



Community Services: Education

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To: Heads of all Educational Establishments

Dear Colleague

Number of children and young people in rooms

Regulation 8 of the Schools General (Scotland) Regulations 1975 indicates that an education authority shall determine the maximum number of children and young people who may be suitably accommodated in the various classrooms of every educational establishment. This regulation serves to control, for health or safety reasons, the number of children and young people and staff who can reasonably be accommodated within a room at any time. The purpose of this education management circular is to indicate the method to be adopted when determining this number for every room in your school.

Room capacity is a function of a number of factors including the total floor area, the available free floor area, the total volume of the room, the ventilation system within the room, the number and position of exits from the room and, significantly, the use being made of the room.

It is recognised that any one room can be used for a wide range of educational activities including class teaching, practical work, audio visual presentations, and tutorials. It is difficult in some situations to define the limits of a room or teaching space, for example where a primary school is of open plan design. While a room may have a capacity of 30 for a normal class teaching situation, this capacity is capable of being increased beyond this number for large group activities such as viewing a video: on the other hand, the same room may only be suitable for fewer than 30 children and young people when they are to be engaged in certain practical work.

In the interest of children and young people and teachers alike there should be determined a 'recommended operational capacity' for every room or teaching space based on its total area as it relates to its normal function. To assist in the determination of capacity the recommended minimum area per child and young person for various learning and

teaching activities is shown in the appendix where recognition of the anticipated area occupied by fixed furniture as well as movable desks, chairs etc has been incorporated within the area/pupil factor. An area's capacity may be exceeded or reduced if different activities are substituted for the normal activity. However, it must be noted that the operational capacity is also liable to be modified in practice by other factors such as the terms of the teachers' contract.

It is also recognised that in individual situations there may very well be a room which because of its design and/or its layout and/or an abnormally high proportion of fitted furniture has a capacity which, in the interests of the health and safety of children and young people and staff alike, should be set at less than the capacity which would be determined by the formulae specified in the appendix. A modification to the notional capacity must then be made. In such cases the head teacher/campus principal should approach the education office for confirmation of an assessment of the acceptable maximum capacity for that room.

To meet the terms of regulation 8 a record of the capacity of each room must be maintained in the school; this should include the dimensions of the room. A regularly updated schedule of accommodation meets this requirement. The schedule for your own school should be readily available to members of your staff for reference. You should also inform the staff of any changes to the schedule as they are made.

Yours sincerely

Executive Director of Community Services

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Appendix

$$\text{Recommended occupational capacity} = \frac{\text{area of room (m}^2\text{)}}{\text{area per pupil (m}^2\text{)}}$$

Normal teaching activity	Area/pupil (m ²)	
Primary		
Classroom in traditional school	1.7	
Class base in open or semi-open plan school	1.5	
Gym	4.0	
Assembly hall	0.5	
Audio/visual	1.4	
General purpose (in schools of traditional design)	1.7	
Tutorial/noisy/quiet/withdrawal Activity	These areas vary in size in existing schools; area per pupil will vary widely depending on use	
Secondary		
Classrooms. tutorial rooms	1.5	
Music practice rooms	2.0	
Games hall	10.0	
Gymnasium	5.0	
Fitness rooms	4.0	
Pool	4.0	
Dance studio	4.0	
Language labs	1.5	
Computer rooms	1.5	
Speech and drama areas	2.5	
Business studies areas	3.0	
Home economics areas	3.5	
Art areas	3.0	
Technical areas	4.0	
Technical drawing areas	2.5	
Technological studies areas	3.0	
Departmental lecture areas	0.8 or number of fixed seats	
Science laboratories	3.0	
Assembly hall	0.5	
Library/resource	2.0	
School lecture theatre	number of fixed seats	
Educational support areas ^{1.4}	1.5	
Pre school (under Children Act 1989)		
Area of play space required		
	0-2 years	3.7
	2-3 years	2.8
	3-8 years	2.3