EDUCATION, CULTURE AND SPORT COMMITTEE

AGENDA

3rd Meeting, 2001 (Session 1)

Tuesday 23 January 2001

The Committee will meet at 2.30 pm in Committee Room 1

1. Regulation of Care (Scotland) Bill - Stage 1: The Committee will take evidence at Stage 1, on the general principles of the Bill, from—

   Scottish Childminding Association
   Ms Maggie Simpson (National Development Officer)

   Scottish Independent Nurseries Association
   Ms Liz Gallacher

   Scottish Council of Independent Schools
   Ms Judith Sischy (Director)

Martin Verity
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The following papers are attached for this meeting—

Written Evidence from Scottish Council of Independent Schools
(Agenda item 1)
"DRAFT NATIONAL CARE STANDARDS - FIRST TRANCHE"
July 2000


Introduction

The Scottish Council of Independent Schools (SCIS) is responsible for some 31,000 children in schools throughout Scotland, 3,800 of whom are boarders (residential) and 1,675 of whom are receiving pre-school education. There are presently around 35 SCIS schools with residential provision and 45 schools with pre-school departments. The following comments relate largely to SCIS’s residential/boarding provision. A list of SCIS member schools is enclosed.

Consultation

SCIS is keen to have some input into the role of the proposed Scottish Commission for the Regulation of Care and the Scottish Social Services Council when it is established. The carers (Heads and staff in boarding schools) and users (young people and their families) would be able to submit views directly or through a SCIS focus group. There appears to have been no such consultation to date.

SCIS Position

SCIS boarding schools have long prided themselves on caring for individual children in a family atmosphere. Over the past twenty years, schools have made many changes to achieve a modern and professional approach, on both an individual and collective basis.

In anticipation of and following the Children (Scotland) Act 1995, SCIS has had a key role in promoting care and welfare standards for boarders, in conjunction with HM Inspectorate of Schools and others. SCIS’s key initiatives in the 1990s have included:-

by Professor Kathleen Marshall

SCIS Guidelines on Guardianship (1998)
researched by Mary Thomas

researched by Mary Thomas
Improving the Care and Welfare of Residential Pupils (1999)  
bym HM inspectorate in liaison with SCIS and others

Training: An ongoing programme of training and advice provided by SCIS  
for boarding and guidance staff

Professional course: A professional certificate of professional practice offered by SCIS,  
validated by the University of Surrey, Roehampton, for boarding  
house staff, matrons and others (from 1999/00)

SCIS works closely with the SEED on all matters affecting the care and welfare, safety  
and security of boarding pupils. It also liaises with the Boarding Schools Association  
(BSA) for the UK which published ‘National Boarding Standards’ in June 2000 in  
conjunction with the Independent Schools Council, Ofsted, the DfEE and other national  
bodies.

The Pupils/Schools

The young people who are boarding/residential in SCIS schools have elected to be  
educated at the school of their or their parents’ choice and who, for varying family  
reasons, board at the school during the academic year. These children have not been  
placed “in care” by the social services, although a minority have been placed in the  
school by their local education authority.

All SCIS schools are subject to HMI inspection, for quality and standards and for care  
and welfare. Through SCIS, regular training is offered on quality assurance and self-  
evaluation.

Standards

With regard to young people in independent boarding schools, it is hoped that the Care  
Standards will take into account the standards set out in the following documents:-

Improving the Care and Welfare of Residential Pupils (1999)

National Boarding Standards (2000)

The above documents reflect considerable, detailed and highly professional work on  
the standards which should apply in boarding schools and both documents are already  
in use in schools. Both documents largely reflect the standards set out in the draft  
National Care Standards for Scotland.

Our concerns about the standards set out in the Draft National Care Standards, First  
Tranche, are summarised below:-

- account should be taken of the views of the independent school boarding sector
there should be close liaison and co-ordination between the Commission and HMI
care should be taken to avoid over-inspection and unwarranted intrusion into the residential provision of young people, whilst protecting their safety and security
the needs of the young people in this sector should be borne in mind and respected
appropriate training is needed for managers and staff
account will need to be taken of any financial implications
Concerns about specific standards might include:-
pressures on staff, especially in small units, to keep up to date with record keeping, meetings, minutes, plans, publications, leaflets etc
accommodation requirements, in particular the use of individual rooms
the need for more specific guidance on accommodation in Scotland, as provided in the National Boarding Standards
arrangements for contact when parents are abroad
use of support staff

Further concerns arise from 'The Way Forward for Care' - July 2000 with regard to the areas which the Commission will regulate. It is not clear how independently managed schools will be affected with regard to, for example, ensuring that services are managed on a sound financial footing, and other areas.

In principle, the setting of national care standards is likely to be welcomed by schools which will look forward to discussing the detailed proposals.

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August 2000
SCOTTISH COUNCIL OF INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS

MEMBER SCHOOLS

Aberdeen Waldorf School
Aberlour House
Albyn School for Girls
Ardvreck School
Atholl : a Preparatory School for
  The Glasgow Academy
Beaconhurst School
Belhaven Hill School
Belmont House School
Butterstone School
Cademuir School
Camphill Rudolf Steiner Schools
Cargilfield School
Clifton Hall School
Compass School
Craigclowan Preparatory School
Craighalbert Centre
Craigholme School
Dairsie House School
Dollar Academy
Donaldson's College
Dunedin School
The Edinburgh Academy
  Junior School
The Edinburgh Academy
Edinburgh Rudolf Steiner School
Falkland House School
Fernhill School
Fettes College
George Heriot's School
George Watson's College
The Glasgow Academy
Glasgow Steiner School
Glenalmond College
Gordonstoun School
Hamilton College
The Hamilton School
High School of Dundee
The High School of Glasgow
Hillside School
Hutchesons' Grammar School

Inchkeith School
International School of Aberdeen
Kelvinside Academy
Kilgraston School
Lathom Preparatory School
Laurel Park School
Lomond School
Loretto Junior School
Loretto School
The Mary Erskine and Stewart's
  Melville Junior School
The Mary Erskine School
Merchant Castle School
Morrison's Academy
New Park School
The New School
Oakbank School
Queen Victoria School
Rannoch School
Regius Christian School
Robert Gordon's College
Rosebrae School
Royal Blind School
St Aloysius' College
St Columba's School
St George's School for Girls
St Katharines School
St Leonards School
St Margaret's School for Girls, Aberdeen
St Margaret's School, Edinburgh
St Mary's Music School
St Mary's School
St Serf's School
Sea View Private School
Starley Hall School
Stewart's Melville College
Strathallan School
Wellington School