

N. SCHOOL PREMISES

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N. SCHOOL PREMISES

References	Subject	Location
S.E.M	School premises	S.E.M 3.10.6 et seq

N.1 PLANNED CLOSURE OF SCHOOLS

Whole or half day closures due to unavoidable circumstances

N.1.1 Head teachers may, on occasion, be required to close their school due to unavoidable circumstances such as a known lack of power or water (due to planned works by utility companies) or where the school is required for election purposes. In these circumstances, the relevant Head of Service should be notified of the planned closure as soon as it is known. head teachers should also notify, well in advance, all those who might be affected by the closure including:

- a. pupils and parents;
- b. staff, including itinerant staff who might be due to visit the school on that day;
- c. the school meals service (where meals are not cooked on the premises);
- d. transport operators (via Technical Services Transport Section);
- e. community groups or others who may have booked school lets; and
- f. any other individuals or groups who may have arranged to visit the school on the day of planned closure.

Early closures

N.1.2 Head teachers may wish to close their school earlier than usual eg because of an evening event or other educational activity involving pupils and/or staff. In such circumstances the head teacher must take into account the inconvenience such closures create for many families and for other sections of the working community. The head teacher must also balance the educational loss involved against any educational gain to be secured from the event or activity. Any departure from normal hours of pupil attendance should be regarded as exceptional.

N.1.3 Head teachers should notify the relevant Head of Service, the parents and any other relevant persons (eg Transportation Section, itinerant teaching staff and cleaning staff) in writing as far in advance of the event as possible and indicate the reasons for their decision. A record of all early closures should be maintained either in the school log book or other convenient file.

N.1.4 It should be noted that the head teacher's discretion does not extend to half day closures which require the approval of the relevant Head of Service unless they are unavoidable closures as above at N.1.1. Schools should also note that where possible, schools should avoid closing the whole school if some part of the school can be kept open (eg where a heating or power failure relates to only one building on a school campus.) In these circumstances, head teachers will wish to take such action as is practicable to accommodate pupils and staff in another part of the premises, to avoid sending pupils home.

N.1.5 Where, in these circumstances, transport operators are unable to vary contracts and to provide transport at an earlier time within the existing transport contract, any additional

transport costs incurred may require to be funded from schools' own budgets. Additional costs will only be met from central funds if prior approval for the expenditure has been given by the Head of Educational Resources.

References	Subject	Location
S.E.M	School premises	S.E.M 3.10.6 et seq

N.2 EMERGENCY CLOSURE OF SCHOOLS

N.2.1 From time to time, circumstances arise which can lead to the emergency closure of schools or other educational establishments. Examples of such circumstances include exceptionally bad weather (including circumstances which may affect the pupils' transport home even though the school itself may not be directly affected), abnormal temperatures, burst pipes, disruption of fuel, power or water supplies. The length of closure may vary from an early closure for a brief period with a return to normal on the following day to a closure for one or more full days. Parents should be advised by letter and through advice in the school handbook which is issued annually to parents (see Section M) that there may be occasions when emergencies make it necessary for pupils to be sent home prematurely and that in these circumstances parents should have planned what arrangements are to be made for their children and advised the school of an emergency contact point or advised the school of an authorised adult who can care for the children in the event of an emergency.

General principles

- N.2.2 Early or longer closure should be considered only when the circumstances are such that it is impossible to continue to make reasonable provision for pupils. Head teachers should make every effort to provide education for as long as possible and for as many pupils as possible. Consideration should be given, where feasible, to partial rather than full closure.
- N.2.3 When considering early closure, head teachers should regard the health and welfare of pupils as paramount. All arrangements should ensure that standard of care for each pupil as would be expected of a prudent parent. Arrangements should take account of age, ability and capacities (physical and mental) of the pupils concerned; the location of the school in relation to pupils' homes and to road conditions and other hazards; the home circumstances of the pupils and any other emergency arrangements.
- N.2.4 No primary aged pupils should be sent home without ensuring that an adult's presence is available. In the absence of parental/guardian acknowledgement or consent to the amended time of dismissal, or acceptance or responsibility for the reception of the pupil by an adult nominated by the parent as an emergency contact, supervision and care must be provided in school or another suitable location until normal dismissal time.
- N.2.5 If early closure is being considered because of abnormal temperatures Head Teachers should consult appendix N.1.

Actions to be taken when closing the school early

- N.2.6 If, after considering all of the above factors, Head Teachers feel that there is no alternative to early closure they should advise the relevant Head of Service immediately, other than in the most exceptional circumstances. Where the Head of Service, or their nominated deputy, agrees that the proposed early closure should take place the head teacher should take the following action:
- a. refer any necessary alterations to transport arrangements to Technical Services Transportation Section;

- b. where appropriate, make arrangements to provide school meals as on a normal day;
- c. advise, if possible and where known, any after school care scheme which involves children;
- d. if possible, send a note home to parents informing them of the reason for closure and when pupils should return to school; and
- e. advise any subsequent users of the building (eg cleaners or groups who might have booked a community let) if the school will not be available that evening. Head teachers will bear in mind that it is possible that some or all pupils might have to be sent home (eg because bad weather and/or high tides might make their normal journey home problematic) whereas a local community group would still find it perfectly safe to use the school for a school let.

N.2.7 If contact with the media is required the appropriate action will be taken by the relevant Head of Service.

N.2.8 Consideration should be given to the health and welfare of staff, though the authority would expect staff to remain in school wherever possible. In all cases every effort should be made to retain during normal school hours a nucleus of staff including senior staff to look after children for whom alternative arrangements cannot be made, to deal with enquiries and to maintain contact with the education authority.

Full day or extended closure

N.2.9 In more extreme circumstances than those which might lead only to an early closure, it may be necessary to consider the closure of a school for one or more days. The possibility of a full day or extended closure could arise when emergencies such as fire, burst pipes or heating or power failure occurs outwith normal school hours with the result that unless immediate remedial action is taken the school will be unable to open.

