

SCHOOL MODERNISATION

GUIDANCE FOR PRIMARY SCHOOLS

FIT FOR PURPOSE



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1 BACKGROUND

1.1 Government Guidance 2006

In October 2006 the Welsh Assembly Government issued a publication *The Learning Country: Vision in to Action* in which it requested that Local Authorities develop plans for capital investment in schools to take into account projected pupil numbers and the need to invest in school buildings. The planning aim is to deliver high quality education in environments that provide essential standards of accommodation and facilities which are appropriate for teaching and learning, now and into the future, and which can also provide appropriate facilities for community use.

Achieving this level of provision was described as being “Fit for Purpose”.

1.2 School Modernisation: The Flintshire Context

In Flintshire there are a number of important factors that are central to the aim of modernising and organising schools. It is vital that our focus on Educational Standards is matched by provision of learning environments that are indeed ‘Fit for Purpose’. It is important that we encourage and allow creative use of space to respond to the changing curriculum and pedagogy in our schools. It is also important that developments include and involve the wider community in the life and work of schools.

We must ensure that there are sufficient places for every child, and that the condition and quality of facilities and accommodation meets essential standards and where possible, introduces new modern learning spaces for learners and staff in schools.

Action should be taken to manage the supply of school places. The maintenance of unused school places must not prevent the investment in securing improvement of learning environments, including meeting the Health, Safety, Safeguarding, and well being needs of the young people and staff in our care.

“Fit for Purpose” standards should help to inform the specifications for new schools and refurbishment work in Flintshire. Deployment of a range of Capital resources from the Welsh Assembly Government, the County Council, individual schools, communities and other bodies will be necessary to deliver a programme of improvements over the next decade against the standards.

This Guidance has been developed by Flintshire County Council, in consultation with schools and the Welsh Assembly Government, to help guide our capital investment decision making so that we do bring about the best improvements to school accommodation and facilities that we can.

1.3 Fit for Purpose: Towards a Definition

Flintshire has undertaken to produce a detailed Guidance Document, by Flintshire, for Flintshire, developed in partnership with schools, Council Officers and Members, and the Welsh Assembly, to set out a workable description of essential standards to be met and criteria to be used in applying the concept of schools ‘Fit for Purpose’ in practice.

1.4 Purpose of this Guidance

This guidance document represents Flintshire's approach to setting out essential standards for the development and improvement of accommodation and facilities in schools that need to be met through capital investment programmes and school improvement action plans in schools in Flintshire. In simple terms this guidance provides a 'minimum or essential standards checklist' to be used in conjunction with the measurement of the condition, suitability and sufficiency of accommodation and facilities of schools, and against which priorities for capital investment and asset management can be assessed.

1.5 Scope and Applicability of this Guidance

This document is designed to provide guidance for future capital investment into Flintshire Primary sector schools. The scope of the guidance is for the existing 75 primary sector schools comprising:

- 1 Nursery School
- 7 Infant Schools
- 5 Junior Schools
- 42 All Through Primary Schools
- 5 Welsh Medium Schools
- 5 Roman Catholic VA Schools
- 6 Church in Wales Aided Schools
- 3 Voluntary Controlled Schools
- 1 Foundation School

1.6 Capacity Levels

The capacity of a school is the number of pupils it can accommodate. LEAs are responsible for assessing the capacities and admission numbers of all the schools they maintain, including voluntary aided and foundation schools and are required to inform the Welsh Assembly Government of newly calculated capacities and admission numbers of schools in their area and of any future changes to them.

Flintshire County Council currently has primary school pupil capacities which vary between 40 and 600 pupil places. This Fit for Purpose Guidance has been designed to apply to the full range of school sizes currently in operation. However, it is possible for Local Authorities to consider introducing minimum and maximum capacity sizes for their Primary Schools to help regulate the distribution of school places and the level of surplus places, which is a requirement of the Welsh Assembly Government, as part of the School Place Planning in Flintshire.

