

March 2023
Management Circular 61

To: Heads of all mainstream secondary schools

S1 Capping and subsequent intakes in Secondary Schools

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The authority is under a statutory duty to manage its education estate effectively at both strategic and operational levels to ensure that there is adequate capacity to meet demands for places in the city's secondary schools. "Capacity" in secondary schools refers to both (i) the physical space in the school and number of teachers employed there; and (ii) the management of time for each year group within that physical space.
- 1.2 At an operational level, the authority is required to plan for the sufficiency of secondary school places across the city on a rolling annual basis, and to ensure that adequate capacity is maintained in schools across the city. The authority must manage school capacities in order to ensure that an effective timetable can be designed that provides all of its young people with a breadth of opportunities and learning experiences as well as, for older pupils, appropriate availability of subject choice.
- 1.3 Each school must design a timetable which secures that the education provided in the school is directed to the development of the personality, talents and mental and physical abilities of each pupil, to his or her fullest potential.
- 1.4 The number of pupils who are admitted to S1 each year will have consequences for timetabling throughout the school. In order to ensure that it meets its statutory duties to pupils throughout their secondary education, the authority identifies the maximum number of children that each school has capacity to admit each year – the "S1 cap".
- 1.5 Why identify an S1 cap?

Forward Planning

To allow assessment of the capacity and future requirements of the secondary school estate and other changes in school provision, taking account of factors such as population trends and new housing.

Curricular and Organisational Needs

To establish the number of young people 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.

Placing Requests

To establish a clear and consistent basis for determining whether placing requests should be granted or refused and identifying schools which are currently over capacity or may exceed capacity in the future.

Informing Consultations on proposed changes to the Secondary School Estate

To meet legal requirements to provide clear, accurate information in consultations on changes to the secondary school estate (eg school closures or catchment area changes) that the public has confidence in.

Teaching policies and objectives

To take account of priorities and objectives such as:

- ensuring that the authority complies with the maxima set out in teachers' terms and conditions of service;
- taking account of changes to Scottish Government curriculum policy and guidance and the provision of the facilities required to deliver the curriculum.

- 1.6 This management circular describes how the S1 intake of secondary schools is identified. The determination of capacity is delegated to the Executive Director.

2. Secondary Schools - Physical Capacity

- 2.1 In 2004 the Scottish Executive issued guidance to education authorities on aspects of the determination of school capacity. No "blueprint" for determination of capacity was set, in recognition of the differing impact of numerous factors upon individual schools, depending on local circumstances.

- 2.2 Each year, the overall capacity within the secondary school will depend upon the interaction of several factors, including:

- Class size maxima. Current class size maxima are:
 - S1 and S2 – 33 pupils for standard classes;
 - S3 – S6 – 30 pupils for standard classes;
 - S1 – S6 – 20 pupils for practical classes.
- Numbers of children in each year group already attending the school;
- Projected stay on rates for S5 and S6 each year;
- Current and projected timetabling needs of each year group;
- Numbers of specialist teaching areas required (such as science labs or music rooms);
- Employment law and the minimum requirements for the authority's employees;
- Accessibility strategies within the school;
- Subject choices by pupils in S3, 4, 5 and 6;

- Physical size of school. This will include:
 - The size and number of classrooms;
 - The size of dining spaces;
 - The number of toilets;
 - Any circulation requirements;
 - The size and number of any staircases;
 - The size of any playground(s) and social spaces inside the school
 - Any requirements or changes needed for improving access

2.3 In establishments, there will be a number of areas that may not be included as classrooms, such as:

- Assembly halls
- School Lecture theatre
- Library/resource area
- Storage facilities
- Social Area
- Classroom/s converted into a pastoral care area
- Crèche facilities and associated areas
- School offices
- Medical rooms
- Rooms routinely required as meeting rooms, eg for multi-agency meetings
- Various department bases

2.4 When identifying which rooms are to be considered classrooms, consideration has been given to the number of young people who can be accommodated in these rooms. The number of young people who can be accommodated in a room itself depends on a number of factors, including both the size of the room and the use to which it is put.

