

# Consultation on the School Estate Model



## Summary Report

Dumfries and Galloway council embarked on a period of consultation from February to August 2023 relating to the development of a School Model for Dumfries and Galloway. The feedback will define the criteria for our school estate moving forward, to ensure best-value and sustainable settings, resulting in an improved learning climate for all our children and young people.

You can find more information regarding the consultation process including a 'Briefing Paper' and 'School Model Dashboard' on the Dumfries and Galloway Council website at [www.dumgal.gov.uk/schoolmodel](http://www.dumgal.gov.uk/schoolmodel).



## Learning Estate Strategy

Our ambition is to make the school estate across the authority more sustainable.

We need to ensure our schools are the right size and fit for the communities they serve; that are energy efficient; offer equity in education; and are fit for 21st Century learners.



## Responses

**1,738** individuals took part via the online survey, school engagement sessions or pupil focus groups.



## Online Questionnaire

**1,076** consultees

- Parents
- School/Nursery Staff
- Other
- Community Councils



## School Engagement Sessions

**121** consultees

- Parents Council Chair (or representative)
- Headteachers (or representative)
- Other including Councillors, Ward Officers, Sport and Leisure, Education Staff, National Parent Forum, University of Glasgow



## Pupil and Young People

**541** consultees

- Primary Focus Groups
- Secondary Focus Groups
- D&G Youth Councillors
- Online questionnaires



*“Our Schools have to adapt and update in line with the changing environment and facilities that our children need for the future. Jobs have totally changed so we need to embrace this within our education and ensure that our buildings, resources and teachers are able to bring out the best in the children to reach their full potential. What was required 20-25 years ago, is totally different nowadays. We need to adapt and improve.”*

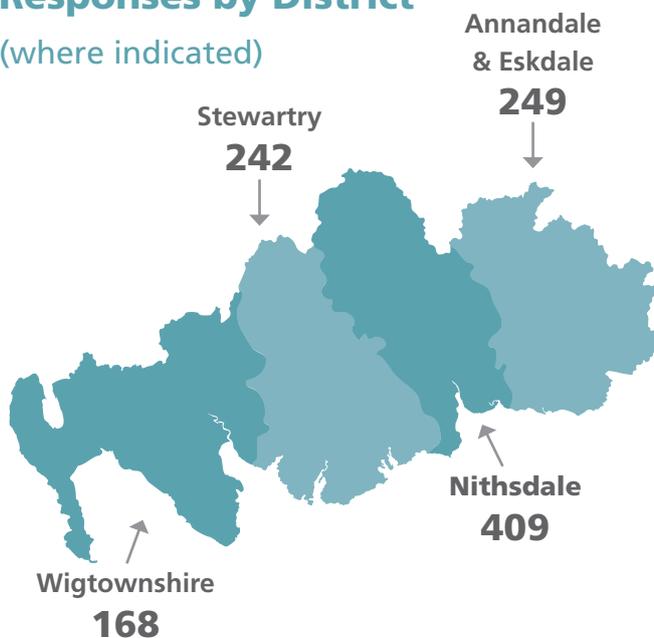


## Demographics

Dumfries and Galloway is a geographically diverse region, and our schools are located in a variety of towns, villages and rural areas. We engaged with consultees across the region to ensure all voices were heard. There was a high uptake of responses from consultees associated with Remote Rural, and Accessible Rural areas, both of which are overrepresented in the responses when compared with local demographics. Non-rural/town schools are slightly underrepresented.

### Online Questionnaire Responses by District

(where indicated)



*“Need to make brave decisions where the school roll has fallen and there is little or no demand for the provision.”*



*“I think it is very important that we have both smaller rural village schools, as well as larger town-based schools to cater for all pupils.”*



## Key Messages Follow on the next pages

**1,738** responses have been carefully considered and analysed. A wide variety of views and ideas were shared.

To ensure a balanced view, we have pulled together a consensus of the most common responses, as well as including representation of minority opinions where appropriate.

### Explanation of terms of quantity

All:	100%
Almost all:	91%-99%
Most:	75%-90%
Majority:	50%-74%
Minority/less than half:	15%-49%
A few:	less than 15%

# Travel



*“As long as the travel infrastructure can support it, and travel is clean, efficient and safe, then travel times of 30-45 minutes for primary and secondary pupils are completely reasonable and also quite generous.”*

In your opinion, how long is a maximum acceptable one-way travel time for nursery children?



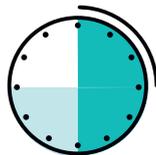
The **majority** of respondents said **15 to 30 minutes** or longer.

In your opinion, how long is a maximum acceptable one-way travel time for primary aged pupils?



**Most** respondents said **15 to 30 minutes** or longer.

In your opinion, how long is a maximum one-way travel time for secondary aged pupils?