N.2.10 In such cases it is essential that immediately the emergency is discovered, the Head Teacher or other senior member of staff should contact the Comhairle's Technical Service help line or the relevant Head of Service where the matter is not related to building issues. Head teachers should keep emergency contact telephone numbers readily available. If Technical Services Department are unable to take steps to allow the school to open they will contact the head teacher who should discuss with the relevant Head of Service what action will be taken in the particular case.

N.2.11 Closure for one or more days may also require to be considered in situations such as abnormally severe weather conditions or disruption to fuel supplies. It is possible that some emergency situations such as fuel shortages can be anticipated and that their effect can be minimised by careful forward planning. Head teachers are asked to undertake contingency planning to meet such emergencies and to review these plans each session.

N.2.12 Where large numbers of schools might be affected by an emergency situation, the Education Department will issue general advice to schools, coordinate efforts to keep schools open and ensure that all interested parties are kept informed. The role of the head teacher in ensuring that disruption to education is kept to a minimum will, however, be important and when considering the school's response to serious emergency situations which might lead to closure of the school head teachers should note the following:

Disruption to Fuel Supplies

- a. In the event of any disruption to fuel supplies, heating and fuel levels should be monitored to ensure that existing stocks are being used sensibly and that early and accurate information about fuel levels can be given to the Resources Service on request. Maximum use should be made of any part of the school heated by a fuel

which is not in short supply but in some cases it may be possible to provide alternative forms of heating to accommodate staff of part of the school population.

Access to Schools

- b. Schools should ensure that they have appropriate stocks of salt and gritting material are available. Head Teachers should discuss any issues in this regard with their Business Support Officer.

Communication with parents

- c. Head teachers should consider how best to ensure good communication with parents. Head teachers should make every effort to advise parents in writing of the reasons for closure and indicate the methods by which they will be informed of the date for the re-opening of the school. (These methods will normally include local radio and possibly the press although schools should note that in the event of large scale difficulties, the Education Department will make arrangements through the Comhairle's Press Officer for any necessary Press Release to be issued.) Schools should also arrange to notify the Comhairle's 24 hour Faire Service of any problems and to keep Faire updated so that they can inform parents and others who may contact the service. Head Teachers should consult the Policy on Employee Contact with the Media (Revised) which is included under Policies and Procedures on the Education Department's Intranet site.

The importance of good communication with parents and the general public cannot be over-emphasised. Head teachers should use all practical means at their disposal to ensure that the community is kept up to date with the situation at their school. It is essential, in this regard, that head teachers regularly update information about pupil emergency contacts.

Attendance of Staff

- d. The arrangements for staff attendance will depend on the situation in each establishment. While the welfare of pupils and the requirements to maintain the maximum possible educational service remain paramount, responsible consideration must be given to the health and welfare of staff. Where conditions allow, staff should be asked to attend and work as normal a day as possible. It is important that teaching and non-teaching staff be treated equitably. Where it is impracticable for all members of staff to attend, a nucleus of staff should, where possible and subject to health and safety considerations, be at the school during normal working hours to deal with enquiries and maintain contact with the Education Department. If it is not possible for the school to receive or make phone calls, phone numbers at which the head teacher or his/her representative can be contacted should be provided to the relevant Head of Service.

As part of the school's contingency plan head teachers should consider how staff who are not expected to attend or who for some reason are prevented from attending can best be kept in touch with the day to day position at the school.

Transport

- e. Schools should liaise directly with transport operators to arrange the provision of transport at an earlier hour than normal. The Transport Section of the Comhairle's Technical Services Department should be contacted as a matter of urgency if, for any reason, the regular operator is unable to vary the service.

Contact with the Education Department

- f. **It is essential that Education Department be kept up-to-date with the situation in each school.** In the event of an emergency situation in the school, Head teachers or their representatives should telephone daily, before 10.00 if possible, to report the

position. The information provided will form the basis of any report which will then be passed to the media.

Alternative Accommodation

- g. If the emergency situation appears likely to last for more than a day or two, head teachers should consult with the relevant Head of Service on the use of alternative accommodation for staff and for pupils such as neighbouring schools, community halls or other suitable buildings. Any additional costs in connection with alternative accommodation (and additional transport where necessary) must be approved in advance by the Head of Educational Resources but, where so approved, will be met from central budgets.

School Lets

- h. Groups or individuals with planned school lets should be kept up to date by school of the situation with regard to their let so that they may consider cancelling or relocating the activity in the event of an extended closure.

Reporting on the closure

- N.2.13 After an emergency closure of whatever length head teachers should send a brief report to the relevant Head of Service on the action which was taken. The report should include:
- a. the dates on which the school was affected and why
 - b. whether the closure was full or partial
 - c. dates and times where staff were dismissed before normal hours
 - d. any alternative arrangements to accommodate staff or pupils
 - e. any alterations to normal travel arrangements
 - f. days on which meals were not supplied
 - g. any special initiatives taken
 - h. specific problems experienced

Recording of attendance

- N.2.14 School closures should not be counted as openings for the purposes of attendance and absence recording.

Log Book

- N.2.15 The decision to close in emergency situations and the action taken should be noted in the school log book or other official record.

N.3 SCHOOL LETS

School lets policy

- N 3.1 The Comhairle's current policy on letting of school premises is set out at Appendix N.2. While income and expenditure related to school lets is not devolved to Head Teachers under the current DSM Scheme, Head Teachers will note that this policy, reaffirms the role of School

Boards (and Head Teachers on delegation from School Boards) in determining school lets issues on a day to day basis.

