

# Education Procedure Manual 3/16

## THE CAPACITY OF SECONDARY SCHOOLS

**For  
Teachers and Employees on Scottish Negotiating Committee  
for Teachers (SNCT) Conditions of Service**

**Effective from: December 2023**

Education, People & Business



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### Version Control History

Version No.	Effective Date	Details of change from previous version	Date Approved	New version no.
N/A	Oct 1998	Updated to new template Updated terminology	08/12/2023	1.0

### GDPR Statement

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### Policy Review Statement

This policy will be reviewed in line with:

- Legislative Change
- Changes to SNCT National Conditions of Service
- Other external factors
- Feedback on the effectiveness of the policy
- Requests for review by Elected Members, Trade Unions and/or Management.

### 1.0 Purpose

- 1.1 This manual describes how the capacity of secondary schools should be calculated.

### 2.0 Scope

- 2.1 The manual is designed to be readily applicable to all secondary schools.

### 3.0 References & Related Documentation

- 3.1 The following documents should be referenced when considering this procedure:

- [SNCT Handbook](#)
- [Equalities Act 2010](#)
- Procedure Manual 3/14 - Number of Pupils in Rooms

### 4.0 Introduction

- 4.1 Detailed information on the technical aspects of the calculation of capacity and the formulae which are used can be obtained from the education office.

- 4.2 The capacity of each secondary school requires to be defined for various purposes as follows:

4.2.1 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.

4.2.2 Curricular And Organisational Needs

To establish the number of pupils 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.

4.2.3 Placing Requests

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

4.2.4 The Application Of The 80% Rule

In terms of the Education (Publication and Consultation etc) (Scotland) Regulations 1981 as amended, the authority has to refer to the Secretary of State any proposal to "discontinue any school, or any stage of school education in any school or to change the site of any school, or to vary the delineated area of any school, where the number of pupils in attendance at that school is greater than 80 per cent of the school's capacity". In considering such proposals, the Secretary of State must have regard to the assessment of capacity on which the education authority has based their proposals.

- 4.3 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.

- 4.4 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.
- 4.5 The information obtained through the application of this manual should allow informed discussion to take place among all those with an involvement or interest in educational provision.
- 4.6 Head teachers will be asked to provide to the education office, the information contained in the appendix to this manual on an annual basis.

### 5.0 Procedure

- 5.1 The starting points for calculating the capacity of a secondary school are the identification of rooms to be included in the calculation and the number of pupils who can be accommodated in these rooms. As described in Procedure Manual No 3/14 (Number of Pupils in Rooms), the number of pupils who can be accommodated in a room depends both on the size of the room and the use to which it is put.
- 5.2 The types of rooms to be included in the calculation and the areas per pupil are as listed below:

Secondary Accommodation	Area per pupil (m <sup>2</sup> )
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

- 5.3 The following areas should not normally be included in the calculation
- (a) Dining halls  
Assembly halls  
School lecture theatre  
Library/resource area  
Social areas  
Guidance suites/offices
  - (b) Educational support areas created in response to changes in the curriculum which call for areas outwith the classroom in which practical activities can be carried out. With the agreement of the education office, some existing rooms which have become surplus to class teaching purposes may be designated educational support areas. The number of such areas should be based on a ratio of one support area for every 10 non-practical classrooms up to a maximum of 4.
  - (c) Areas already included in approved minor works or adaptation programmes for conversion of teaching areas for other purposes, such as activity or resource areas, social areas, adult areas, staff bases, storage etc.
  - (d) Teaching areas which it has been agreed with the education office could without conversion be designated for the purposes described in (c) above.
  - (e) Areas formally approved through the education office for uses such as crèche facilities or for accommodation for external agency projects including urban aid funded activities. The allocation of areas for such purposes may be reviewed at any time by the department of education.
  - (f) All ancillary accommodation such as administrative offices, medical rooms, technician bases and staff rooms and bases.
- 5.4 In formulating a proposal to the education office which involves deciding whether to designate a room for teaching or non-teaching purposes, the first consideration must be current and foreseeable teaching needs. Normally this will mean that rooms which can take maximum class sizes for teaching purposes should be included in the capacity calculation.
- 5.5 The maximum capacity of each room is attained by dividing the area of the room by the recommended area per pupil. The capacity of each room is, however, also affected by the maximum class size in particular areas of the curriculum. This is known as the functional capacity. Functional capacities are expressed as 30 places or 20 places. Detailed guidance is given in the notes accompanying the schedule of accommodation.
- 5.6 The functional capacity of the school is the sum of the functional capacities of its rooms. Timetabling and other constraints on the use of accommodation mean that not all of the places can be used all of the time. The functional capacity is, therefore, reduced to take account of these constraints by the use of the following formula which is derived from previous national secondary staffing formulae:

Usable places = (0.76 x Total places) - 150

An example of the use of the formula is given in [Appendix 1](#).

- 5.7 The number of usable places is the planning capacity of the school and will be used for broad strategic issues related to school provision and for the application of 80% regulation described in section [4.2](#).
- 5.8 While the planning capacity of a school gives an indication of the number of pupils the school can accommodate, it does not determine the number of pupils for whom an appropriate curriculum can be provided at each year stage.

To ensure that an appropriate curriculum can be provided at all stages, it is necessary to determine the maximum intake level at S1 in any particular session. This will be the figure up to which placing requests will be granted for that session.

The figure cannot be exceeded since the school would then no longer be able to offer a full curriculum at S1 or later stages.

Three elements are involved in the calculation of maximum intake level:

- (i) a projection factor based on transfer rates from one stage to another.
- (ii) the planning capacity of the school, and
- (iii) the number of 20 pupil class groups required.

The transfer rate at each stage from S1 to S4 is taken as 100%. After S4 the rate will normally be less than 100%. The projection factor for a school with 100% transfer at each of the 4 stages from S1 to S4 and a 98% transfer rate from S4 to S5/S6 will have a projection factor of 4.98.

If the planning capacity of this school is 882 the initial target intake level is  $882/4.98$  which is 177. This would require 9 class groups of up to 20. The maximum intake level is therefore 180 pupils for which staffing and accommodation is available within the same level as that which would have to be provided for 177 pupils.

A detailed example is shown [Appendix 1](#).

Form PM 3/16/F01 provides a template for schools to calculate their Capacity.

### Appendix 1: Sample Secondary School Capacity Calculation

1	Session	2022/23						
2	Estimated Roll	S1	S2	S3	S4	S5	S6	TOTAL
		170	175	173	170	127	55	870
3	Total Number of Places (From agreed Schedule of Accommodation)	1358						
4	Planning Capacity (Usable places)	$= (0.76 \times \text{Total Places}) - 150$ $= (0.76 \times 1358) - 150$						
		882						
5	Projection Factor							
	(a) S4 to S5 transfer rate % =	70						
	(b) S4 to S6 transfer rate % =	28						
	(c) Add (a) and (b) =	98						
	(d) Divide (c) by 100 =	0.98						
	(e) Add 4.00 to (d) =	4.98						
6	Maximum Intake Level							
	(a) Divide Planning Capacity by Projection Factor: 882 Divided by 4.98 =	177						
	(b) Number of 20 pupils class groups required = 177 divided by 20, rounded up	9						
	(c ) Maximum intake level = $9 \times 20 =$	180						

The school can cope comfortably with its projected S1 intake of 170.