Flintshire Proposal for Consultation: Future Minimum and Maximum Primary School Capacity Levels

It is recommended that future consultation is undertaken with all appropriate stakeholders, on the advantages and benefits of the use of Minimum and Maximum School Capacity Levels to assist School Place Planning in Flintshire.

1.7 Staff Numbers (Teaching and learning support)

The Welsh Assembly Government specifies the following ratios in relation to minimum levels of staffing for the provision of care and teaching:

Age Range	Staff Ratio
3-5 year olds	1:8
5-7 year olds	1:15
7+	1:24

In addition, all schools must have a Headteacher.

Proportionate to the size of the school, staffing in primary schools also involves the use of the following roles:

- a. Secretary
- b. Peripatetic staff
- c. Non- teaching staff including:
 - Cleaning
 - Caretaking
 - Administration
 - Mid day supervisors
 - Catering

1.8 Use of Mobile Classrooms

Mobile classrooms will be removed from school premises as a priority where these are being utilised for long-term shortage of capacity.

Mobile units will only be utilised to provide short-term capacity, or in instances where classrooms are unavailable (periods of refurbishment etc).

1.9 Safeguarding Children / Child Protection

Schools should have appropriate signage, security warnings, trespass warnings and direction to main entrance. Car park control signage is required as part of a controlled entrance to the school and separate vehicle and pedestrian entrances to enjoy segregated safe access for pupils and community users. Provision for cycles will vary from site to site but is encouraged and provision should be made where required.

1.10 Security

Security lighting and CCTV are strongly recommended, however, whether this element of investment is deemed to be essential will vary from school to school. However, in future design briefs attention should be paid to designing out poor visibility and blind spots around schools which make safeguarding children more difficult.

1.11 DDA Compliance

Historically, educational buildings within the County Council have undergone alterations to comply with the Disabilities Discrimination Act (DDA) 1995 on a need by need basis for those pupils with a disability transferring between schools.

It is the aim of the Council to ensure that all schools within Flintshire are DDA compliant as a basic necessity by 2016, through a rolling programme of capital investment.

1.12 Accommodation for Religious Diversity

Schools should have appropriate arrangements, hall or other suitable space to accommodate opportunities for worship across a range of religions.

1.13 Sustainability

Flintshire along with all other Welsh Authorities has signed the Welsh Declaration on Climate change and committed to reducing its emissions by a minimum of 3% per annum. This will be superseded by a commitment by Flintshire County Council to achieve a 60% reduction in carbon emissions over the next 12 years, to its entire portfolio of buildings.

It is essential that funding allocated to Flintshire schools is used effectively and appropriately by designing and installing long term sustainable energy systems. An additional benefit of this approach will be to make our schools more comfortable and improve the educational environment for our children by making them fit for purpose.

In future, greater emphasis should therefore be placed on energy use, and a more holistic approach taken when refurbishing our schools, for example, to insulate walls and roofs, replace windows before installing new boilers, and operate a building management system so that boilers can be accurately sized to match the heating requirements of the school.

Where lighting is in need of modernization, installation of modern high frequency fittings with occupancy/daylight controls should be considered.

Installation of renewable energy systems should be considered where feasible. Usage of water run off systems to recycle water may also be considered.

1.14 Community Use

Modernised schools of the future will be required to further develop and enhance their role within the community. As well as providing increased access for the community for sports and other educational facilities and resources, the school will wish to consider a range of other services and activities to improve the learning and well being of the pupils, their families and for the wider community.

The accommodation needs of each school to facilitate community provision will vary. However, consideration should be given to location and access for efficient management and maintaining site security e.g. zoning of heating and zoned access and control of facilities.

Storage of community resources will also need to be considered. Where schools are used as polling stations, separate consideration will need to be given to this in the design brief.

2 The School Building

2.1 Learning Spaces/Classrooms

As the fundamental aim of education is to produce learners who are increasingly responsible for their own learning and able to make full use of new technologies we refer in this document to learning spaces as opposed to teaching areas.