Recording and invoicing of school lets

- N.3.2 For health and safety, security and insurance purposes all applicants for school lets should be asked to submit a formal application for let which should be retained in the school and marked on an appropriate school let or general calendar. Where a let is subject to a charge (see School lets policy), invoices should be raised on at least a termly basis under the procedures set out in Appendix P 6 of this handbook.
- N.3.3 A formal return on chargeable lets must be sent to the Education Department, at the end of each term, for auditing and reconciliation purposes. Schools will be issued with the appropriate formware at the start of each term and should discuss its completion with their Business Support Officer.
- N.3.4 A specimen copy of the School Lets Application form is set out at Appendix N.3. This form is also available on the Education Intranet site and on the Education Section of the Comhairle Internet site.
- N.3.5 Schools are reminded that any organisation which is letting school premises for activities directed towards children or vulnerable adults must have registered, via the local voluntary sector, with regard to the appropriate Disclosure Scotland checks. A list of the registered groups and their authorised let bookers is contained on the Comhairle database which is accessible through the Internet or Intranet. (Passwords for the database are available from Business Support Officers.) School should note that school staff should only have regard to whether or not the group and the let booker are on the database. Schools are not required or authorised to require groups or bookers to produce Disclosure Scotland checks to school staff.

References	Subject	Location
S.E.M	School Security	S.E.M 4.5.2 et seq

N.4 SCHOOL SECURITY

Secure school entry systems

- N.4.1 Head Teachers are responsible for ensuring that secure school entry systems are in operation throughout the school day. Entry systems **should not be disabled or switched off** unless it is for a very short time (eg for unloading a bulky item of furniture) and the Head Teacher is satisfied, having regard to, security issues that it is safe to do so.
- N.4.2 Any failure in the school security system should be reported immediately to the Comhairle's Technical Services Department who will make arrangements to have the fault analysed and repaired. Head Teachers should note, however, that it may not be possible to repair faults immediately where they are identified as being eg hardware related and where specialist contractors may have to be brought in from the mainland. In these circumstances, Head Teachers should discuss with their Business Support Officer what measures might be necessary to maintain the integrity of the school's security.
- N.4.3 A number of school security systems are designed to allow swipecard access by members of school staff. Where there is a failure of the swipe card facility (eg due to computer malfunction) it will not mean that the school is insecure as entry to the school will still not be

possible. It will however mean that manual controls will have to be used until the problem is resolved.

Swipe/identification cards

- N.4.4 In many schools, as above, staff will have swipe cards for individual access to controlled entry buildings. These cards, which carry the name and picture of the employee, are also used for identification purposes within the school and for identification purposes only in schools which do not have swipecard entry facilities. Head Teachers should ensure that all employees wear their identification cards at all times when on school premises.

New and replacement cards

- N.4.5 An initial card will be provided for each member of school staff. The processing of these cards is currently undertaken by the Comhairle's personnel section on behalf of the Education Department and schools should notify their Business Support Officer immediately a new member of staff takes up post so that arrangements can be made for a digital photograph to be taken for insertion on the new card. The image will then be stored centrally and any replacement of cards can be effected automatically. The cost of providing the initial card will be met from central Education Department budgets but the cost of replacing cards which are lost by members of staff will, except in exceptional circumstances, require to be met from school budgets.

Stolen or Lost cards

- N.4.6 Where cards with a swipe facility are lost or stolen in circumstances which gives cause for concern that security could have been compromised, the school should immediately report the matter to Technical Services and their Business Support Officer. Head Teachers will wish to consider in such cases whether the swipe entry facility should be disabled in the interim and to allow time for reprogramming of the entry system.

Return of cards which are no longer in use

- N.4.7 Cards which are no longer in use (eg where a member of staff has left the school permanently) should be returned immediately to the school's Business Support Officer who will make arrangements to have the card cancelled and destroyed.

Control and identification of visitors

- N.4.8 All visitors (including tradesmen) should, unless known to the school staff, be asked to provide identification before being allowed on to school premises. On entering the school, they should be entered in the visitor's book or similar and asked to wear a visitor badge while on school premises. Staff should make it a practice to confirm the identity of any person unknown to them whom they encounter on school premises without an identity or visitor badge. The only exception to the requirement to wear a visitor's badge would be where a visitor was already in possession of and wearing a valid Comhairle identification badge eg from another Comhairle Department or school.
- N.4.9 Where possible, visitors to school premises should be escorted by a member of school staff while on school premises.
- N.4.10 Schools should ensure that visitors do not have inappropriate access to areas of the school or information (eg pupil files) to which they have no right of access given the purpose of their visit. If visitors or tradesmen require to work, for example, in a school office with pupil files, files should be locked to ensure that no information is disclosed. Schools should always ensure that computers are appropriately passworded having regard to the data which might be stored on them.

Authorisation of contractors on site

- N.4.11 The procedures to be adopted by schools for the authorisation of contractors on site are set out in the separate schools health and safety manual. Schools should note that there are no exceptions to the rules for authorisation of contractors, no matter how small the job or how

well known the contractor. The Comhairle's own staff (eg tradesmen from the Commercial Operations Unit) are also covered by the procedures.

School security policy

- N.4.12 A sample school security policy is set out at Appendix N.3. Head teachers may adapt this policy for use in their own schools and should consider including the policy in the school information handbook which is issued annually to all parents.

School security risk assessment

- N.4.13 A school security risk assessment is available on the Education Department Intranet site and also from Business Support Officers.

N.5 FIRE SAFETY

- N.5.1 Separate guidance on Fire Safety is contained in the Scottish Executive publications "Fire Safety in Schools" and the associated "Case Studies" which are available on the Education Department Intranet site under Health and Safety.

- N.5.2 Schools should ensure that all the recommendations of the above guidance and the separate Comhairle guidance which is available in the School Health and Safety manual are followed at all times. In particular schools must:

- (i) ensure the carrying out of all necessary fire drills and manoeuvres;
- (ii) ensure the maintenance of the fire log book
- (iii) ensure the maintenance of high standards of housekeeping throughout the school
- (iv) carry out regular fire safety risk assessments in conjunction with their Business Support Officer
- (v) regularly review and update all fire safety material including information for pupils, staff and others who may be using the school eg school lets.

