



“Someone to talk to  
and Someone to listen”

**Supporting young pregnant women  
and young parents in school**



Scottish Government  
Riaghaltas na h-Alba  
gov.scot

## Executive Summary

### Objective:

Every pregnant young woman and young parent is supported to stay in school.

Pregnancy is not a reason for exclusion from school.

*It is unlawful to exclude a pupil because of her pregnancy or maternity<sup>1</sup>.*

### Aims:

This guidance aims to set out why it is important to provide support, how that support could be provided and what needs to be taken into account when reaching decisions with the young person.

### Context:

#### **Why it's important to support young parents to remain in school**

Parenthood is a positive experience for many young people. Good quality, integrated support for young parents and their families helps them to achieve positive outcomes for themselves and for their children. Education has a crucial role in contributing to improving the life-chances of all young people.

#### **Supporting young people disclosing a pregnancy**

A multi-agency approach to supporting young people around pregnancy, including disclosing of pregnancy is important. Each young person's situation will be unique and different supports will be required depending on their situation. The GIRFEC National Practice Model should be used when assessing need.

#### **Pregnancy Options**

This resource focuses on supporting young people who have decided to continue with their pregnancy ensuring they remain supported to continue with their education into parenthood. Young people who disclose their pregnancy to school and who choose other options will also be supported throughout.

#### **Collaborative Planning**

Through multi-agency working with the young person, organisations can provide the young person with the tailored support that is required. Assessment and planning can be delivered through the GIRFEC National Practice Model<sup>2</sup>. Templates are included in this guidance which make suggestions on what needs to be considered. Copies should be given to the young person for agreement so that they can refer to what has been put in place and ask for adjustments as required.

---

1 [https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/sites/default/files/equalityact2010-technicalguidance-schoolsinscotland-2015\\_0.pdf](https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/sites/default/files/equalityact2010-technicalguidance-schoolsinscotland-2015_0.pdf) p. 46

2 <https://www.gov.scot/publications/girfec-national-practice-model/>

### **Planning pregnancy and parenthood support for young people at school**

Ongoing communication throughout the pregnancy will help the young person adapt to their new circumstances in school.

However, working with the young person to consider their needs through a series of regular meetings will help ensure the proper support is provided. It will also enable adjustments to be made when circumstances alter over the course of the pregnancy.

#### **Who should be involved?**

Involve only essential people at meetings to avoid the young person/people feeling overwhelmed. The young person should be asked who they would like to attend to support them for example family or carer. Many young people will have a Family Nurse, who will be an important part of these meetings.

It's important to note that not all young people have the same family support network in place. In such cases, it's essential that the young person is supported by trusted adults with whom they have existing, established relationships.

# Contents

<b>1. Introduction</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>2. Aim of this resource</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>3. Why it’s important to support young people who experience pregnancy and parenthood to remain in school</b>	<b>7</b>
Engaging with the wider support network	8
Ensuring all young people are well informed about pregnancy	8
<b>4. Supporting young people disclosing a pregnancy in school</b>	<b>9</b>
The role of the School Nurse	9
Family Nurse Partnership	9
Pregnancy Options	10
Confidentiality and Information Sharing	11
Collaborative Planning	12
Bullying and Young Parents	13
Coping with loss	13
<b>Appendix A: Pregnancy and parenthood support for young people at school</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>Appendix B: SEEMIS: Recording absence in relation to pregnancy and parenthood</b>	<b>20</b>

*Throughout the document we have included the voices of young parents which reflect their experience of being pregnant and a parent at school. We are grateful to these young people for their help and support in the development of this document.*

## 1. Introduction

[The Pregnancy and Parenthood in Young People Strategy](#) highlights the importance of education, training and employment for young parents, as part of overall holistic support. This resource aims to support Local Authorities in regard to Action 4.9 to *develop guidance for schools to ensure that support and planning processes are in place to allow young people who become pregnant to remain in their own school.*

This resource can be modified locally to enable local authorities and schools to develop a document relevant to local approaches, or it can be used in its current form. It sets out why young pregnant women and young parents (mothers and fathers) need additional support to reduce barriers to learning.

Appendix A sets out how to plan that support, with the young person and their needs at the heart. Young parents are also young people, and should have their rights recognised as such. It is important that they are able to experience life as such. The [United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child \(UNCRC\)](#) helps us to understand and ensure young people are provided with those rights.

The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated the inequalities already experienced by young parents. Support for young parents to access learning, training and career advice is more important than ever. As part of this support, enabling young parents to remain or re-engage in school is key.

