



## Community Services: Education

Argyll House  
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To: Heads of all Educational Establishments

Dear Colleague

### **The capacity of primary schools**

The authority's procedures for establishing the capacity of its primary schools are as set out below.

#### **1 Introduction**

1.1 The capacity of each primary school requires to be defined for various purposes.

(a) Forward planning

To allow assessment of the need for replacement schools and other changes in school provision taking account of factors such as population trends and new housing.

(b) Curricular and organisational needs

To establish the number of children and young people for whom the school can provide the desired curriculum, and to allow assessment of the implications of any new staffing standards, changing methodologies and new resources.

(c) Placing requests

To establish a clear and consistent basis for determining whether placing requests should be granted or refused where the number of children and young people who can be provided for in a school is an issue.

1.2 This circular describes how the capacity of primary schools should be calculated.

The circular is designed to be readily applicable to all schools. Detailed information on the technical aspects of the calculation of capacity and the formulae which are used can be obtained from the education office.

1.3 The determination of capacity is delegated to the Executive Director of Community Services. Regularly updated schedules of accommodation will continue to be the basis for calculating capacity. Detailed instructions will be issued with the schedules. The main principles of calculating capacity are, however, described below.

## **2 Calculating the capacity**

2.1 The main factors which have to be considered in the calculation of the capacity of primary schools are:

- (a) The number of available classrooms or class bases in the school. The recommended pattern of provision is shown in Appendix 1.
- (b) The number of children and young people who can be accommodated in these rooms. This depends on the size of the room or base and the use to which it is put. For rooms or bases to be included in the calculation of capacity the recommended areas per child and young person are as follows.

	Area/pupil sq m
Classroom in school of traditional design	1.7
Class base in open or semi-open plan school	1.5

[The area/child and young person figures for all types of accommodation are shown in education management circular 3.27]

- (c) The terms of any national agreements on class size. At present the maximum class size is 33 for one teacher. Where there are composite classes the maximum class size is 25.
- (d) The class organisation in any school session.

## **3 Planning capacity**

3.1 The planning capacity is based on the number of rooms - 2.1(a) above, the number of children and young people who can be accommodated in these rooms - 2.1(b) - and maximum class size - 2.1(c).

A school which has 14 rooms or bases capable of accommodating 33 children for class teaching purposes has a planning capacity of 462 [14 x 33]. A school which has 5 rooms capable of accommodating 32 children and 3 capable of accommodating 28 children has a planning capacity of 244 [(5 x 32) + (3 x 28)].

3.2 It is the planning capacity which will be used for broad strategic issues related to school provision and for the application of the 80% regulation described in section 1.1.

#### **4 Working capacity**

- 4.1 The working capacity of a school is obtained by adjusting the planning capacity to take account of the organisational needs of the school and could, therefore, vary from session to session.

For example the working capacity of a school which has 14 classrooms or areas capable of accommodating 33 children and young people but in a particular session has 2 composite classes is 446  $[(12 \times 33) + (2 \times 25)]$ .

- 4.2 Areas which can accommodate more than the maximum single-teacher class size can be used for teaching groups of more than 33 (or 25) with an appropriate number of teachers.
- 4.3 It is the working capacity at each stage which should be used in considering placing requests and other matters where specific information related to a particular session is required.

Sample calculations showing both planning and working capacity are shown in Appendix 2.

#### **5 Procedures**

- 5.1 Accurate and up-to-date information on capacity and the awareness of the effects of curricular change and associated accommodation needs are of vital importance in ensuring that schools are making the best possible provision.
- 5.2 The information obtained through the application of this circular should allow informed discussion to take place among all those with an involvement or interest in educational provision.
- 5.3 Head teachers/campus principals will be asked to provide to the education office, on an annual basis, the information contained in the appendix to this circular (see Appendix 3).