Advice and assistance with regard to fire safety

- N.5.3 The Comhairle's Fire Safety Officer works with other staff in the Comhairle's Health and Safety Section and is available to give advice to schools on aspects of fire safety. The Fire Safety Officer is responsible to the department for undertaking a programme of fire safety risk assessments of all schools and will be able to provide advice and assistance during school visits.

Actions arising from Fire Safety Risk Assessments

- N.5.4 Fire Safety risk assessments carried out by or for schools may identify issues which require immediate action on they part of the authority. Recommendations will broadly break down into three types:
- (i) housekeeping matters: Head Teachers will be responsible for implementing any such recommendations within their school;
 - (ii) fire signage improvements: stocks of appropriate signs are held centrally by the School Handypersons. Head Teachers will be responsible for arranging for installation of signage either by janitorial staff (having obtained signs from the Handyperson Service) or as part of the agreed programme of work by the Handyperson Service.

- (iii) Other repairs and maintenance issues: any repairs and maintenance recommendations made by the Fire Safety Officer should be passed to Technical Services, as for other health and safety property issues, but noted "Fire Safety Assessment Recommendation". The recommended works will then be considered by Technical Services and the Education Department in the context of available funding and a report on the assigned priority will be returned to the school.

N.6 PROPERTY MAINTENANCE

Devolved school repairs and maintenance budgets

- N.6.1 Guidance on the use of devolved repairs and maintenance budgets is set out in Section P of the Handbook.

Non-devolved repairs and maintenance budgets and capital spending

- N.6.2 Major repairs and redevelopment of school and other education premises are funded through central budgets for planned programme work, ad hoc maintenance and through the Comhairle's capital programme. Requirements for such work will be identified in the course of the regular discussions between Head Teachers and Technical Services Property Maintenance Officers who will forward any proposals to the Head of Educational Resources for prioritisation in the light of available funding. Requirements which are identified outwith the course of these regular discussions should also be forwarded to the property maintenance officer as above, or as part of a fault report where the situation is more urgent or where health and safety matters arise.
- N.6.3 The current structure of the Technical Services property maintenance section is set out at Appendix N.4.

N.7 GROUNDS MAINTENANCE

- N.7.1 Grounds maintenance work for schools is carried out under a grounds maintenance contract. The details of the contract for each school have been circulated so that head teachers may satisfy themselves as to the standard and specification of the work. Any queries on grounds maintenance activities should be directed to the Technical Services Estates Management Officer.

Abnormal Temperatures

1. School heating systems are designed to standards which should ensure that room temperatures reach the levels indicated below when the outside air temperature is at freezing point.

Type of Accommodation	Temperature
Medical inspection room, shower and changing room, bathroom	18.5°C
Teaching space, dining room, nursery room, common room and staff room and school office	17.5°C
Assembly area, lecture hall, toilets, theatre and cinema	15.5°C
Sickroom	14.5°C
Cloakroom and corridors	13°C
Gymnasia	13°C
Games Hall	10°C

2. On the relatively infrequent occasions when outside temperatures are below freezing point in the morning – and the indoor temperature is correspondingly lower – this should not in itself be regarded as a reason for sending pupils home. Normally temperatures will rise during daylight hours.
3. When there is a complete breakdown in the heating system or where the temperatures have not risen to those indicated in the above table by one hour after the start of the school day, head teachers should inform the council's Technical Services Department of the fault (if this action has not already been taken)
4. In the rarer event that the temperature in some parts of the school rises above a maximum tolerable limit, humidity, radiation, ventilation and length of exposure must be considered. Teaching staff should take all reasonable precautions such as opening windows and doors, drawing curtains or blinds where available, If however, a temperature of 27°C (80°F), in the shade, has been experienced for a minimum of one hour, pupils and staff should be withdrawn from that room. If the temperature rises considerable in excess of 27°C, evacuation should take place within a shorter period.

COMHAIRLE NAN EILEAN SIAR

EDUCATION DEPARTMENT

SCHOOL LETS POLICY

1. POLICY (GENERAL STATEMENT)

- 1.1 Comhairle nan Eilean Siar acknowledges the community resource represented by education premises and welcomes applications for their use. In line with Comhairle policy, the Education Department commits itself to the provision of a high quality service to all sectors of the community.

2. ROLE OF SCHOOL BOARDS AND HEAD TEACHERS IN CONNECTION WITH SCHOOL LETS

- 2.1 Responsibility for letting of school premises is delegated to School Boards. In the case of routine applications the Boards have further delegated the approval, and the administrative arrangements in respect of the applications, to Head Teachers. Where applications are of a contentious nature or problematic nature, the Head Teacher will submit them in the first instance to the School Board for approval.
- 2.2 Applications for school lets, whether considered by the School Board or by the Head Teacher under delegation from the School Board, fall to be determined in line with overall Comhairle policy on school letting arrangements.
- 2.3 Where there is no School Board, matters relating to school lets fall to be determined by the Head Teacher in consultation with the education authority or seeking approval of lets (eg in connection with the use of alcohol) from the Education and Children's Services Committee as appropriate

3. AVAILABILITY OF SCHOOL LETS ON WEEKDAYS AND SATURDAYS

- 3.1 The Comhairle provides subsidised lets throughout the week and on Saturdays in community schools with specific janitorial allocations for letting overtime. Schools without janitorial allocations for school lets may offer subsidised lets for up to 4 week-night sessions and a part day session on Saturday.