## 2. Aim of this resource

*We grow up loved, safe and respected so that we realise our full potential<sup>3</sup>*

*“How can pregnant women  
even stay at school?  
I didn’t think it was possible...”*

As per Article 28 of the UNCRC, every child has the right to education. Recognising the impact that disrupted or discontinued education can have on the future life-chances of the young person and their child, the focus of this resource is on the educational and wellbeing needs of young pregnant women and young parents (mothers and fathers) who are in school.

To successfully achieve this aim, it is important to ensure that:

- Young pregnant women, and young parents, know that pregnancy and parenthood is not a barrier to education or to remaining in school.
- Young people are encouraged to remain involved in education during pregnancy and in the post-birth period.
- Young pregnant women and young parents views are heard and respected.
- Young pregnant women/young parents are helped back into learning, and into the school community, particularly if they were disengaged from school prior to pregnancy.

The Getting it right for every child (GIRFEC) approach should always underpin support to ensure that young pregnant women and young parents can secure the right support at the right time from the right people, and remain as fully integrated in the school community as possible, as well as being mindful of their needs as a young parent and young person.

Schools support young people with a range of experiences that may be traumatic and staff need the confidence and skill to respond appropriately. NHS Education for Scotland (NES) have developed the National Trauma Training Framework<sup>4</sup>, which supports the development of trauma skilled practice. Any member of staff who is trauma informed trained should be able to recognise where people are affected by trauma and adversity, and be able to respond in ways that improve life-chances.

---

3 <https://nationalperformance.gov.scot/national-outcomes>

4 <https://transformingpsychologicaltrauma.scot/>

### 3. Why it's important to support young people who experience pregnancy and parenthood to remain in school

***“I want to get an education  
so I can work and support my son.  
I want to be independent.  
If I didn't stay I know I would regret it  
in the future.”***

Parenthood is a positive experience for many young people. Good quality, integrated support for young pregnant women and young parents and their families through positive, trusted relationships helps them to achieve positive outcomes for themselves and for their children.

Education has a crucial role in contributing to improving the life-chances of all young people. Schools, provide a supportive and nurturing environment in which young people can grow in confidence and adapt to their new, dual role of being both young parents and students.

Pregnancy is not a reason for exclusion from school. Directly or indirectly implying that a young pregnant woman is no longer welcome at school, is discriminatory behaviour. Health and safety is not a reason to exclude pregnant young women from school.

The [Technical Guidance for Schools in Scotland](#) covers discrimination in schools, in relation to the 2010 Equality Act. Published by the Equality and Human Rights Commission it includes information in relation to discrimination against pregnancy and maternity. It sets out that:

*“A school must not discriminate against a pupil because of her pregnancy or maternity, or because she is breastfeeding. This means that it is unlawful for a school to restrict the education, benefits, facilities or services available to pregnant or breastfeeding pupils, or to restrict the options available to them.*

*However, it is not unlawful to treat a female pupil more favourably because of her pregnancy or maternity, or because she is breastfeeding. So a school can offer pregnant or breastfeeding pupils' additional education, benefits, facilities or services, or offer them in a more flexible or favourable way than they are offered to other pupils. Schools should avoid making assumptions about the educational and career aspirations of teenage mothers”<sup>5</sup>.*

And additionally that:

*“It is unlawful to exclude a pupil because of her pregnancy or maternity”<sup>6</sup>.*

- Some young people may need additional or more intensive support as young parents. It is important to consider and explore with each individual what matters and what is important to them. It is also important to provide an opportunity to explore their own experiences and circumstances to understand and hear what they feel would be helpful and supportive.

---

5 [https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/sites/default/files/equalityact2010-technicalguidance-schoolsinscotland-2015\\_0.pdf](https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/sites/default/files/equalityact2010-technicalguidance-schoolsinscotland-2015_0.pdf) p. 40

6 [https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/sites/default/files/equalityact2010-technicalguidance-schoolsinscotland-2015\\_0.pdf](https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/sites/default/files/equalityact2010-technicalguidance-schoolsinscotland-2015_0.pdf) p. 46

## **Engaging with the wider support network**

It can take time for the young person and their family to come to terms with such life-changing news. For many, informing the school about the pregnancy is a big challenge to be negotiated. How the young person is supported by the school can affect both the young person and their wider support network’s immediate and long-term responses to education and wider offers of assistance.

