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AGUS EOLAÍOCHTA | DEPARTMENT OF
EDUCATION
AND SCIENCE

Planning & Building Unit

Technical Guidance Document TGD-022

Primary School Design Guidelines

1st Edition, October 2007

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DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND SCIENCE

PLANNING AND BUILDING UNIT

Contents

| | | |
|------------|---|-----------|
| 1.0 | Introduction | 3 |
| 1.1 | General | 3 |
| 1.2 | Design Guidance Suite | 3 |
| 1.3 | Design Team Procedures | 4 |
| 1.4 | Application | 4 |
| 1.5 | Further information | 5 |
| 1.6 | Comments & Suggestions | 5 |
| 2.0 | Project Brief | 6 |
| 2.1 | Brief | 6 |
| 2.2 | Typical 16 Classroom schedule | 7 |
| 3.0 | Planning a Primary school | 8 |
| 3.1 | Introduction | 8 |
| 3.2 | Curriculum | 8 |
| 3.3 | The School timetable | 8 |
| 3.4 | Areas and heights | 9 |
| 3.5 | Wall to floor ratio | 9 |
| 3.6 | Grouping of spaces | 9 |
| 3.7 | Circulation | 10 |
| 3.8 | Construction programme | 10 |
| 3.9 | Sample Room Layouts | 10 |
| 4.0 | Room Data Sheets | 11 |
| 4.1 | Application | 11 |
| 4.2 | Schedule of Rooms | 11 |
| 4.3 | General requirements | 12 |
| 4.4 | Classrooms | 13 |
| 4.5 | Library/ General Resource Area | 16 |
| 4.6 | Multi-Purpose Room | 17 |
| 4.7 | Special Education Teacher [SET] Support Room | 18 |
| 4.8 | Administration / General Office | 19 |
| 4.9 | Teachers/ Staff room | 20 |
| 4.10 | Principal/ Deputy Principal's Office | 21 |
| 4.11 | General Purpose Room | 22 |
| 4.12 | General Purpose Room Toilets | 24 |
| 4.13 | Adult toilets including Universal Access with shower | 25 |
| 4.14 | General Storage including Safe, Cleaners, & External Stores | 26 |
| 4.15 | Electrical Metering and Electrical Distribution Centre | 27 |
| 4.16 | Data Communication Centre | 28 |
| 4.17 | Heating Centre (Boiler house) | 28 |
| 5.0 | External Facilities | 29 |
| 5.1 | Site | 29 |
| 5.2 | Landscaping | 29 |
| 5.3 | Car-parking & Set-down/Pick up areas | 29 |
| 5.4 | External Play Areas | 30 |
| | Appendix A | 31 |

1.0 Introduction

1.1 General

- (a) These Primary School Design Guidelines state the specific design requirements and room inter-relationships applicable to the design of primary schools.
- (b) They should be read in conjunction with [TGD-020 General Design Guidelines for Schools](#) which describes the general design principles of school design (Primary and Post-primary), and [TGD-021 Construction Standards for Schools](#).
- (c) This document, in conjunction with the other relevant design guidance (see below), is intended both as a design tool-kit for the Client* & Design Team and as part of a set of reference documents for the evaluation of design submissions.
 - * *In the case of Primary Schools, where the site is owned by the Department of Education and Science, the Department is the client, but for the purposes of this document the term "Client" shall also encompass the School Authorities.*

1.2 Design Guidance Suite

- (a) The [Primary School Design Guidelines](#) is part of a suite of Department of Education and Science [DoES] design guidance documents for Primary and Post-primary schools which include:

| DoES Technical Guidance Document [TGD] | DoES –TGD |
|---|-----------|
| General Design Guidelines for Schools | 020 |
| Construction Standards for Schools | 021 |
| Primary School Design Guidelines | 022 |
| Post-primary School Design Guidelines | 023 |
| Post-primary Fixed furniture Details | 024 |
| Post-primary Room Layouts | |
| Mechanical & Electrical Building Services Engineering Guidelines for Temporary Accommodation School Buildings | 001 |
| Mechanical & Electrical Building Services Engineering Guidelines for Primary School Buildings | 002 |
| Mechanical & Electrical Building Services Engineering Guidelines for Post-primary School Buildings | 003 |
| Information & Communication Technology (ICT) Infrastructure Guidelines for Primary Schools | 004 |
| Information & Communication Technology (ICT) Infrastructure Guidelines for Post-primary Schools | 005 |
| Energy Information Form | 006 |