In order to deliver the changing Foundation Phase and Key Stage 2 curriculums successfully, the spaces for learning will in future need to facilitate/accommodate:

- Flexible learning in small and large group spaces for independent and collaborative learning, indoors and outdoors.
- Integrated IT systems.
- The organisation of a wide range of resources that can be accessed independently by children.
- Sufficient storage for teacher resources and pupil work, ideally with a 'walk-in', lockable store cupboard.
- Foundation Phase classrooms must have access to a secure outdoor space that encompasses a mixture of soft and hard play areas, shade and shelter, access to water and provision for gardening.
- Classroom/learning spaces should have two sinks, at an appropriate height for the age range of the pupils, to separate practical craft work and food preparation.

To deliver the Welsh Assembly Government priority of Community Focused Schools, the spaces for learning will also need to facilitate/accommodate:

- Adult learning and family support programmes.
- Activities/services to meet identified community needs, indoors and outdoors.

2.2 Specialist Practical Spaces/Areas

These are enclosed, lockable rooms, centrally positioned for whole school use, fitted with specialist equipment for food technology and shared by all classes.

This room should be suitable for at least a group size of 8.

2.3 ICT Bases

2.3.1 Flintshire County Council has no preference for whether provision of a separate dedicated ICT Room is required or whether it is provided at the point of learning (within the classroom). Sufficient capacity and facility is most important to enable appropriate teaching and learning.

Integrated and flexible ICT provision will include access to technology, as appropriate for all learners, including provision for intergenerational and adult learning so the location of ICT equipment and access arrangements will need careful consideration.

2.3.2 Minimum requirements:

- a. Schools will be “wireless”
- b. One projector point per teaching area and supporting infrastructure.
- c. Each classroom and hall to have a pc driven display device.
- d. Sufficient power provision to the school and all power supply to IT equipment to be surge protected.

2.3.3 The minimum bandwidth standard should be in compliance with Welsh Assembly Government recommendation (currently 2 meg).

In addition, WAG recommend that there is provision of pupil access to computers that meets the following standard or ratio:

- **8 pupils to 1 PC for Primary Schools**
- **2 pupils to 1 PC in Special Education Schools**

2.3.4 Schools will have a suitable capacity server located in a secure, but easily accessible and appropriate and ventilated or air conditioned space, with file restrictions in line with Council criteria.

2.3.5 Performance assessment of IT equipment should be carried out on a 2 year cycle.

2.4 Halls and Studios

2.4.1 Schools should have at least one school hall on site to provide for whole school collective worship, physical education, dance, drama, music, school performances and community gatherings.

2.4.2 Halls and studios are unfurnished spaces that have particular height, finish, lighting, acoustic criteria and blackout facilities where necessary. The indoor space should have a floor which is easily maintained and suitable for bare foot work and most importantly must not be slippery. The floor should be marked with inlaid line markings to define the working area to prevent collision with walls etc together with markings for games activities. The hall should be well lit, and appropriately heated and ventilated.

- 2.4.3 In any primary school the total area for halls and studios should include at least one hall or studio for every 200 pupil places and will be fitted with emergency lighting, smoke detectors, water sprinklers, drama lighting, TV point, IT network point and a lesson change over bell system.
- 2.4.4 Ideally the area should be lit as much as possible from natural daylight, though where illumination is necessary this should be fluorescent lighting maintained at a luminance of 350 lux with a maximum glare index of 19.
- 2.4.5 120m² is the minimum size for reception and Key Stage 1 (KS1) and 140m² for KS2 sufficient for PE and dance (ideally with a sprung floor and ample wall space to accommodate fixed climbing frames and apparatus for both Foundation Phase and KS2. Ideally the walls should be free of protuberances (e.g. radiators,).
- 2.4.6 The height of the hall or studio should not be below 5.2m to accommodate games activities.
- However, where the height of the hall or studio falls below the desired 5.2m no alteration to the fabric of the building will be made. Ideally the hall should allow for the possibility of climbing ropes suspended from a track way attached to ceiling trusses.
- 2.4.7 Where the hall is used for dining it will require an adjacent servery and kitchen and separate provision should be made for the storage e.g. tables, chairs. Ideally this area should be separate from that required for the storage of PE and gymnastic equipment.