2.5 Physical capacity will also be affected by the requirement for specialist areas for the teaching of certain subjects, including:

- Science labs;
- Sports facilities;
- Craft workshops;
- Teaching kitchens;
- ICT rooms;
- Music rooms and studios;
- Art rooms;
- Libraries;
- TV, video, multimedia rooms;
- Drama rooms and studios;
- General purpose rooms

3. Factors influencing management of time in the physical space

3.1 When considering how many pupils can be admitted to any year group within its secondary schools, the authority must also consider :

- The immediate requirement to provide a broad general education to pupils in S1 and S2;
- The class size maxima as S1 pupils move through the school: in particular the drop in maximum from 33 to 30 in standard subjects when they move to S3;
- The need to provide existing pupils with an appropriate range of subject choice from S3 on ;
- The number of available classrooms for both standard and practical classes;
- The need to provide continuity of education for the existing pupils in the school;
- The need to ensure parity across each year group;
- The number of children in each year group currently at the school;
- Projected stay-on rates from S4 and S5;
- Current and future catchment demand;
- Any existing stresses upon common areas within the building (such as toilets etc.);
- Availability of subject-specific qualified staff

4. Calculating the S1 Cap

- 4.1 It is for the authority to determine the capacity of individual schools, and the above factors are not exhaustive. There may be individual circumstances within schools which must also be taken in to account. Different factors will have a greater or lesser impact on school capacities depending on local circumstances, including any options locally available for the effective management of relevant factors.
- 4.2 In light of the dynamic nature, variety and complexity of the factors which may apply, the overall capacity figure for each school will be subject to annual review.
- 4.3 The number of pupils admitted to a school in S1 each year must be considered in light of the impact that this number will have on the timetable which can be offered to pupils from S3 upwards. If too many S1 pupils are admitted in any given year, this can have significant negative consequences for those S1 pupils themselves, as well as for existing pupils in the school. For example the school may require to restrict subject choice, or may be unable to honour the reasonable expectations of senior pupils in respect of progression through their chosen subjects. S1 capping is an essential tool to manage capacities and to ensure that an effective timetable can be designed which meets the educational needs of each school's young people throughout their entire secondary education.
- 4.4 The maximum number of S1 pupils who can be admitted to each secondary school will be identified each year. Thereafter, priority for spaces in S1 is given to young people residing within each school's defined catchment area. Wherever it is operationally possible the authority will accommodate catchment pupils in their local school.

- 4.5 Each year, in September, the Education Support Services Manager will identify a provisional cap for S1 intake. The head teacher will be asked whether the previous year's cap should apply, or whether the school has either (a) any additional capacity this year; or (b) any difficulty in accommodating the same number of pupils again. In the event that the head teacher seeks a reduction in the previous year's cap, the Executive Director of Education will consider whether that reduction is to be authorised. The authority will make every attempt to maximise the intake without compromising the education of the young people already attending the school.
- 4.6 In *October/November*, the Elected members' approval of the provisional cap is sought through the City Administration Committee or equivalent.
- 4.7 Parents are required to notify the authority of their choice of school at the *end of November* each year. This provides the authority with a more definite figure showing actual demand for places in each school. This figure is compared to the school's provisional cap. If demand is greater than the provisional cap, the head teacher will be asked for their assessment of the implications in the school of a higher number of pupils being admitted.
- 4.8 In the event that the head teacher indicates that the provisional figure cannot be increased to meet actual demand and there is no expectation that placing requests will not reduce the intake below the cap, the authority's Management Development Officer (whose remit includes expertise in timetabling) will review the time table and space within the school and identify the limiting factors for that school, with a view to identifying whether additional places can be offered or created, taking account of both current and expected future demand in the area.
- 4.9 In March each year, pupils in S3-6 will confirm their subject choices, and actual demand for timetabling will be clearer. At that stage, the authority will be considering whether any placing requests for its schools require to be refused. If the authority is considering refusing placing requests for a particular school, the Management Development Officer will consider again whether the actual demand arising from senior pupil choices have resulted in additional space becoming available for S1 pupils.
- 4.10 If the number of spaces cannot be increased to meet demand for S1 places, only then will placing requests be refused.

5. **S2 to S6 enrolments**

- 5.1 The factors outlined above apply throughout each school's year group. Pupil numbers in subsequent year groups will normally be governed by the number of pupils admitted in S1. If a young person presents in the catchment, or if a family present a placing request, the question the establishment will consider is whether granting the placing request will create additional demand upon resources available in the school. If there is a space in the existing year structure to accommodate the pupil both at the time and as that year group progresses through the establishment, then the placing request will be granted.

- 5.2 Otherwise, the factors outlined above will be taken in to account. Only if the school is unable to accommodate the request will it be refused. In that case, if the young person is a catchment young person CYPS should be contacted in order for the “local school full” process to be actioned. If not, the hub should be contacted detailing the reason for refusal.

6. **Additional Information**

- 6.1 The Executive Director of Education has the authority to amend the intake of establishments due to operational requirements.
- 6.2 This management circular should be considered along with (Management Circular 70C Over-subscription and Management Circular 70A Placing Requests).

Douglas Hutchison
Executive Director of Education