilities for emptying and filling etc.
- Janitorial and cleaning arrangements, with emergency contact numbers provided to all School Age Childcare managers.
- Registered Space in line with Care Inspectorate requirements including: confidential meeting and storage space.

The School Age Childcare provision is entitled to standard cleaning arrangements as part of the Local Authority let which should be flexible and responsive to the needs of the provision, in particular to holiday periods, within the limitations of available resources.

The Manager of the School Age Childcare provision should be a designated fob holder for the school / centre, due to the out of hours nature of the provision and should be fully briefed on security arrangements and fire detections system.

As part of the Local Authority let agreement, the provision should be entitled to utilise janitorial services for reporting faults, repairs and general maintenance as required, as well as any health and safety issues.

Janitorial services are responsible for weekly Fire Alarm testing at each site and will communicate with the School Age Childcare provider when testing takes place. The School Age Childcare provision is responsible for preparing an emergency fire evacuation plan (EFAP) and for implementing fire drill procedures in line with Care Inspectorate requirements to test this EFAP. However, janitorial services are happy to provide support with Fire Drills on a termly basis.

Where use is negotiated, the School Age Childcare provider will be responsible for replacing items damaged or broken within its setting e.g. Gym equipment/loose parts. The school / centre remains responsible for large items of maintenance and repair.

5.5 Promotion of School Age Childcare

Providing School Age Childcare is seen as a key service and can influence parents and carers choice of school. Schools should promote their School Age Childcare provision on a regular basis by the following means:

1. Advertise the provision by distributing information leaflets through the school bag mail outs, in the school newsletter and on school notice boards;
2. Include the provision in any site visits and give information to potential new pupils / parents and carers;
3. Include the provision in the P1 new starts programme by inviting the managers to attend induction and open days, where appropriate.
4. Promote and publicise the service through regular updates to the Parent Council and PTA; Inform the PTA about the strict guidelines that registered providers must adhere to.
5. Enable the providers to host open days / evenings for parents coinciding with the school's parent- consultation days / evenings.

6. Risk

- 6.1 **Compliance Risk:** This policy will support mitigation and compliance with Health and Safety guidelines and Care Inspectorate requirements.
- 6.2 **Operational Risk:** The policy relates to the provision of registered School Age Childcare provision. By doing so ensures that third party organisations operating from Council premises are regulated by Care Inspectorate and have appropriate safeguarding measures in place for children, young people, staff and volunteers.
- 6.3 **Reputational Risk:** The policy sets out standards and requirements to ensure that a consistent approach is adhered to by all stakeholders and will therefore minimise customer complaints.

7. Environmental Considerations

- 7.1 The funding secured from Inspiring School Age Childcare Spaces (ISACS) fund has been invested in outdoor spaces at four settings, enhancing spaces and outdoor play and learning opportunities. Across all School Age Childcare settings, good use is also made of outdoor and green spaces where practicable and where feasible to do so.
- 7.2 The provision of School Age Childcare within local communities has environmental benefits if less travel is made by car and more active travel taken.
- 7.3 School Age Childcare providers should be mindful of environmental considerations and ensure that lights are switched off and taps turned off after use in their registered space.

8. Policy Performance

- 8.1 The provision of School Age Childcare can be measured by the total number of places available across the city and by monitoring supply and demand. Registered School Age Childcare provisions are regulated by the Care Inspectorate and are subject to ongoing inspection to ensure they offer a quality service and meet the needs of children and young people attending.
- 8.2 Performance will also be measured by customer satisfaction surveys and reduction of risk, for example the reduction in complaints that Aberdeen City Council and School Age Providers receive in relation to availability of School Age Childcare places.

9. Design and Delivery

The provision of high quality School Age Childcare will help to deliver the Local Outcome Improvement Plan (LOIP). The policy is aligned to support the achievement of LOIP objectives:

- To make Aberdeen a place where all children and young people can grow up loved, safe and respected so that they can all realise their full potential.
- To achieve a 74% employment rate for Aberdeen City by 2026. The provision of School Age Childcare supports more families to take up employment and training opportunities, thus also helping to reduce poverty.

10. Housekeeping and Maintenance

- 10.1 This policy replaces all other policies relating to School Age Childcare (Formerly referred to as Out of School Care). The Policy will be reviewed on an annual basis.

11. Communication and Distribution

- 11.1 The policy will be shared and communicated with key stakeholders including: School Age Childcare providers and staff; Heads of School and Community Establishments; Facilities Colleagues; and Parents and Carers. This policy will be available for citizens to access/review on the Aberdeen City Council website.

12. Information Management

- 12.1 A map has been created to provide a visual overview of where School Age Childcare is located across the city and this will be updated regularly.

School Aged Childcare – Google My Maps

- 12.2 Regular monitoring of supply and demand across the city and annual audit of number of available places.
- 12.3 The information generated by the application of the policy will be managed in accordance with the Council's Corporate Information Policy and supporting procedures.

13. Definitions and Understanding this policy

- 13.1 **ACC :** Aberdeen City Council
- ASG :** Associated School Group (Secondary School Zone)
- Customer :** All school age children who access School Age Childcare, and their parents, carers and families.
- ELC :** Early Learning and Childcare
- External Provider:** Any registered School Age Childcare provider (out with Aberdeen City Council) which delivers School Age Childcare.
- SAC:** School Age Childcare