4. SUPERVISION OF SCHOOL LETS

- 4.1 Head Teachers will ensure that appropriate supervision or security arrangements are made for all school lets. For schools with janitorial provision, supervision by the janitor will be the normal arrangement. In the event of the non-availability of the janitor, or in the case of non-janitorial schools, another member of non-teaching staff may be willing to undertake the supervision duties. In both cases, staff would be expected to undertake such other work during the period where they are present at the school as would be compatible with appropriate supervision of that let.
- 4.2 Where no member of non-teaching staff is available or willing to undertake supervision duties, the Head Teacher should only grant a let if they are satisfied that alternative arrangements are suitable having regard to school security and health and safety issues. In these cases, a precise record should be kept in the School's letting file of the arrangements agreed for each let by the Head Teacher.

5. SCHOOL LETS ON SUNDAYS

- 5.1 The Comhairle does not, in principle, employ its staff to work on Sundays except in circumstances of emergency, legal obligation, essential maintenance, or in exceptional circumstances, where in relation to:
- (i) School premises: School Boards wish to let such premises in line with the predominance of local opinion; and
 - (ii) Where to do so would involve the Comhairle in additional expenditure, the Director of Education is given responsibility for calculating actual costs.
- 5.2 School lets on Sunday will be charged at the Standard rate where paid janitorial or other staff supervision is required. Where the Head Teacher is satisfied that no paid supervision is required and the group or individual has met any necessary security requirements (eg where a member of school staff volunteers their services to supervise a religious or other group) the let may be charged at the appropriate rate according to the nature of the group (eg if the group is a community or young people's group.) It should be noted that school staff can not be required to work on Sundays and where a Head Teacher wishes to grant a let where no member of staff is willing to work they will have to satisfy themselves as to the security and health and safety arrangements in place.

6. OPTIMISATION OF SCHOOL LETS

- 6.1 Additional school lets costs (eg paper goods, energy or paid overtime on the part of janitorial staff) are met from central education budgets or accommodated in school budgets. However any savings on these budgets may, at the discretion of the school (eg energy, paper goods) or the Education Department (staff overtime costs) be allocated to other needs within schools. Schools will therefore aim for all possible optimisation of lets eg by combining a let where possible (if the group is amenable and the timing of an event is flexible) on a night when other lets or eg a school board meeting have already been arranged.
- 6.2 Where possible, schools should avoid booking any room or part of the school throughout the week continuously to ensure that cleaning staff can access all parts of the school on a regular basis.

7. LENGTH OF SESSIONS

- 7.1 Subsidised lets are available between the hours of 18.00 – 22.00 on weekdays and 11.00 to 18.00 on Saturdays. Lets out with these slots will be charged as follows:
- (i) Weekday Lets between end of school day and 18.00: this slot is generally reserved for after-school clubs and similar activities and not for adult or community groups. Schools may at their discretion, and with the approval of their School Board, grant these lets at the relevant subsidised rate where such a let would not interfere with school activities (including cleaning or maintenance work) or the activities of school clubs and other similar bookers and where no additional staff supervision is required. Where additional staff supervision is required the Standard rate of charges would apply.
 - (ii) Weekday lets after 22.00, Saturday lets before 11.00 and after 18.00 and any lets outwith the subsidised allocation in a particular school: any such lets (other than "setting up or cleaning up time") should be charged at the Standard rate.

8. SETTING UP AND CLEANING UP

- 8.1 Groups should be allowed up to 10 minutes before and after a let session, free of charge, to set up and clean up after their activity where this does not conflict with any other booking. (If it does conflict with another booking, the cleaning up period should be incorporated within the letting allocation.) Any group occupying the premises outwith this grace period should be charged pro rata to the relevant hourly rate.

- 8.2 Groups are expected to leave school premises, within reason, in as clean and ordered a state as they found them, including restoring the original layout of furniture and returning any equipment to its original position. Any group which leaves premises in a condition which requires additional cleaning or other work by staff may be charged for the additional work. Continued instances as above may lead to further applications for let being referred to the School Board for consideration of forfeiture of future lets.

9. LETS OF ARTS AND LEISURE PREMISES WITHIN SCHOOLS

- 9.1 Some schools contain facilities (eg libraries or swimming pools) which are managed or funded by the Arts and Leisure Service of the Department for Sustainable Communities. The usage policies and charges for these premises are determined separately by the Department for Sustainable Communities who also receive any income from relevant lets.

10. LETS DURING SCHOOL VACATIONS

- 10.1 School lets will not generally be available in school holidays except in schools with specific janitorial provision during the holidays or in schools where the Head Teacher is satisfied that there are adequate health and safety, school security and other necessary arrangements in place.

11. STATUS OF CONFIRMED LETS

- 11.1 Where a let has been confirmed to a group, the let – which is in essence a contract between the group and the school - should be honoured even if it is on a date subsequently desired by the school or another group. The only exception to this would be cases where the let could not be honoured due to matters wholly outwith the school's control, (eg a major building emergency, a parliamentary by-election where the school was required as a polling station or a major loss of power or water.) In these circumstances, the Comhairle would not be liable for any loss to the group or any expense incurred by the group. Groups will be advised of this as part of the booking process. The above guidance does not, of course, preclude negotiation between the school and a letting group with regard to a particular let.

12. DEFINITION OF TYPES OF LETTING GROUPS

- 12.1 Letting groups (or individuals) are defined in 5 categories.

(i) **School related groups:** use of the school's premises by the school, the School Board, a Parent Teacher Association or eg a group raising funds entirely for the school takes precedence over all other non-statutory letting requests (but see 11 above with regard to confirmed lets.) These lets are free of charge although the school is expected where possible to optimise lets by holding events at the same time where possible.

(ii) **Comhairle users and statutory requirements:** schools may be used for constituency purposes by Parliamentary representatives or the Comhairle's elected members, for election purposes, by Community Councils or by other Comhairle Departments. These lets are free at the point of use. However, uses by other Comhairle Departments should be notified to the School's Business Support Officer as part of the School's School Let Return for consideration of internal recharges to other departments where appropriate.