The wider support network of the young pregnant woman and the father of the baby, if present, need to be reassured that continued involvement in education will benefit both parents and enhance their ability to successfully support their child in the future. It is important for the young person and their wider support network that the response from the school offers reassurance that support will be available to meet the changing circumstances.

## **Ensuring all young people are well informed about pregnancy**

***“They only talk about  
stopping pregnancies.”  
“We need help, we need guidance.”***

Providing information to all young people about pregnancy and the importance of speaking to someone if they’re pregnant – or suspect they might be – is central.

It is important that young people are helped to understand who they can approach in confidence should they require support and advice about pregnancy. Some young pregnant women may not want to access services due to anxiety and distress over their pregnancy and may need additional, personalised help to access that support and advice, which schools can play a role in facilitating if required.

Learning through Relationships, Sexual Health and Parenthood (RSHP) education should prepare young people so that they will be informed in advance and better able to confidently seek support and advice should they experience a pregnancy.

In some schools, drop-in health services provide help and advice to young people around pregnancy. It is also useful to provide easily accessible information on noticeboards etc. about local sexual health services, pregnancy testing and support.

In some situations, it may be helpful for young women to access independent advocacy to help them understand their rights and what options they have. This type of support should be independent of the other services involved in their life and can help them articulate their views or decisions to others.



## 4. Supporting young people disclosing a pregnancy in school

***“Scary! One of the most scary things I went through...”***

Assessing wellbeing and planning to meet identified needs in the context of the young person’s support network and unique circumstances, as well as their strengths and vulnerabilities, is enabled by the GIRFEC National Practice Model. A multi-agency approach to supporting young people around pregnancy, including disclosing of pregnancy is important. Each young person’s situation will be unique and different supports will be required depending on their situation.

***“We need some guidance, something that helps us to understand what is coming next, what to expect...”***

All members of staff in school should be aware that a pregnancy disclosure could be made to them. Whilst they do not need to be experts, they should be able to direct the young person to the relevant person at school who can offer the initial help and support they need. It is important that the young person has the time and space they need to talk about the situation at their own pace. Listening and providing a non-judgemental, warm and positive response to the young person will help them feel more confident as they are guided through this time.

***“I don’t understand why some people are so cold-hearted about it.”***

***“It would be good to hear someone saying something nice [about you being pregnant], even just simple congratulations. But nobody does.”***

When there are consistent, predictable and secure relationships, young people will feel more confident about disclosing pregnancy, that their rights will be respected and that any support they need will be in place for their next steps, without fear of stigma and discrimination. The young parent’s voice should be at the heart of decision making about the support that they need.

### **The role of the School Nurse**

School Nurses are health professionals with enhanced educational qualifications in health and development of school age children and young people. School Nurses may have a key role in supporting young people in school, during pregnancy and parenthood. School Nurses can be an important link between health and education services, supporting and enhancing the health and wellbeing of children and young people.

### **Family Nurse Partnership**

The Family Nurse Partnership (FNP) is a licensed programme, originally developed in the USA, in which specially trained nurses work with first-time young mothers to develop their parenting capacity and support them to make positive choices for themselves and their children. It also seeks to support these families using strength based approaches to achieve their short- and long-term goals and aspirations. Mothers aged 19 and under across Scotland are offered the FNP programme. Family Nurses have a key role in supporting first time young mothers and are an essential part of the support around the young parent and can provide support and advice to the school. Visits are offered weekly to fortnightly from early pregnancy until the first child reaches 2 years of age.

Where a young person does not have a Family Nurse the Health Visitor will be the named person.

## Pregnancy Options

This resource focuses on supporting young people who have decided to continue with their pregnancy ensuring they remain supported to continue with their education into parenthood. Young people who disclose their pregnancy to school and who choose other options will also be supported throughout.

Some young people will have already considered their options and made a decision about their pregnancy, whereas others will not. Young people are more likely to seek help with decisions about their pregnancy options from family and health professionals, some young people may seek support in schools. Regardless of where the young person seeks support with their pregnancy options, the school will need to provide ongoing emotional support to the young person.

Taking account of individual circumstances and experiences in childhood, it is important to recognise some young people may require additional care, support and help. By working collaboratively, agencies can ensure a safe space for the young person, putting them at the centre of decision making.

An open and supportive conversation about pregnancy options will help young people to make an informed decision.

Not all young women will disclose a pregnancy to their school, particularly if they decide not to continue with the pregnancy. If a young woman has disclosed to her school, she should continue to receive support around her health and wellbeing, should she need or wish to in line with GIRFEC.