3 Internal Non-Teaching Spaces

Internal non teaching spaces include rooms such as:

3.1 Storage

- 3.1.1 Storage areas are broken down in to teaching storage and non-teaching storage as follows:
- 3.1.2 Teaching Storage
- a. Pupil personal belongings

The area of storage must include coat and bag storage for all pupils Coat and bag racks to be located in separate cloakrooms or in corridors though ideally in circulation routes that are not dead ends as specified in BB99 Part C.

- b. Full height lockable storage

This specifically relates to storage above 2.1m high, whether in the form of furniture units or walk in stores and will count as non teaching area. There should be at least 1m² for every classroom easily accessible by staff (but not pupils), for resources such as valuables or hazardous items.

3.1.3 Specialist walk in stores

For shared curriculum resources at least two 6m² store rooms in any school ideally accessed from the corridor or shared teaching area.

3.1.4 Indoor/outdoor PE storage

Opening on to the long side of the main hall and ideally also accessible from outdoors. The storage area should be a minimum of 10% of the area of the hall and include shelving for the storage of gymnastic equipment and other games resources. The entrance to the storage area should be wide enough to enable safe movement of equipment.

3.1.5 Non- teaching storage

Other non-teaching storage includes:

- a. Secure storage – for valuable items such as personal records located adjacent to or within close proximity of the school office.
- b. Storage for mobility equipment and aids for disabled pupils
- c. Central storage of book stock such as paper and pens.
- d. Lockable storage for maintenance equipment and hazardous substances for cleaners and caretakers.
- e. Chair and table store – when the hall is used for dining this may be positioned between the kitchen and hall and can double up with the servery.
- f. **Other non teaching storage to include storage for community use e.g. playgroups, before/after schools clubs to include lockers and long term equipment storage.**

3.2 Staff and administration

3.2.1 The staff and administration area sits mostly within the non teaching area. In Flintshire, schools should have an office for the Headteacher (of at least 10 m²) and a separate office for school administration.

3.2.2 Medical Inspection room – (M.I.) this room may also be used by visiting therapist or other support for pupils with SEN and disabilities.

3.2.3 Work and social space for teaching staff – usually this takes the form of a central staff room and will include a designated ICT area and free tables for laptop and general work.

3.2.4 Schools should also have a separated designated PPA workroom with ICT access which can accommodate a minimum of two people.

3.2.5 Storage units for teachers' personal possessions should also be included within the staffroom. A proportion of these storage units should be set aside for use by visiting staff.

3.3 Staff and administration area – includes offices, main office, secure reception area and reprographic facilities.

3.3.1 Offices – to be utilised by other senior teaching staff such as deputy or assistant heads who may need privacy for interviews or pastoral support.

3.3.2 A main office to be utilised by administrative staff with storage space for confidential records and linked to reception.

3.3.3 A secure reception area – this should provide access to the rest of the school and be adjacent to the recognised main entrance.

3.3.4 Reprographic area – this will be located in a separate room from the main office (but not in a circulation area) and may include ICT print services. The room should be adequately ventilated.

3.3.5 A dedicated, multi-functional meeting room, within the zoned entrance area, so that it can be used by visitors without them entering the main school. This room will accommodate:

- a. Parental meetings
- b. Community learning programmes
- c. Multi-agency meetings
- d. Governors Meetings
- e. INSET meetings
- f. Interview

3.3.6 Caretaker's office – where permissible office facilities will be included within the storage area but will not be provided independently.