Where an application for let is booked by an officer or member of the Comhairle, the school should have regard to the declared purpose of the let. Where the let is not for Comhairle business it should be classified according to the normal criteria regardless of the identity of the person(s) applying for the let.

(iii) **Children, young people and vulnerable adults:** children, young people's and vulnerable adults' groups are those whose formal stated **purpose (including the**

reason for the let) is directly targeted to educational or leisure activities for children, young people under 18 or vulnerable adults. Groups which happen to have eg children or young people participating in their activities but which have a more general remit are not included in this category. These lets are free if they are contained within the weekly allocation for subsidised rents set out above or if the school has agreed that they may be allowed in the period directly between the end of the school day and 18.00 when subsidised evening lets sessions begin. Other uses outwith this period will be charged at the Standard Rate.

For a let to fall in this category, it is assumed that the specific activity will be directed as above. Groups who may in other circumstances receive free lets will not receive free lets for example if they are fund raising (for example holding a sale of work, or charging for admission at a rate more than that necessary to meet the costs of the let and any directly associated activity or provision of refreshment.) Fund raising activities will fall within the category of Community charges (see iv below.)

(iv) Community/charity/older persons groups

Community groups: are those whose formal stated **purpose** is connected with community projects or activities. Community groups with formal and relevant constitutions might be easily confirmed as falling within this category but where other let applicants declare themselves to be within this category, schools will be entitled to seek further details about the nature of the group. It should be noted that groups do not become a community group solely because they happen to be made up from local residents or contain local residents. There must be a direct linkage with eg community wellbeing or development. Any cases where there is remaining doubt about the nature or purpose of the group should be referred to the School Board for determination.

Charity groups: are those whose formal stated **purpose** is connected with charitable concerns or fund raising. Registered charities will be easily confirmed as falling within this category. Where other let applicants declare themselves to be a charitable concern schools will be entitled to seek further details about the nature of the group. Any cases where there is remaining doubt about the nature of the group should be referred to the School Board for determination.

Older persons' groups: are those whose formal stated **purpose** is connected solely with educational, leisure or similar activities for persons over retirement age. Groups do not become an Older Persons' Group solely because they happen to be made up from retired persons or contain retired persons. Where let applicants declare themselves to be an older persons' group, schools will be entitled to seek further details about the nature of the group. Any cases where there is remaining doubt about the nature of the group should be referred to the School Board for determination.

Community, charity and older persons' groups are charged at the Community Rate.

- (v) Standard Groups:** Groups or individuals who do not fall in to any of the above categories are counted as Standard Groups. Any groups or individuals who are making a profit from their activities (other than formal charity groups who are raising funds) should be counted as standard groups. Cases where there is doubt about the nature of the group should be referred to the School Board for determination.

12.2 In cases of doubt about the category into which a group will fall, the onus of proof will be on the group.

13. HEALTH AND SAFETY IN SCHOOL LETS

Premises (general)

13.1 The school is responsible for providing premises that are safe, secure and fit for the purpose for which the let has been authorised. Where it appears to a school, for any reason, that the

premises are not fit for the purposes for which the let application has been made, the let should not be granted and the applicant advised of the reasons. The School is not obliged to incur exceptional expenditure (eg on premises adaptations) specifically to facilitate an individual let with unusual requirements.

Use of school playing fields

- 13.2 Schools occasionally receive requests to allow lets of school playing fields or grounds for purposes which include livestock (eg for agricultural shows.) Schools should be aware that guidance on prevention of ecoli infections means that pupils may not use such ground for a period of 14 days following the date on which the animals were present. Schools should not therefore allow such lets unless there will be a clear period of 14 days before the commencement of school (eg if the let is in a holiday period) or unless they are prepared to prohibit pupils from using or playing on the grounds in question for the appropriate period.

Use of school equipment

- 13.3 School equipment (other than fixed equipment) does not necessarily form part of the let. Where a letting group wish to use additional equipment (eg projectors or gym equipment) they should apply to the school specifically for use of that equipment. If the use of any equipment is granted, at the school's discretion, the group will be asked to confirm in writing that they have received the appropriate training or are fit to use the equipment in question. The school will not be responsible for undertaking or arranging any such training.

Fire Safety

- 13.4 Schools should ensure that all letting groups receive and acknowledge clear written instructions as to the fire safety arrangements in place at the school. Schools with frequent lets should also ensure that an unannounced fire drill is held termly during a school let session on the same basis as that undertaken for school staff and pupils.

Applications for residential use of schools

- 13.5 For health and safety reasons, the Comhairle does not permit any residential use of school premises.

Kitchen/Canteen Safety

- 13.6 Use of the school canteen or kitchen is permitted only with the specific permission of the Education Department. Any such let application will be viewed in light of health and safety considerations, both as regards the group and as regards subsequent use by pupils and school staff.
- 13.7 Only school meals staff are allowed to use the appliances in school kitchens. The wages in respect of any hours worked by school meals staff in connection with a kitchen let will require to be paid by the group hiring the premises.

Smoking on school premises

- 13.8 Smoking is banned in all Western Isles Schools. Under no circumstances may any letting groups or individuals smoke in a school, regardless of the nature of any event.

Reporting accidents or "near misses"

- 13.9 Where a school is made aware of an accident or "near miss" on the premises during a school let, it should investigate and report the matter immediately using the standard Comhairle reporting procedures.

14. SECURITY IN SCHOOL LETS

Information

- 14.1 Groups or individuals letting school premises should under no circumstances have any access to any information held about individuals by the school (pupils, staff or others) and should not be able to access areas where security might be important ie areas where cash or valuable goods might be stored or where there are critical computer systems which might be accessed.
- 14.2 Schools should ensure that appropriate security measures are in place to prevent such access eg by means of locked doors, filing cabinets etc. If this is not achievable to the satisfaction of the Head Teacher, the let should not be granted. Schools are not required to incur exceptional expenditure in this regard to facilitate a specific school let with unusual requirements.