Where a school is aware of a young person choosing to have an abortion, support should be provided to welcome them back into school. Support may also be required for the partner, particularly if the relationship has broken down.

Although they have made a decision not to continue with their pregnancy, some young women may still be vulnerable to pregnancy or may wish to become pregnant again. It will be important to be aware of the needs of these young people and for multi-agency partnerships and to ensure the plan around the child (GIRFEC) engages the right support from the right people at the right time.

If the young person is considering adoption, their midwife will support them in those discussions and in any planning and engagement with other agencies where required.

Final decisions are never made until after the baby is born – only discussion and planning take place during pregnancy. Considerable personal support will be required for the young woman if adoption takes place and reintegration back into school life may take considerable time and must be treated with sensitivity.

Young people can access more information about adoption at the [CoramBAAF](#) website.

## Confidentiality and Information Sharing

Organisations supporting young people around pregnancy must work in partnership with them when considering and sharing information necessary to promote, support or safeguard their wellbeing.

Education staff have responsibilities to protect all children from risk of harm and where staff are concerned that there is potential or actual risk of significant harm to either an unborn baby, child or young person they must notify the statutory agencies as outlined within the [National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland 2021](#) (to be published in summer 2021). Consent is not required or appropriate because the information must be shared in order to protect the child. Where appropriate, agreement and understanding about the sharing of information may be helpful in engaging individuals in the process.

The needs, feelings, views and wishes of the young person should be taken into account and documented. They may also need additional support to understand and communicate.

Information sharing decisions must be based not only upon considerations about the safety and wellbeing of the individual, but also the safety of others.

Information can be shared without consent if, for example, a practitioner is unable to gain consent from the individual in time to prevent risk of harm, or if gaining consent could place a child at risk. Every effort should be made to gain consent for issues that are not related to child protection.

It can be beneficial for a young person to have a central point of contact, a person with whom they can discuss the situation. As part of the GIRFEC approach, the young person will have a named person or trusted adult within the school. This is likely to be a member of school staff at their school and someone already involved in offering support. In these circumstances it is important that the central point of contact is someone that the young person feels most comfortable talking to, and this might be someone other than the named person. If the young person has a child's plan, they should also have a lead professional to coordinate, manage and review actions agreed to provide a range of support. The lead professional could be outwith the school, for example their Family Nurse, who works with school staff where they are agreed partners to a plan.

The school's Guidance/Pastoral Team will be key contacts for the young person and their parents/carers; and, if the young person has a child's plan, key partners to the young person's plan where agreed with the young person in order to access support and plan next steps within the school.

Young people may be concerned about confidentiality – particularly if they are under 16 – and should have confidence and clarity about how and when any information sharing takes place to support their wellbeing. In most circumstances, the young person will know what information is being shared, with whom and for what purpose, and their views will be taken into account. This may not happen in exceptional cases, such as where there is a child protection concern.

On occasions when a young woman has not disclosed her pregnancy to her parent/carer it is good practice to encourage the young person to do so. However, it is important to remember that a young person has a right to confidentiality and the school should not share information about a pregnancy with parents or carers without the young person's consent.

Discussing with the young person why they fear a negative reaction may help identify their anxieties and support them in communicating the news to their parents/carers. The right to confidentiality and safeguarding of the young person must be respected at all times, whilst ensuring their safety where there are child protection concerns.

More detailed information is available at:

[Resource for Professionals: Key Messages for Young People on Healthy Relationships and Consent](#)

## Collaborative Planning

Through multi-agency working, organisations can provide the young person with the tailored support that is required. A key component of GIRFEC is a single plan or planning process which covers all aspects of a young person’s wellbeing and circumstances. Pregnancy and pre-birth planning for school should have the young person at its heart in the context of their own circumstances, strengths and vulnerabilities. They should have ownership of their plan and be able to express what they need with the support and advice of the professionals and trusted adults around them. Assessment and planning should be delivered through the GIRFEC National Practice Model<sup>7</sup>.

It is important to recognise that young people may experience a range of mental, emotional, social and physical issues that could affect their ability to continue to engage, or engage meaningfully with learning during pregnancy. They may also result in the young person wishing to leave school altogether.

