



Community Services: Education

Argyll House
Alexandra Parade
Dunoon PA23 8AJ

To: Heads of all Educational Establishments

Dear Colleague

Minor modifications or improvements to premises (self-help)

This management circular updates and replaces Education Management Circular 1-30 (February 2010).

The Report of the Commission for Rural Education (April 2013) highlighted the benefits to schools from offers of community assistance to undertake minor improvements to the school premises and environs or the supply of fixtures and fittings. For these purposes, community assistance is taken to include offers of support from community groups, parents, pupils and local businesses. The Commission recommended that *“Local authorities should encourage and accept help with school fabric and maintenance from parents and communities where appropriate”*.

Major maintenance and improvement works are generally financed, planned and executed by the Council’s Facility Services on behalf of Education Services. The prioritisation of such works is set out within the Strategic Education Asset Management Plan (SEAMP) and associated capital investment programme approved annually by the Council as part of the budget process. Routine repairs and maintenance works are carried out by a number of term contractors who are appointed by the council following competitive tender. For both major maintenance and improvement and routine repairs and maintenance, the council is bound by national and in some cases European procurement legislation.

In general terms, minor improvements envisaged under this circular would not involve works which would fall under the provisions of the Construction, Design and Management Regulations (CDM, 1995). Specifically, they would not involve demolition, property fabric disturbance (without refurbishment/demolition asbestos survey being available) or works associated with gas safety, load bearing structures, electrical installations, heating systems, and mechanical and electrical services.

From time to time proposals are made in respect of education establishments to carry out minor improvements or modifications. For educational reasons, the Head of the Establishment may feel that the project should be undertaken by pupils, students, parents and/or members of staff and thereby take advantage of community assistance.

The Executive Director of Customer Services, under Argyll and Bute Council standing orders, is responsible for all premises and any work done in them. Any work, however minor, within educational premises requires **prior** authorisation from Facility Services within the Customer Services department. The Executive Director is also a duty holder within the Council's Health and Safety Policy and will ensure, **through completion of form MM1**, that any such proposals will not present any health and safety risk to property users, that they meet the relevant quality standards and where appropriate that those carrying out works hold the required public liability insurance. Notwithstanding the requirement to ensure the proposal meets these standards, there is a presumption to take advantage of community assistance wherever practicable or to give advice as to how a proposal could be framed to meet those standards.

The following procedures are advised:

- 1) A proposal should be submitted in writing to the Head Teacher/Campus Principal in the first instance which provides details of the proposals, including the purpose of the project, the methods by which it will be carried out, the materials which will be used and the ways in which it will be financed and who would carry out the works.
- 2) The proposal should be submitted to and agreed by the School Support Services Manager and sent to the education offices at Argyll House, Dunoon in advance of any work being started. No works must commence until approval has been received from Facility Services and necessary discussions with other interested parties undertaken by Education Services. A realistic timescale for the proposal to be considered and investigated should be allowed, including sufficient time for Facility Services to fully consult with relevant staff from other council departments including Planning, Corporate Health and Safety and Building Standards.
- 3) If the proposal meets the required standards and is subject to approval by Facility Services, the Head of Education Establishment will receive a written agreement to the progressing of the works and any advice or conditions on which this approval is based.
- 4) Form MM1 (attached) should be signed by the Head of Education establishment and signed off by both Facility Services and Education Services before works can commence. Please note that the paid engagement of contractors must be through Facility Services and all contractors must be on the Council's list of contractors whose health and safety competence has been checked and accepted as being satisfactory.
- 5) Also required will be a rough sketch or plan showing dimensions of any construction/object and showing where on the site it is to be located.
- 6) Thought must also be given to the maintenance of any work that is carried out as the establishment will have to take responsibility for this.
- 7) The purpose of this circular is not to stifle local initiative, indeed the Council is actively interested in all community assistance, but rather to ensure that any work undertaken conforms to the necessary building standards, health and safety legislation and local bye-laws which exist and to offer education establishments appropriate help in any preparation of drawings and submission of documents which may be required.

Yours sincerely

Executive Director of Community Services

June 2017

Form MM1: Minor Modifications Form

Details of proposal
Purpose
Work to be carried out by
Other comments/details

Signed	Head of establishment		Date	
	School/establishment			