All of the above Guidance Documents are available on the Department of Education & Science web-site at www.education.ie.

- (b) This Suite of Design Guidance documents is intended to assist in the design and proper planning of buildings in response to the educational needs of a particular school as determined in the brief formulation process.

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1.0 Introduction (continued)

1.2 Design Guidance Suite (continued)

- (c) These Guidelines and the other relevant documents in the Design Guidance suite should be read in conjunction with
- The Brief,
 - The [Design Team Procedures](#) and
 - All other [DoES Technical Guidance Documents](#) published on the Department's web-site.❖

❖ *Always check the Department's web-site for the most up-to-date version.*

- (d) In applying these guidelines to projects, clients and design teams will be obliged to comply in full with the current [Design Team Procedures](#), [DoES Technical Guidance Documents](#) and other guidance issued by the Department, except as stated in [1.4 Application](#) below.
- (e) The above Suite of Design Guidance documents replace all previous Design Guidelines both Primary and Post Primary.
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1.3 Design Team Procedures

- (a) The [Design Team Procedures](#) [DTPs] set out the scope of service for all consultants individually and collectively for all projects stating the requirements and principles for each stage of the design and construction process starting with Project Analysis, and proceeding through the design stages to Tender Documents, obtaining tenders, Construction and Final Account.
- (b) The DTPs apply to all construction projects funded in part or in total by the Department of Education & Science unless otherwise directed by the Department in writing.
-

1.4 Application

- (a) These [Primary School Design Guidelines](#) together with [TGD-020 General Design Guidelines for Schools](#) and [TGD-021 Construction Standards for Schools](#) apply to all Primary construction projects funded in part or in total by the Department of Education & Science (unless otherwise directed by the Department in writing) where a decision to commence architectural design and planning has been confirmed in writing by the Planning and Building Unit.
- (b) The scope of the building project will be the schedule(s) of accommodation and other briefing instructions as agreed between the Client and the PBU.
- (c) Where it is proposed to construct a new school these guidelines and all associated documents in the suite of Design Guidance should be applied in full.

Continued overleaf

1.0 Introduction (continued)

- 1.4 **Application**
(continued)
- (d) In the case of existing school buildings, where an extension, conversion or renovation is proposed, a flexible pragmatic approach will be required. The dimensions and areas stated in this document will apply in full to the new build portion of the project.
 - (e) The dimensions and areas in the existing building will be retained except where the PBU specifies otherwise (based on educational need). In existing buildings the room designation, dimensions, and areas will be as specified in the brief ([Future Use of Existing Accommodation](#)) except where otherwise indicated.
-
- 1.5 **Further information**
- (a) This document and all other Guidance Documents mentioned above are available on the Department of Education & Science web-site at www.education.gov.ie. ❖
 - ❖ *Always check the Department's web-site for the most up-to-date version.*
 - (b) For further advice on these guidelines or any other matters relating to this document, please contact:

Department of Education and Science,
School Building Unit,
Portlaoise Road,
Tullamore,
Co. Offaly.
Telephone: (057) 9324300
Fax: (057) 9351119
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- 1.6 **Comments & Suggestions**
- (a) The Department of Education & Science welcomes comments and suggestions on how to improve these guidelines. Such comments and suggestions should be sent by email to technical_staff@education.gov.ie
 - (b) All comments and suggestions will be considered when revising this document.