Yours sincerely

Executive Director of Community Services  
March 2010

## **Appendix 1: rooms/bases/areas to be included in capacity calculation**

- 1 The table over applies to schools with 5 or more rooms/bases/areas which can be used for educational purposes. **In the case of smaller schools, recently built open plan schools and those with a number of small non-teaching spaces, advice should be sought from the education office.**
- 2 The table shows the recommended distribution of rooms/bases/areas for class teaching and other activities for a given total number of rooms. In the allocation of rooms priority should be given to class teaching needs.
- 3 The column headed "Total number of educational spaces" should include all rooms which can be used for educational purposes such as classrooms, class bases, general purpose (GP), GP/dining, learning support, noisy/quiet library/resource rooms.

The following areas should normally not be included: gymnasium, dining/gymnasium, open-plan activity areas, all ancillary accommodation such as medical room, offices and head teacher/campus principal's room.

Column 1	Column 2	Column 3
Total number of educational spaces	Number of rooms to be allocated as GP, learning support etc [that is rooms to be used for educational purposes other than as class teaching bases]	Number of rooms to be counted to produce the capacity of the school
5	1	4
6	1	5
7	1	6
8	1	7
9	2	7
10	2	8
11	2	9
12	2	10
13	2	11
14	2	12
15	2	13
16	3	13
17	3	14
18	3	15
19	3	16
20	3	17
21	3	18
22	4	18
23	4	19
24	4	20
25	4	21
26	5	21
27	5	22
28	5	23
29	5	24
30	6	24
31	6	25
32	6	26
33	6	27
34	6	28
35	7	28
36	7	29

## Appendix 2: an example

### Argyll and Bute Council : Community Services : Education

#### Calculation of capacity/proposed class structure

##### Faslane Primary School in 1999/2000

- 1 Total number of educational spaces (appendix 1, column 1) 21
- 2 Number of rooms not included in calculation of capacity (appendix 1, column 2) 3
- 3 Number of rooms included in calculation of capacity (appendix 1, column 3) 18
- 4 Rooms not included in calculations of capacity (from 2 above)

Number	Use of room	Area in sq m (from schedule of accommodation)
1	Library	38m <sup>2</sup>
2	Audio visual	45m <sup>2</sup>
3	General purpose	50m <sup>2</sup>

- 5 Roll and stages

Stage	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5	P6	P7	Total
Estimated roll	63	62	79	60	63	71	43	441

6 Rooms included in calculation of capacity

Number	Area sq m	Planning capacity	Proposed organisation or use if not used as class teaching base	Working capacity	Places available
1	64	33	P1-32	33	1
2	64	33	P1-31	33	2
3	50	29	P2-27	29	2
4	52	30	P2-28	30	2
5	52	30	P2/P3-22 [7+15]	25	3
6	58	33	P3-32	33	1
7	58	33	P3-32	33	1
8	52	33	P4-31	33	2
9	52	30	P4-29	30	1
10	52	30	P5-28	30	2
11	52	30	P5-27	30	3
12	52	30	P5/P6-20 [8+12]	25	5
13	52	30	P6-30	30	0
14	52	30	P6-29	30	1
15	52	30	P7-18	30	12
16	52	30	P7-25	30	5
17	52	30	Staff resource room	30	30
18	52	30	Art	30	30
Totals		554	441	544	

Head Teacher/  
Campus Principal \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

### Appendix 3

#### Argyll and Bute Council : Community Services : Education

#### Calculation of capacity/proposed class structure

#### Primary School in

- 
- 1 Total number of educational spaces (appendix 1, column 1) \_\_\_\_\_
  - 2 Number of rooms not included in calculation of capacity (appendix 1, column 2) \_\_\_\_\_
  - 3 Number of rooms included in calculation of capacity (appendix 1, column 3) \_\_\_\_\_
  - 4 Rooms not included in calculations of capacity (from 2 above) \_\_\_\_\_

Number	Use of room	Area in sq m (from schedule of accommodation)
1		
2		
3		
4		
5		
6		
7		
8		

- 5 Roll and stages

Stage	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5	P6	P7	Total
Estimated roll								



6 Rooms included in calculation of capacity

Number	Area sq m	Planning capacity	Proposed organisation or use if not used as class teaching base	Working capacity	Places available
1					
2					
3					
4					
5					
6					
7					
8					
9					
10					
11					
12					
13					
14					
15					
16					
17					
18					
19					
20					
Totals					

Head Teacher/  
Campus Principal \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_