These issues could include:

- having mixed feelings about the pregnancy
- anxiety and/or depression
- bullying and/or perceived bullying by other students
- discrimination and judgement.
- conflict with the father of the baby (particularly if he is in the same school)
- conflict with family
- disruption at home
- financial worries
- housing worries
- physical health worries and symptoms

---

7 <https://www.gov.scot/publications/girfec-national-practice-model/>

## Bullying and Young Parents

Bullying of any kind is unacceptable and must be addressed quickly whenever it arises.

*‘Respect for All: The National Approach to Anti-bullying for Scotland’s Children and Young People<sup>8[1]</sup>* provides the framework for all anti-bullying work in Scotland.

We know that young people’s mental, emotional, social and physical wellbeing and attainment can be severely impacted by bullying. To support them it requires approaches that are holistic, preventative, and supportive. Young parents can experience bullying because of the stigma and judgement that is still associated with young parenthood.

Teachers should be aware of the increased possibility of bullying in relation to a young pregnant person or young parent and that this can occur face to face as well as online.

Schools should be cognisant of their anti-bullying practice and approach and ensure young people receive adequate information and guidance around this topic. For those who are pregnant/ young parents, this can add to what is already a potentially highly emotional and stressful time.

## Coping with loss

Some young people may experience complications in pregnancy or other health issues which may lead to loss of their baby. They will need considerable support through this time. Fellow students, peers and friends may also require support to help them know what do to support their friend if they experience pregnancy complication or loss.

For some young women, a pregnancy may end in a miscarriage. The young woman (and her partner) will require support in such circumstances and should be helped to access more specialist support.

More information for young people can be found at <https://www.miscarriageassociation.org.uk/your-feelings/young-people/> and Scottish Care and Information on Miscarriage <https://www.miscarriagesupport.org.uk/> and Held in Our Hearts <https://heldinourhearts.org.uk/>

[Home | SiMBA Charity, Simpsons Memory Box Appeal](#)

Young people who have experienced a stillbirth or a neonatal death will need support from the school as well as other services to support them through this difficult time.

The Stillbirth and Neonatal Death Society (SANDS) and Held in Our Hearts <https://heldinourhearts.org.uk/> provides help and support for parents who have suffered bereavement. <https://www.sands.org.uk/support-you>

---

8 <sup>[1]</sup><https://www.gov.scot/publications/respect-national-approach-anti-bullying-scotlands-children-young-people/>

## Appendix A

# Pregnancy and parenthood support for young people at school

*“(School)... It’s a nice break. You could focus on yourself and chat to your peers.”*

Ongoing communication throughout a pregnancy will help the young person adapt to their new circumstances.

The GIRFEC National Practice Model can support the process of assessment, analysis, action and review in partnership with the young person.

The support that the young person would like to see put in place should be developed and agreed at the earliest opportunity, to enable the young person to make decisions about their future; and reviewed regularly at key points e.g.

- 8-10 weeks prior to the due date to provide reassurance to the young mother that she will be welcomed back to school and will be able to continue her education. Includes consideration of maternity/paternity leave
- 2-3 weeks before the planned return to school, to provide an opportunity for the young person to reflect on their return to school following the birth of the baby

This will support the young person to consider their needs and help to ensure support is provided that meets their ongoing needs. It will also enable adjustments to be made when circumstances alter over the course of the pregnancy and in parenthood.

### Who should be involved?

In addition to the young parent the team around the child/family might include:

- Parent/carers or other supportive family member
- Relevant school staff such as guidance teacher, school nurse, educational psychologist
- Family Nurse
- Any other relevant professionals or trusted adult(s)
- Third Sector

Involve only essential people in planning support to avoid the young person/people feeling overwhelmed. It will be important for the young person/people to be listened to about who is an important partner to their plan.

It’s important to note that care experienced young people may not have the same family support network in place. In such cases, it’s essential that the young person is supported by trusted adults with whom they have existing, established relationships.

## Initial Support Meeting

An initial support meeting enables the young person to make decisions about their future. The following questions will help the young person consider what supports they might want or need.

You might find it helpful to share the questions with young people prior to their meeting, so they have time to consider them.

### Considerations for assessment and planning at the earliest opportunity

#### Helpful questions to explore with young people and school staff as part of gathering information:

- Who will support me in school?
- Who needs to know about my pregnancy?
- What social, emotional and practical support do I need?
- What time will I need off school?
- Who else can provide me with support?
- What childcare options are available to me?
- What are my strengths?