3.4 Staff Room

3.4.1 There is no minimum requirement for the provision of a staff room. The Authority however recognises the benefits that grouped areas provided and therefore where not currently provided will seek to locate space for the provision of a suitably sized social and dining area for staff. This will include a kitchen area with: -

- a. Sink
- b. Fridge
- c. Dishwasher
- d. Zip boiler
- e. Storage
- f. Staff room to be sited close to the main entrance.

- 3.4.2 The size of a school staffroom will be determined by the overall capacity of the school.

Additionally, the pupil age range of the school should be taken into consideration and the related staffing requirements e.g. Foundation Phase staffing ratios.

3.5 Learning Resource Areas

- 3.5.1 Learning resource areas are generally spaces used for informal learning and shared by the whole school. The total area for this category of space should include

- at least one Library ($10\text{m}^2 + 0.05\text{m}^2$ for every pupil place)
- at least one Group Room ($2\text{m}^2 + 1.1\text{m}^2$ for every pupil place)¹

¹ These rooms are usually SEN resource areas and may accommodate between 6 and 15 pupils.

- 3.5.2 Where a school currently has no provision of a small group room, but where a classroom below the WAG minimum of 15 pupils is present, the room will be re-designated as a small group room.

3.6 Library

- 3.6.1 Schools within the Authority must have at least one designated library. In schools where the library function has been dispersed into several areas within the school, attempts will be made to provide a central designated library to assist with optimisation of space.

- 3.6.2 The library should be of sufficient size to accommodate a class of 30 pupils seated on the floor (carpeted) and also include:-

- Appropriate book storage units
- Soft informal seating
- Some work tables/chairs (for a group of 8 pupils)
- ICT area including provision for minimum of 2 computers – one dedicated to support library management system, one for pupil use. (Wireless facilities would also support the use of additional laptops).
- Ceiling mounted projector & whiteboard

3.7.2 Staff Toilets

- a. These should be a separate facility for the first 15 full-time equivalent members of staff and another one for every further 15 (not including catering staff). In schools with less than 120 pupils with a majority of female teachers an option to make one of the toilets unisex.

- b. Accessible Toilets

These are intended for disabled pupils, staff or visitors. Provision counts towards the total staff provision, though will not count towards pupil provision.

3.7.3 Changing Rooms

Where changing rooms are not currently provided within schools due to a shortage of space this will not be seen to be detrimental to educational provision.

However, whilst this is not a statutory requirement at this moment in time consideration should be given to the provision of separate changing rooms for boys and girls at a size ratio of 0.5m² per pupil. The changing rooms should include bench seating and facilities to hang items of clothing.

3.8 Kitchen Facilities

3.8.1 Not all schools prepare hot food, though all schools require a kitchen area. The kitchen area must include facilities for cold storage, preparing food and drink and washing up.

3.8.2 The size of the kitchen facilities is based upon the number of pupil places.

3.8.3 For kitchens preparing only cold food and drink the area is calculated as 0.1m² per pupil. Therefore a school with 210 pupil places should have a combined kitchen area of 21m²

Where the school does prepare hot food the kitchen area should also include;

- Sufficient area and facilities for safe preparation & cooking of food
- Toilets and Personal care for catering staff including a changing area
- Cook's Office
- Storage area suitable for the storage of cleaning materials in compliance with Chemicals Or Substances Hazardous to Health (COSHH) regulations
- Separate secure storage for dry goods
- Provision for both refrigerated and frozen goods
- Sufficient circulation space for acceptance of goods and removal of waste
- Provision of a servery

3.8.4 For kitchens preparing hot food and drink the area is calculated as 15m² + 0.15m² per pupil. Therefore a school with 210 pupil places should have a combined kitchen area of 46.5m²

3.9 Circulation

3.9.1 Circulation areas include corridors and reception areas, though may also be within the teaching space where the school is 'open plan' in design.