2.0 Project Brief

2.1 Brief

- (a) Each project will have an agreed written Brief setting out the scope of works and the Client's requirements for that project. Every brief will comprise (where applicable):
 - (i) A [Schedule of Overall Accommodation](#)
 - (ii) A [Schedule of Future Use of Existing Accommodation](#) (with room areas)
 - (iii) A [Schedule of Residual Accommodation](#) (extensions to existing)
 - (iv) A schedule of alterations to existing accommodation, where necessary for the implementation of that project only (if required)
 - (v) A provisional Schedule of essential remedial works applicable to that project only (see also [Design Team Procedures](#))
 - (vi) A Cost Limit for New Build per square metre (if applicable).
- (b) In all cases the determination of the brief will be based on an assessment of overall medium-to-long term educational need, and the capacity and suitability of existing accommodation to provide for this need.
- (c) For Primary School projects, this brief is determined by the Planning and Building Unit [PBU], in agreement with the relevant School Authority as follows:
 - (i) The School Planning Section of the Planning and Building Unit [PBU] first determines the projected long-term enrolment for the school.
 - (ii) Then based on the current design guidelines, staffing levels, and current area norms, the School Planning Section determines a [Schedule of Overall Accommodation](#).
 - (iii) The PBU then assesses the Educational Suitability of the existing accommodation and prepares both a Schedule of [Future Use of Existing Accommodation](#) and a Provisional Schedule of Alterations & Remedial works (if applicable).
 - (iv) The deficit in accommodation (i.e. the difference between the [Schedule of Overall Accommodation](#) and the [Schedule of Future Use of Existing Accommodation](#)) is called the [Schedule of Residual Accommodation](#) and the total area indicated is the Total Floor Area (area limit) of new build to be funded.
 - (v) The [Schedule of Residual Accommodation](#) plus the [Future Use of Existing Accommodation](#), plus the Provisional Schedule of Alterations & Remedial works (if applicable) and the applicable cost limit all form part of the brief for the project.
- (d) The Project Brief setting out the scope of works must be agreed in writing by both the School Authority and the Planning & Building Unit before the appointment of Design Consultants, and before commencement of Stage 1 Preliminary Design.


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2.0 Project Brief (continued)

2.2 Typical 16 Classroom schedule

(a) Below is an example of a 16-classroom schedule of overall accommodation. It should not be taken as an accurate or typical 16-Classroom schedule for all schools. ❖.

❖ *The number, sizes and types of rooms may not match your schedule of overall accommodation, as each schedule is determined individually based on a range of factors including the number of pupils and teachers. Always refer to the schedule of accommodation for your own school project.*

