

REPORT TO: Council Committee for Education

MEETING DATE: 16 March 2010

BY: Executive Director of Education & Children's Services

SUBJECT: Policy for the design of General Purpose space in Primary Schools

1 PURPOSE

- 1.1 To inform the Committee of the historic and current practice of providing General Purpose space in primary schools and to seek approval for this practice to be a formal Council policy.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 The Committee is asked to:-
- i. Note the contents of this report.
 - ii. Approve the Policy & Guideline document "Provision of General Purpose space in Primary Schools" (Appendix 1).
 - iii. Note that the inclusion of General Purpose space in primary schools is governed by the guidance and scale as provided in the Table – '*Design Requirements for General Purpose spaces*' contained within Appendix 1.

3 BACKGROUND

- 3.1 East Lothian has experienced sustained population growth that has significantly increased school rolls. The number of houses that will have planning consent, together with the houses already allocated in the East Lothian Local Plan, will continue this trend.
- 3.2 This sustained growth of rolls has placed considerable pressure on the existing capacity of schools within whose catchment area this new development takes place. In turn this has created extensive new school building development to match this specific pupil product of these

houses. With increasing rolls, resulting in additional classrooms, has come a concurrent requirement for additional General Purpose space proportional to the roll.

- 3.3 From 1990 onwards the authority has provided dedicated General Purpose space on the basis of a more widely used set of standards. The standards for a second Physical Education (PE) space are the recommendation of the guidance provided in the "Primary School Sports Facilities" booklet from Sportscotland. These standards are enshrined within Appendix 'A'.
- 3.4 In the early primary years, the focus for PE in the curriculum is on foundation skills - such as running, throwing, movement and balance, and hand/eye coordination. Specialist, purpose-designed facilities are essential, if such skills are to be taught effectively and therefore require the right size, design and specification to be conducive to both learning and enjoyment.
- 3.5 The National 5–14 Guidelines describes the aims of PE for young children as follows:
 - *Physical activity is essential to growth and development of children.*
 - *Physical education offers opportunities for the development of physical competencies, social skills, fitness and healthy lifestyles.*
 - *Facilities alone are not the only factor for quality PE but are considered essential if we are to allow pupils to reach their full potential.*
- 3.6 To meet Sportscotland's criteria, where school rolls exceed a two-stream model, *of 411 pupils and above*, requires two PE spaces. This second space may not be required by the timetable solely for PE and as such should be capable of use as a dual use space. Accordingly the East Lothian model is of a double classroom size, 120m², a pair of rooms with a sliding partition allowing use as the Movement & Dance Studio when required, and may be used more generally at other times for General Purpose activity. Where the roll boundary crosses to a three-stream school, it is highly likely that such a studio will be exclusively used for PE.
- 3.7 Success in turning our aspirations into reality will only be demonstrated or measured in the years that follow. We should nevertheless strive to improve the facilities available to the authority's pupils, as and when the opportunity arises, in line with best practice and any available current knowledge.
- 3.8 The Table of General Purpose space (contained within Appendix 1) shows the point on the school roll the next phase of additional essential space is required.

4 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The policy will assist in the undertaking of negotiations with housing developers, as the authority continues to seek essential Developer Contributions for the necessary educational infrastructure, as is currently undertaken within the remit of Circular 1/2010 Planning Agreements.
- 4.2 This policy, including the Table – ‘*Design Requirements for General Purpose spaces*’ as well as the narrative in an abridged form, will be incorporated in the review of the authority’s School Estate Management Plan 2010, which will be returned to the Scottish Government during May 2010.

5 EQUALITIES IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- 5.1 This report is not applicable to the well being of equalities groups and an Equalities Impact Assessment is not required.

6 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 Financial - There are no immediate resource implications arising from this report. The policy itself reinforces the historic position of including both General Purpose space and the inclusion of a Movement & Dance studio within the East Lothian school building estate thereby allowing the authority to gain developer contributions wherever the roll reaches the trigger point shown in the Table. It also enables the authority to incorporate the same principles in the existing estate where the roll declines, again within the thresholds of the Table, to produce improved opportunity for the pupils.
- 6.2 Personnel - None
- 6.3 Other - None

7 BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 7.1 The booklet ‘Primary Schools Sports Facilities’ – Sportscotland 2004.
- 7.2 The ‘School Estate Management Plans’ – Building Our Future: Scotland’s School Estate, Scottish Executive 2003.
- 7.3 ‘Building Better Schools: Investing in Scotland’s Future’ Scottish Government 2009.