3.9.2 Building Bulletin 99 stipulates that a corridor leading to two or more teaching spaces should have a width of at least 1.8m and shorter corridors 1.2m.

3.9.3 Due to the practicality of increasing corridor widths in schools of particular designs it would be cost prohibitive to increase widths in line with new build standards. In instances where the circulation of pupils has been found

during suitability assessment to be compromised this needs to be managed by the schools (informal one-way, staggered times).

4 External Areas

4.1 Site Security

- 4.1.1 All schools will be fully secure to ensure safety to pupils and staff from external influences. This may require a 1.4 metre palisade fence line around the curtilage of the property. All properties will have lockable gated entry point with separate vehicle and pedestrian entrances.
- 4.1.2 Where possible vehicle and pedestrian segregation will be used up to the main or recognised front entrance.

4.2 Entrance Paths and Roads

- 4.2.1 All school sites will have clearly defined road markings and speed restrictions.

4.3 Car Parking and Drop Off

- 4.3.1 The number of car parking spaces required will vary in line with the size and use of the school. The minimum requirement is to ensure compliance with Local Planning Guidance Note No 11 – Parking Standards.

Land Use Type	Standard
D1 Non Residential Institutions	
Education – Pre school	1 car space per 25m ² gross floor area + 1 car space per staff
Education – Primary*	1.5 car spaces per classroom
Community Uses	
Education - Primary	4 per classroom

* For Primary Schools provision must also be made within the curtilage of the development for the safe setting down and picking up of children, preferably by use of circulatory systems.

4.4 Playing Fields

- 4.4.1 Section 77(7) of the Schools Standards and Framework Act 1998, which is designed to protect school playing fields, defines 'playing fields' as any land in the open air which is provided for the purposes of physical education or recreation, other than any other prescribed description of land.

Schools will have the following allocated areas sized in accordance with their designed capacity. This will be in accordance with Building Bulletin 99 (BB99) part D for Primary schools:

- Sports pitches
- Games Courts (hard surfaced)
- Soft informal and social area
- Hard informal and social area
- Habitat areas

For a sports pitch or games court to qualify towards the minimum requirement it should meet the following criteria (BB85 School Grounds a Guide to Good Practice Section E)

- Suitable for the playing of team games
- Laid out for that purpose
- Capable of sustaining team sports for at least 7 hours a week during term time

The facilities should also cater for a straight running track of 60-80 metres in length with a width of 6 to 8 lanes together with the provision of a long jump pit (confirm with Alan and check with Health and Safety).

Schools will have a flexible pitch appropriately marked with facility to insert goal posts of differing sizes to suit a variety of team sports including football, rugby, and hockey.

In instances where the playing fields are found to be too small in area, but where there is an over provision of car parking against Local Planning Guidance No.11 the allocation of this area will be reduced in the first instance to meet the shortfall in sufficiency of the external playing fields.

Both grassed and hard play areas should have sufficient margin between the designated play area for a 'run-off' area. The hard play areas should be marked for both traditional games as well as a variety of interesting playground markings for recreational play by children in break times.

Blank hard surfaces provide little challenge or interest to young children. It would therefore be appropriate to consider the introduction of apparatus of an adventure type such as concrete drain pipes, stepping stones, obstacle courses and other cognitive play areas not designated for PE activities. Such

provision encourages creative play and enhances the environment which will be a source of great interest and benefit to young children

Consideration should also be given to the provision of providing walls and / or rebound surfaces where children can be engaged in developing ball handling skills and hand-eye co-ordination.

4.4.2 Infant / Junior Schools

There is no requirement for the provision of a playing field for infant schools although there is a requirement for external hard play areas and the size is based upon the Numbers on Roll (NOR).

Junior schools however do require the provision of a playing field and external hard play areas and the size is based upon Numbers on Roll (NOR).

Flintshire County Council, in compliance with the development of Foundation Phase, will provide pupils aged 3 to 7 with access to an outdoor learning environment which may also be used for recreational and physical education purposes.