#### Key Considerations may include:

- Who is the key staff member in the school providing support for the young person and their family?
- Who in the school needs to know about the pregnancy?
- What support from family/carer, if any, is in place?
- What supports does the young person need? Social, emotional and practical support.
- What time off might be needed during pregnancy? For example, antenatal care and classes, maternity leave, morning sickness and other related health issues.
- Is the young parent care experienced – what additional support might they need?
- Who are the other professionals in the team around the child?
- What are the childcare needs for returning to school?
- How will the school support breastfeeding?

### Learning needs

The learning needs of the young person will differ depending on where they are in their education. It is important that this meeting provides a positive opportunity for the young person to discuss their educational aspirations and how they can be achieved with the right support.

## Practical Support

There are practical supports that will make a difference to young pregnant women in school and the provision of these should be discussed at the initial support meeting. These should include, but are not limited to:

- A toilet pass
- An early class release pass, to avoid busy corridors and stairwells
- A lift pass
- Locker/storage if available
- Flexibility around uniform requirements as pregnancy progresses

## Health and Safety

Curriculum adjustments may be necessary to take account of additional needs during pregnancy. The needs of new and expectant mothers in school should be taken account of through a risk assessment, to ensure an optimal experience of school during their pregnancy.

Risks which may affect the health and safety of new or expectant mothers include:

- **Physical** e.g. manual handling;
- **Biological** e.g. infectious diseases, such as measles, mumps and rubella;
- **Chemical agents** e.g. exposure to toxic substances in science activities;
- **Learning conditions** e.g. physical fatigue etc.<sup>9</sup>

Risks assessments for an expectant mother should be regularly reviewed and updated to ensure they remain effective<sup>10</sup>. Pregnancy is not a reason for exclusion from school and health and safety should not be used as a reason to prevent a pregnant pupil attending school.

## Key Planning Output: Young Person’s Pregnancy Support Summary

### Considerations for support prior to the due date

Reviewing the support in place at around 8-10 weeks prior to the due date will enable the young woman and her support network to consider the help she will need following the birth of the baby and should provide reassurance that she will be welcomed back to school and will be able to continue her education.

As with any parent, it’s important that young people have the time and space to bond with their baby through a period of maternity/paternity leave. Their midwife, family nurse or health visitor and other trusted professionals will be able to help them to make that decision in co-ordination with parent/carers and the school.

The length of leave required will depend on:

- personal circumstances
- the health and wellbeing of parent and baby
- the parent’s educational commitments, including imminent examinations.

---

9 Glasgow City Council, New and Expectant Mothers: <http://www.glasgow.gov.uk/CHttpHandler.ashx?id=12195>

10 Glasgow City Council, New and Expectant Mothers



It will be important to take account of staff movement as part of these discussions. If the young person’s main point of contact leaves the school, it is vital that the same level and nature of support continues. The young person should be supported as they build a new relationship, which may take time depending on the existing contact they have had with that person.

Post birth planning must take into account the young person’s mental, emotional, social and physical health needs, the demands that childbirth and being a new parent will put upon them as well as their learning needs.

The following questions will help the young person consider what supports they might want or need. You might find it helpful to share the questions with young people prior to their meeting, so they have time to consider them.

### **Key considerations for the young person**

- When will my maternity/paternity leave begin?
- When will I return to school?
- Who will keep in touch with me during my leave?
- How will I keep in touch with my friends?

### **Key considerations**

- When will the maternity/paternity leave begin?
- What might affect their return to school date e.g. portfolio, exams, digital inclusion?
- Who will be the young person’s key contact whilst they are on leave?
- How can we help young people to keep in touch with their peers?

**Key Planning Output:** Young Person’s Post Birth Support Summary

### **Support considerations prior to return to school**

***“Some teachers seem to forget that you are going home to take care of your baby.”***

Reviewing the support in place 2-3 weeks before the young person’s preferred return date to school will enable the young person to consider their return to school now they are a parent.

The post-natal period can potentially be challenging for young mothers, so they may need help and support to enable their return and their any previous plans may need adapting or adjusting. Being flexible about a previously agreed return to school date will help young mothers and fathers feel positive about returning at a time when they are ready.

The following questions will help the young person consider what supports they might want or need. You might find it helpful to share the questions with young people prior to their meeting, so they have time to consider them.

### **Key Considerations for the Young Person**

Do I feel ready to leave my baby?  
Who will look after my baby when I'm at school?  
How can I be reached if there is a concern about my baby?  
My mental, emotional and physical health  
The health of my baby  
How I feel, how tired I am  
What support will I have from my family/carers and/or other services?  
How do I feel about going back to school?  
Can I breastfeed if I return to school?