7.4 Inverclyde Council: Department of Education Services, Calculation of Capacity: Primary

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**East Lothian
Council**

Department of Education & Children's Services

POLICY & GUIDELINES

**Provision of General Purpose space in Primary
Schools**

February 2010

Provision of General Purpose space in Primary Schools

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'Design Requirements for General Purpose spaces in Primary Schools'

Acknowledgement is given to Inverclyde Council and **Sportscotland** whose guidance has informed this document.

1. Introduction

The Scottish Government has since the turn of the new millennium produced a whole series of specific guidance specifically targeted at improving the teaching environment and backed this vision of improvement with hugely significant investment plans under the PPP/PFI banner.

Alongside this has been the realisation that a snapshot of the actual current state of the school building fabric, if undertaken, would provide an accurate benchmark from which improvement of the conditions for teaching and learning could be subsequently measured.

Particular references, which are milestones along this journey of collecting data and providing a view for improvement commenced with School Estate Management Plans (SEMP) from the [Scottish Executive 2003] which set out the vision and objectives for a school estate that supports better public services.

East Lothian Council embraced this process and produced our own School Estate Management Plan over four editions, since 2003.

The authority are now asked to contribute the latest edition of this East Lothian Council document with renewed and more detailed guidance in the publication entitled - Building Better Schools: Investing in Scotland's Future [The Scottish Government 2009].

An essential part of this process will be to enshrine into the SEMP our own policy standards for those areas of school's essential physical capacity that are currently not covered by statute but which are part of the educational ethos for many of the country's authorities. Here in East Lothian we have a particularly long standing history, embedded in the authority's education culture, of providing - general purpose (or General Purpose) space - for out of classroom activity in all our schools.

2. Background

As stated earlier, East Lothian Council has a long tradition of incorporating General Purpose space into its schools, when the opportunity has arose, and as far back as the early 1990's in various forms, of larger and small spaces, for a variety of out of classroom activity- circling groups, investigating the tactile nature of materials, sing song, or quiet sessions, being examples, all without the restraint of the table and chair physicality of the regular classroom.

From 1990 onwards the authority has provided dedicated General Purpose space on the basis of a more widely used set of guidelines, based upon documentation produced by the Inverclyde Council in a tabular form relating to the school roll.

The standards for a second Physical Education space are the recommendation of the guidance provided in the "Primary School Sports Facilities" booklet from sportscotland

2004 and this itself is now included as an integral part of our General Purpose space design table, arising as the roll moves to a two stream school.

This publication provides a clear distinction of scale, to incorporate this larger General Purpose space when there is a sufficiently large roll, to maximise this space for physical activity whilst allowing any downtime to be utilised for out of class activity.

The **sportscotland** recommended models are:

A **one-stream** school - a two-court hall (whilst smaller, rural schools may be acceptable with a smaller facility) for PE, as well as for movement and dance.

A **two-stream school** would have both the two court hall together with a movement & dance studio.

Whilst a **three-stream** would have, dependent on size, either a two court or a three court hall, as well as a movement & dance studio.

It is an important aspect of these criteria that the movement and dance studio itself offers maximum flexibility in use, particularly when it is being used for alternative purposes. Therefore it is to be designed, for primary schools, on the basis of two adjoining class sized spaces offering an appropriate size of 120m² whilst having the ability, by use of a sliding screen or partition, to achieve two smaller units (of class size).

The inclusion of General Purpose space is consistent with, and based on an historical basis, as well as by our current practice as shown by the recent crop of new schools both completed and under design for completion in the next three years. (These establishments include Sanderson's Wynd, Windygoul and Wallyford primary schools.)

3. Assessment

To gain a robust and consistent approach to how and when General Purpose space is provided in any school, a Table involving the cross matching of pupil roll and size of school with the resulting number of classrooms against an increasing requirement for further additional General Purpose space to conduct out of classroom activity is utilised.