Computers

- 14.3 Schools should only allow letting groups or individuals to use school computers with the approval of the Head Teacher who will consult the Department's ICT Coordinator as appropriate.

Telephones

- 14.4 Letting groups should not have unsupervised access to any telephones which might be used to place calls unauthorised by the school. Where it is not possible to physically prevent unsupervised use (eg from a classroom extension) schools should consider measures to disable phones in respect of after hours use other than calls to the emergency services. Schools should note however that they are not required to incur exceptional expenditure in this regard to facilitate a specific school let with unusual requirements.

15. CONSUMPTION OF ALCOHOL ON SCHOOL PREMISES

- 15.1 There are three typical circumstances in which alcohol might be consumed ie:
- (i) where that alcohol is being consumed only (eg wine brought to a teacher's retirement dinner by those attending and consumed on the premises);
 - (ii) where the alcohol is being supplied to persons attending an event by the person(s) organising the event; and
 - (iii) where the alcohol is being sold to persons attending an event by the person(s) organising the event.
- 15.2 Consumption of alcohol alone is not subject to any licensing requirements. Where alcohol is being sold or supplied, however, it would be the responsibility of any groups to obtain the appropriate licences. Failure to obtain licences would mean that alcohol could not be supplied or sold on the premises.
- 15.3 Where a group requests, as part of a let application, to consume or supply alcohol as part of their let, the matter will be referred to the School Board for determination in line with the predominance of local opinion. **Where a group request permission to sell alcohol as part of a let application, the matter will be referred for determination by the Education and Children's Service Committee.**
- 15.4 When advising groups in this regard, schools should point out the significant advance notice that could be required to receive the approval of the School Board or Education and Children's Services Committee and to obtain (if appropriate) the necessary licences. Schools are not required to undertake any work in this regard. Groups wishing such permissions should write to the School Board or the Education Department (Head of Educational Resources) as appropriate to commence the approval process and should contact the Comhairle's Licensing Section to seek advice on licensing requirements and applications. However schools may, at their own discretion, and following informal consultation with their

School Board, award groups a provisional booking subject to the necessary licences being granted.

16. LETS INVOLVING CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE OR VULNERABLE ADULTS

- 16.1 It is the Comhairle's policy that any group or individual which has significant contact with children, young people or vulnerable adults can only let Comhairle premises if the adults are suitable to work with the children, young people or vulnerable people. Local representatives of voluntary sector umbrella organisations carry out these checks for groups (through Disclosure Scotland) and maintain a database of authorised groups and bookers. The Database (and further guidance on the process) is accessible on the Comhairle's Intranet site and passwords are obtainable from schools' Business Support Officers.
- 16.2 It should be noted that schools are **not responsible for or authorised to** view or arrange any Disclosure Scotland checks for groups or individuals wishing to let their premises. Schools are responsible only for checking the Comhairle database to confirm whether the group and booker is authorised. Groups or bookers not on the database may not have a let confirmed although a school may, at their discretion, make a provisional booking pending database registration.
- 16.3 Where a school discovers that a group has significant contact with children and vulnerable adults as above, and the group has neither declared this nor is registered on the Comhairle's database, the group's bookings should be terminated or suspended (depending on the timescale) pending regularisation of the situation. Where such a matter comes to light in the course of a specific let schools should, unless there are clear concerns about the nature of the activities, allow that let to continue until the end of the let but send a short report on the circumstances of the let to the Head of Educational Resources on the day following.
- 16.4 Where bookings have been suspended or terminated as above, schools should not impose a cancellation fee without seeking the specific approval of the Head of Educational Resources.

17. BOOKING SCHOOL LETS

- 17.1 Groups should book lets directly with the School using the standard departmental booking form which is also available on the Comhairle's Internet site. Schools are entitled to ask for 14 days advance notice of a booking although they may, at their discretion, waive this period in exceptional circumstances. Written (or email) confirmation of lets should be sent to all groups as a matter of course including a standard notification of conditions, health and safety instructions and cancellation terms and possible charges. All groups or individuals seeking a let must complete the booking form regardless of whether they are to be charged for the let or not.
- 17.2 Block bookings may be taken on a termly or annual basis and in these circumstances schools may, at their discretion, issue one booking confirmation only. Groups should not be allowed to block book more than one year in advance. In addition, schools will apply judgment in accepting or confirming bookings where it is suspected that delays in building work or other circumstances might prevent the let taking place. In these cases, schools may take a provisional booking but should advise the group of the circumstances and warn them that the school will take no responsibility if the premises are not, after all, available on the required date.
- 17.3 Schools are required to submit a termly return to the Education Department on all lets, including those for which no charges are levied. In addition, all records of non-charged lets (including application forms) should be retained for inspection and for health and safety reasons for a period of 2 years from the date of the let. (This refers only to the school let booking records: other documentation such as copies of notifications of health and safety incidents should be kept for the normal agreed timescales.)

18. BOOKING OF SCHOOL LETS BY PERSONS UNDER 18

- 18.1 There is no bar on school lets being booked and led by young persons aged 16 and 17. (School lets may not be booked by children under 16.) However schools should note that the normal rules with regard to Disclosure checking etc will apply in these cases as in any other. Schools will also take into account the age of the booker or group leader when considering eg health and safety or security arrangements before authorising any such bookings. Where the school is not satisfied, for whatever reason, that the young person is suitable to manage the activity or to meet the conditions of let, they should discuss the matter with their Business Support Officer and refer the matter for determination by their School Board where necessary.