### **Key Considerations for mental, emotional, social and physical health of the young parent**

Health of the baby  
Energy levels of the young mother  
Levels of support available from the family/carers (if any) and other services  
Childcare  
If the young woman feels ready to leave the baby in the care of others  
Potential anxiety about returning to school  
Whether a phased return to school may help the young parent adjust  
Support if the mother is breastfeeding

### **Practical factors to take into consideration should include:**

Authorised time off for appointments  
Caring needs: enabling them to arrive later if they have to take their baby to nursery/childminder  
Enabling the young woman to see her Family Nurse during school time, if that is her preference  
Access to local groups for young parents

### **Learning Needs**

It is important to help young parents to manage their expectations; managing a full range of subjects as well as parenting their baby may prove challenging. In such circumstances it is important to help the young parent feel positive about their achievements to date and to support them in achieving their aspirations without feeling overwhelmed.

Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) promotes flexibility and allows schools to personalise learner journeys to meet the needs of all children and young people.

The provision of flexible pathways can help the young parent manage their studies with their parenting responsibilities. This is important for both young mothers and fathers, so that fathers are also able to care for their baby<sup>11</sup>.

The Additional Support for Learning framework recognises that young parents may need extra help at school and it allows schools to provide this support to ensure young parents fully benefit from their learning. Young parents may also benefit from Alternative Assessment Arrangements. The particular arrangements should be discussed with the school.

Due to their parenting commitments, young parents may find it difficult to study after school. The following can help young parents with their studies:

- Build study time into timetables to provide young parents with the opportunity to study, finish homework and coursework during the school day.
- Flexibility with deadlines to help young parents to keep up with their peers, if they are coping with sleepless nights, or looking after an unwell child.

**Key Planning Output:** Young People’s Decisions Summary

---

11 <https://www.gov.scot/publications/included-engaged-involved-part-1-positive-approach-promotion-management-attendance-scottish-schools/pages/4/>

## Appendix B

### SEEMIS: Recording absence in relation to pregnancy and parenthood

Whilst it’s important that young pregnant women/young parents maintain their attendance at school through pregnancy and parenthood there will, of course, be times when they are unable to attend due to health care appointments, pregnancy related ill health, maternity leave or sickness of the baby/child etc.

In order to maintain consistency of recording, the following codes for recording pregnancy and parenthood related absence are suggested below.

Further information and guidance on school attendance is available at <https://www.gov.scot/publications/included-engaged-involved-part-1-positive-approach-promotion-management-attendance-scottish-schools/pages/2/>.

Attendance/ Absence Reason	Attendance/ Absence Code	Notes on completion	Authorised/ Unauthorised absence
Attendance	10	<p>This code can be used to record attendance when a young person has a reduced or part time timetable, so they may not be on school premises but are considered to be attending when necessary and required.</p> <p>Include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attendance at school</li> <li>• Learning outwith the school provided by a college or other learning provider while still on the roll of the school</li> <li>• Educational visits, day and residential visits to outdoor centres</li> <li>• Interviews and visits relating to further and higher education or careers events</li> <li>• Debates, sports, musical or drama activities in conjunction with the school</li> <li>• Study leave for pupils participating in national exams, if arranged by the school during the period of the national examination timetable</li> <li>• Receiving tuition via hospital or outreach teaching services</li> </ul>	Attendance

Attendance/ Absence Reason	Attendance/ Absence Code	Notes on completion	Authorised/ Unauthorised absence
Sickness with educational provision	13	<p>This code can be used to record a young woman’s period of <b>Maternity Leave</b>.</p> <p>This may include time spent on sick leave or maternity leave, with parental confirmation or medical certificate, and where adequate educational provision has been made.</p> <p><i>Guidance on Education of Children Absent from school through Ill-health.</i> <a href="https://www.gov.scot/Publications/2015/06/6846">https://www.gov.scot/Publications/2015/06/6846</a></p>	Attendance
Sickness with no education provision	20	<p>This code can be used to record a young woman’s pregnancy related sickness, for example ‘morning sickness’.</p> <p>This would include any time where a pupil is off sick, with parental confirmation or medical certificate, and section 14 of Education (Scotland) Act 1980 is not applicable. See <i>Guidance on Education of Children Absent from school through Ill-health.</i> <a href="https://www.gov.scot/Publications/2015/06/6846">https://www.gov.scot/Publications/2015/06/6846</a></p>	Authorised
Exceptional domestic circumstances (authorised)	23	<p>This code can be used to record when a young person is not attending school due to the sickness of their child.</p> <p>This relates to short-term exceptional domestic circumstances. Absences related to short-term exceptional domestic circumstances can be classified as either authorised or unauthorised absence. Authorised absence under this heading covers situations such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the period immediately after an accident or illness</li> <li>• a period of serious or critical illness of a close relative</li> <li>• a domestic crisis which causes serious disruption to the family home, causing temporary relocation</li> </ul>	Authorised