| Aonad Pleanála agus Tógála, Bóthar Phort Laoise, Tulach Mhór, Contae Uíbh Fhailí. | |  | | Planning and Building Unit Portlaoise Road, Tullamore, Co. Offaly. | |
|--|-----------|---|------------------|---|--|
| <p>XXXX National School, address,TOWN, COUNTY Roll No: XXXXXXX</p> <p>SCHEDULE OF ACCOMMODATION for a 16 CLASSROOM PRIMARY SCHOOL</p> <p>Based on a Projected Long-term Enrollment of XXX pupils</p> <p>With Teaching Accommodation for 4 Full-time Equivalent Special Education Teacher(s)</p> <p>(Teaching Accommodation for 2 Full-Time Equivalent SET(s) in Library/Resource /Multi-purpose Rooms)</p> | | | | | |
| No. of spaces | Area (m2) | Description of Space | Total Area (m2) | | |
| 16 | 80.0 m2 | Classroom(s) incl WCs & storage | 1280.0 m2 | | |
| 1 | 195.0 m2 | General Purpose Room | 195.0 m2 | | |
| 1 | 8.0 m2 | General Purpose Room Servery | 8.0 m2 | | |
| 1 | 20.0 m2 | P.E. Equipment Store | 20.0 m2 | | |
| (1) | 13.0 m2 | WC Area [4 No.] associated with General Purpose Room | 13.0 m2 | | |
| 1 | 66.0 m2 | Library & Resource Area combined (incl storage) | 66.0 m2 | | |
| 1 | 20.0 m2 | Multi-Purpose Room | 20.0 m2 | | |
| 2 | 16.0 m2 | Special Education Tuition Room(s) | 32.0 m2 | | |
| 1 | 16.0 m2 | Administration/General Office | 16.0 m2 | | |
| 1 | 50.0 m2 | Teachers & Staff Room | 50.0 m2 | | |
| 1 | 16.0 m2 | Principal's Office | 16.0 m2 | | |
| | 12.0 m2 | 2 Dual use Staff/Universal Access WCs with shower | 12.0 m2 | | |
| (1) | 35.0 m2 | General Storage, incl safe,cleaner's & external | 35.0 m2 | | |
| (1) | 4.0 m2 | Electrical | 4.0 m2 | | |
| (1) | 2.0 m2 | D.C.C. | 2.0 m2 | | |
| | | Sub-Total | 1769.0 m2 | | |
| 6.0% | 106.1 m2 | Internal Walls/Partitions @ 6.0% | 106.1 m2 | | |
| 18.0% | 318.4 m2 | Internal Circulation @ 18.0% | 318.4 m2 | | |
| | 20.0 m2 | Boiler House | 20.0 m2 | | |
| | | TOTAL (Rounded up to nearest m2) | 2214.0 m2 | | |
| | | Plus maximum 25m2 per stairs per floor [where approved by PBU only] | 0.0 m2 | | |
| | | External: | | | |
| 2 | 585.0 m2 | 2 External Ball Court(s) | 1170.0 m2 | | |
| 1 | 430.0 m2 | 1 Junior Play Area | 430.0 m2 | | |
| | 26 | 26 Car Parking Spaces for Teaching & non-teaching staff | | | |

3.0 Planning a Primary school

- 3.1 Introduction**
- (a) This guidance document, together with [TGD-020 General Design Guidelines for Schools](#) and the schedules of accommodation, should be used as a starting point for developing a design specific to the school.
 - (b) The [Schedule of Overall Accommodation](#), [Schedule of Future Use of Existing Accommodation](#) and [Schedule of Residual Accommodation](#) (extensions to existing) lists the accommodation to be provided (refer to 2.0 the Brief for description of how these schedules are determined).
 - (c) [TGD-020 General Design Guidelines for Schools](#) describes the general design principles for schools (both Primary and Post-primary) including the Design Philosophy, the Built Environment, Health & Safety, Building Location & Orientation, Universal Access, Security, External Circulation and the general principles applying to the internal layout.
 - (d) This document provides detailed information on the spaces required (both internal and external), their area, height and any special requirements applicable to those spaces.
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- 3.2 Curriculum**
- (a) The Primary School Curriculum 1999, incorporates current educational thinking and effective pedagogical practices. Its implementation has represented an exciting opportunity for change and renewal in primary schools. It also celebrates the uniqueness of the child and provides a structured national framework that aids teachers in planning the learning experiences most useful to the child at the various stages of his or her development. It is designed to cater for the needs of children in the modern world.
 - (b) Building upon the child-centred philosophy of *Curaclam na Bunscoile* (1971), the 1999 curriculum incorporates new learning objectives and embraces new approaches and methodologies. Its design reflects six curriculum areas: Language, Mathematics, Social, Environmental & Scientific education (SESE), Arts education, Physical education & Social, personal & health education (SPHE).
 - (c) The Primary Curriculum articulates a progressive and developmental learning experience for children as they proceed up through the primary school. It is laid out at four levels - infant classes, first and second classes, third and fourth classes and fifth and sixth classes.
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- 3.3 The School timetable**
- (a) In agreement with the education partners a standardised school year is implemented in Irish primary schools. The minimum number of teaching days per school year is 183 full school days. Generally, schools close for summer vacation during the complete months of July and August. Schools currently also have breaks of two weeks off during both Christmas and Easter and two shorter mid-term breaks of up to five working days at Halloween and in February.

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