19. CHARGING FOR SCHOOL LETS

General

- 19.1 The basic charges for school lets are set out in the Schedule at Annex 1. Schools should not vary these basic charges unless there are wholly exceptional circumstances and they have received the specific approval of the Head of Educational Resources.

Block bookings

- 19.2 The overwhelming majority of school lets are already subsidised by the Comhairle and there is no discount available for regular bookers (eg where a group books the same evening let every week.) However, there may be circumstances where a group books a large number of rooms in a school (eg for a Feis) and the marginal cost to the Comhairle of the additional rooms is small.
- 19.3 Where a community, charity or older person's group books more than one part of a school for an event such as a Feis, schools should impose the full hourly charge for the most expensive area (eg a school hall) but allow a 75% reduction on the charge for all additional areas/ rooms.
- 19.4 There is no automatic reduction on multiple room letting charges for Standard Rate lets. Where a school believes that there are wholly exceptional circumstances in connection with any such let, they should discuss the matter with their Business Support Officer and seek approval of any variation from the Head of Educational Resources.
- 19.5 Schools may, at their discretion, charge for the use of non-fixed equipment at a rate to be set by the school. If any charge is levied, the income from the use would be liable to VAT and full details of the transaction would be required to be submitted to the Comhairle together with the relevant portion of the income. The school will have to certify that the equipment is fit for the purpose for which it was intended and that the Comhairle's insurance section is aware that the item of equipment might be used by members of the public. Any additional insurance charges levied would have to be met by the school from the proceeds of the equipment hire.

20. INVOICING FOR SCHOOL LETS

- 20.1 Schools should invoice groups for one-off lets as soon as possible after the event. Schools may, at their discretion, invoice regular users less frequently but on at least a termly basis.

21. LICENCES FOR LET ACTIVITIES

- 21.1 Schools should ensure that the school is in possession of all relevant licences (eg performance and entertainment licences) which may be required having regard to the nature of the let before confirming the booking. Groups letting the premises are responsible for obtaining other licences such as clearing copyright issues before performing a copyrighted musical etc.

22. SUB LETTING OF PREMISES

- 22.1 Where school premises are rented out (eg to a pre school group) or used by another group or department, no let should be allowed without the agreement of the person or group using that area of the school. If the let is agreed however, all normal letting rules apply including the

application of the charging policy. Any monies received by the school for such lets would accrue to the Comhairle.

23. REQUESTS FOR USE OF SCHOOL PREMISES BY MEDIA COMPANIES

- 23.1 Requests for the use of school premises by media companies may not constitute a normal let and such cases should be discussed individually with the school's Business Support Officer and the Head of Educational Resource.

CHARGES FOR USE OF SCHOOL PREMISES (FROM 1/1/05 TO 31/3/05)

DESCRIPTION	CHARGE PER HOUR
Children/Young People/Vulnerable Adults	Free for subsidised let sessions. Other uses at appropriate rate below.
Community/Charity/Older persons	
Classroom/school hall or theatre/canteen	£6.00
Playing Field	£22.00
Standard Rate	
Classroom/ School hall or theatre/canteen	£23.00
Playing Field	£48.00
Sunday Usage	
No staff required	£ 6.00
Staff supervision required	£ 23.00
Other uses on application	

Security cameras are located at [*give details for cameras outside and inside the school including where the camera feed is to and whether a recording is being made*] . These cameras are used by the school for the prevention and detection of crime and for health and safety reasons and are registered under the Data Protection Act.

[*Give details of any cameras which may be for entry verification only eg to allow teaching staff to determine who is requesting entry to the school.*]

6. PERSONAL PROPERTY

All pupils are discouraged from bringing unnecessary items of value into school.

[*Give details of any school locker arrangements or other arrangements which the school has in place for safe keeping of valuable items brought in to school inadvertently.*] Parents are asked to avoid giving their child large sums of money to take in to the school (eg substantial sums for school uniforms or school photographs).

Any item of lost property found on school premises or grounds should be handed to a member of school staff who will issue a receipt for items of value. Valuable items found on school grounds when the school is closed should be handed to the local police.

7. KEY HOLDERS

Nominated members of school staff are key holders for the building. Any loss of keys should be reported immediately to the Head Teacher or, in their absence, to the Comhairle's Education Department.

Where there is a need to gain emergency access to the building and no key holder is available, the Comhairle's Community Alarm Service (01851 702023) should be contacted.

8. HANDLING OF CASH

[*Departments/classes/pupils*] are discouraged from keeping even small sums of petty cash or personal cash on the premises without it being stored in the school safe. Cash received by the school will be banked where possible immediately, in line with the Comhairle's financial requirements.

9. SCHOOL LETS

1. Janitorial Schools: All school lets are supervised by our janitor or another authorised member of school staff. Groups letting the school premises are only entitled to access the area being let and must obey all the school's security and health and safety guidelines. Groups will not have access to any sensitive areas of the school (such as school offices) and will not have access to any information being stored about children by the school.
2. Non-janitorial schools [*Give details of current arrangements including security of data/telephones/other.*]

10. IDENTIFICATION OF STAFF

All teaching and non teaching staff and volunteer helpers are encouraged to wear identification badges. Staff will be expected to challenge any person not known to them and not identified by a badge. This may include ensuring that the person is escorted off school premises. Pupils must not take instructions from any adult in school who is not known them or is not wearing a badge. If an unfamiliar adult is on schools premises, pupils must tell a member of staff.

11. MONITORING AND REVIEW OF OUR POLICY

[] School is proud of our good safety and security record and welcomes all positive suggestions on ways to maintain it. Suggestions or comments should be submitted to the [Head Teacher/ the School Board/the Parent Teacher Association.] The effect of the policy will be monitored regularly and the policy revised as necessary.

[date]
[Name of Head Teacher]

APPENDIX N.4

PROPERTY MAINTENANCE- TECHNICAL SERVICES STRUCTURE

(to follow)