Attendance/ Absence Reason	Attendance/ Absence Code	Notes on completion	Authorised/ Unauthorised absence
Medical and dental	25	<p>This code can be used to record health care appointments in relation to pregnancy, e.g. antenatal care or in relation to the baby e.g. appointment with the health visitor.</p> <p>Attendance at medical and dental appointments.</p> <p>See 5.3 Medical and Dental appointments. For those recording period by period, any opening that contains at least 1 session of attendance will be converted to ‘attendance’ for statistical purposes. For schools with one registration per opening, a medical and dental recording should be recorded as ‘attendance’ if the child or young person attends for any part of the opening, for statistical purposes.</p> <p>It is assumed that the school will note the fact that the child or young person was not in attendance for the full opening, for legal purposes.</p>	Authorised

## Support for young pregnant women and young parents

### Parentclub

<https://www.parentclub.scot/>

Family Support Directory <https://www.parentclub.scot/family-support-directory>

### Information aimed at young parents

Little Lullaby <https://littlelullaby.org.uk/>

Ping <https://young.scot/campaigns/national/ping>

### Family Nurse Partnership

FNP Blog <https://blogs.gov.scot/family-nurse-partnership/>

‘Becoming the mum I want to be’ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IFa1QYqpbAo>

### Resources for parents

Baby Box <https://www.parentclub.scot/baby-box>

### Income Maximisation

Money Talk <https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/scotland/debt-and-money/other-resources-related-to-debt-and-money/money-talk-team-s/>

EMA <https://www.mygov.scot/ema/applying-for-or-renewing-ema/>

Scottish Welfare Fund <https://www.mygov.scot/scottish-welfare-fund/>

Child Poverty Action Group Financial Help for Young Parents  
<https://cpag.org.uk/welfare-rights/resources/factsheet/financial-help-young-parents>

### Housing

Young people at risk of, or experiencing homelessness, can obtain help and advice from Shelter [https://scotland.shelter.org.uk/get\\_advice](https://scotland.shelter.org.uk/get_advice) or they can be supported in accessing this free helpline [https://scotland.shelter.org.uk/about\\_us/contact\\_us/call\\_our\\_free\\_helpline?referral=contact\\_us](https://scotland.shelter.org.uk/about_us/contact_us/call_our_free_helpline?referral=contact_us)

Support is also available from Citizens Advice Scotland <https://www.cas.org.uk/bureaux>

### Breastfeeding

Parent Club <https://www.parentclub.scot/topics/feeding?age=2>

### Pregnancy and Baby Loss

Miscarriage Association <https://www.miscarriageassociation.org.uk/>

SCIM (Scottish Care and Information on Miscarriage) <https://www.miscarriagesupport.org.uk/>

Sands (Stillbirth and Neonatal Death Charity) <https://www.sands.org.uk/>

SiMBA <https://www.simbacharity.org.uk/>

Scottish Cot Death Trust <https://scottishcotdeathtrust.org/>

### Support for young people on abortion

<https://education.gov.scot/improvement/learning-resources/abortion-lets-talk-about-it>

### Independent Advocacy

<https://www.siaa.org.uk/us/independent-advocacy/>



Scottish Government  
Riaghaltas na h-Alba  
gov.scot

© Crown copyright 2021

**OGL**

This publication is licensed under the terms of the Open Government Licence v3.0 except where otherwise stated. To view this licence, visit [nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/version/3](https://nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/version/3) or write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: [psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk).

Where we have identified any third party copyright information you will need to obtain permission from the copyright holders concerned.

This publication is available at [www.gov.scot](http://www.gov.scot)

Any enquiries regarding this publication should be sent to us at  
The Scottish Government  
St Andrew's House  
Edinburgh  
EH1 3DG

ISBN: 978-1-80004-318-3 (web only)

Published by The Scottish Government, August 2021

Produced for The Scottish Government by APS Group Scotland, 21 Tennant Street, Edinburgh EH6 5NA  
PPDAS880746 (08/21)

w w w . g o v . s c o t