This Table is now also set against the Scottish Government's overarching strategic objectives of a 'high quality school estate'. This can be iterated by –

- supporting the quality and range of life long learning opportunities on offer for people of all ages;
- through accessible sport and recreation facilities;
- through offering a welcoming, accessible and inclusive place of opportunity, which will nurture talent and potential.

Such space is easily defined in new building or during significant remodelling of the existing building fabric.

East Lothian has shown, and will continue to show, significant increase in new house building [4,500 units in the current Lothian's Structure Plan] leading to an ever growing requirement for increased pupil rolls. In this scenario, such space will form an important integral part in the design brief of any school involved in roll expansion.

Where in other areas of East Lothian we may see a fall in school roll, this may also provide an opportunity to ensure these standards run throughout the school estate. As such this concept of General Purpose space will also be written into the revised Education Departments - School Estate Management Plan 2010, for completion by the end of May 2010.

Data collected against two of the three key criteria of building - asset management planning – namely, Suitability and Sufficiency, will provide the opportunity and assist in identifying where there are any anomalies that exist in the current estate, thus providing the foundation for future capital expenditure plans for improvement and modernisation in line with specific targets.

4. Key Principles

- That all primary schools must have appropriate levels of General Purpose space to complement and facilitate differing forms of learning, whilst offering a freedom of expression which differs from the more rigid and regimented classroom activity.
- The criteria for the requirement for General Purpose space is clearly defined in the attached Table - 'The design of General Purpose space in Primary Schools' which is banded according to the size of the school pupil roll and number of classrooms.
- Any school requiring three or more General Purpose spaces, the third should be – a 120m² Movement & Dance studio, capable of division into two units. This also clearly ties into the **Sportscotland** advice at the two-stream roll trigger point.
- That such space must be a component of all and any expansion criteria for a school, which has to deliver education to increasing pupil rolls.
- This then naturally infers that the authority expects any design for such expansion to include the requisite General Purpose space, in accordance with the Table, and where such roll increase results directly from the child product of any new housing development, such cost will be incorporated into the developers financial contribution to the procurement of that expansion through a s.75 planning agreement.
- Where anomalies exist in the existing school estate, as reflected in any revision of the data collected for the School Estate Management Plan review, that whenever the roll in such school's decline, the opportunity to address any identified shortfall would be considered against the Table, at the first opportunity.

In this way all the estate's schools will have an adequate provision of General Purpose space for the delivery of education that embraces the ethos of 'Curriculum for Excellence' and in facilities over and above those used for the daily activity of the standard classroom, in line with good practice as identified not least by **sportscotland**.

5. Table:

The Table indicating the design requirement of **General Purpose** space in line with the banding of pupil roll and classroom space in Primary schools is shown overleaf.

This will be utilised to arrive at the quantum of General Purpose space required in East Lothian Council's primary schools.

The Table is entitled:

'Design Requirements for General Purpose spaces in Primary Schools'

Table of - Design Requirements for General Purpose spaces in Primary Schools

Total Number of Educational Spaces	Class bases	Rooms to be used for General Purpose etc. (that is, for non class based activities)	Capacity	Capacity (Taking Account of Max 30 in P1-P3)	General Purpose room Trigger points
2	2	0	50	50	
3	3	0	75	75	
4	3	1	75	75	1
5	4	1	100	100	
6	5	1	125	125	
7	6	1	150	150	
8	7	1	231	222	
9	7	2	231	222	2
10	8	2	264	255	
11	9	2	297	285	
12	10	2	330	318	
13	11	2	363	348	
14	12	2	396	381	
15	13	2	429	411	
16	13	3	429	411	3
17	14	3	462	444	
18	15	3	495	477	
19	16	3	528	507	
20	17	3	561	540	
21	18	3	594	570	
22	18	4	594	570	4
23	19	4	627	603	
24	20	4	660	633	
25	21	4	693	666	
26	21	5	693	666	5
27	22	5	726	699	
28	23	5	759	729	
29	24	5	792	762	
30	24	6	792	762	6
31	25	6	825	792	
32	26	6	858	825	
33	27	6	891	855	
34	28	6	924	888	
35	28	7	924	888	7
36	29	7	957	921	

All schools with capacity above 100 should have 1 separate General Purpose space.

Any School requiring three or more General Purpose spaces, the third should be: a 120m2 Movement & Dance Studio, capable of division into two units.