The **majority** of respondents said **30 to 45 minutes** or longer.

*“Distance and travel time need to be considered to explore the effects it has on the length of the school day for our learners.”*

*“Fewer, better resourced schools, with improved staff morale (through larger learning communities) to give all pupils the best education possible.”*

*“Sustainable buildings with space for community hubs [and] partner agencies.”*

*“Please prioritise people - the learners and the staff who lead them deserve good conditions in which to learn, work and grow. Strive to make the model fit the needs of people.”*

*“I firmly believe that schools in the region need to be consolidated as the current status is unsustainable.”*

*“We need to ensure all pupils receive similar opportunities/ experiences and that they are not penalised because of which school they attend.”*

*“Costings-per-pupil should depend on the needs of those children (i.e., special needs) and because of rural local costs-per-pupils might be higher but if there is enough demand for a local school then it should stay open.”*

*“Please put learning and teaching at the heart of any decisions regarding school buildings and their use. Invest in our young people now so that they stay or return to our region!”*



## School Size

In your opinion, what should be the minimum utilisation of a school building?

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**60%**

The **majority** of respondents said **60% or higher**.

In your opinion, what should be the minimum number of classroom teachers working in a single primary school to create an effective professional learning community?

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The **average** response was **3.8 primary teachers**

In your opinion, what should be the minimum number of classroom teachers working in a single secondary school to create an effective professional learning community?

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The **average** response was **21.5 secondary teachers**

In your opinion, what should be the minimum number of classes in a primary school?

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The **average** response was **3.45 primary classes**

In your opinion, what should be the minimum number of classes in a secondary school?

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The **average** response was **15.6 secondary classes**

In your opinion, in primary composite classes, what should be the maximum age/stage range between pupils in the same class?



**Almost all** respondents said between **1 and 3 years age range**



## School Buildings

We also heard from stakeholders about the importance of schools that are inclusive of those with disabilities and can support community use, a desire to reduce the overall carbon footprint of our schools and an aspiration for excellence and equity for all learners.



The **majority** of respondents agreed that school buildings and grounds should **support community use**.



**Most** respondents **agreed** that all school buildings should be **accessible** for children, staff and visitors with disabilities.



The **majority** of respondents **agreed** that our school buildings should have high standards in **energy efficiency** and **low carbon emissions**.

# Pupil and Young People Voice



We completed 40 pupil focus groups in schools as well as an online seminar with the Dumfries and Galloway Youth Council. The response and feedback to these sessions were incredibly positive, and our young people were very knowledgeable, well informed and insightful in their response to questions relating to a sustainable school estate.

**98%** of pupils and young people said it was **important or very important** that all schools should give **all children the same opportunities**.

**96%** of pupils and young people said it was **important or very important** that school buildings are the **right size** for the number of pupils using them.

**89%** of pupils and young people said it was **important or very important** that the costs to run a school is **best value for money**.

**95%** of pupils and young people said it was **important or very important** that all schools are **accessible, welcoming and inclusive** for people with a disability.

**77%** of pupils and young people said it was **important or very important** that school buildings have a **low carbon footprint**.



*“A key feature of society is equality and providing equal opportunities to all pupils.”* Secondary Pupil

*“I think the quality of the education should justify travel time, so if travelling for 10 minutes longer will have a positive impact I would suggest that it be considered.”*  
Youth Councillor

*“I think that it is important to remember that anyone might come to this school in the future and you have to think: will they have a disability? Will they require certain things? Or will they have issues such as lack of trust.”*  
Primary Pupil

*“I think it is important schools are close to where pupils live however, I think it is better to travel a small amount of time rather than have a few, small schools that wouldn't be of benefit to the curriculum.”* Secondary Pupil

*“I like (my new school) because there's lots of children to play with and if there's not many people like in (my old school) you can fall out and then you need to do things on your own.”*  
Primary Pupil

*“I would like a school that's not too big because if there's thousands of children it might be scary and there might not be enough space or toilets. A school with one class for each primary would be the right size because you could know everyone in your class.”*  
Primary Pupil

*“It is important for pupils to have peers to play and work with as this boosts their social and team-working skills as well as making new friends and not feeling alone.”*  
Secondary Pupil

*“Being environmentally friendly means that we can be sustainable. More cost efficient in the long run.”*  
Secondary Pupil



# School Review

## We received the following feedback:

Parents, carers and families have a choice in what school to attend (where places are available). We are seeing changes in the population; a decrease in pupil numbers, as well as the movement of families and where they choose to live. This has an effect on our schools and their catchment areas, and we are seeing changes in demand for school places. We need to be responsive to these changes, and therefore we consulted on under what circumstances a school may need reviewed.

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*“Encouraged that you are forward planning and looking to future growth of the education estate.”*

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**75% agreed** a school should be reviewed when *‘the roll of a school will drop below an agreed minimum number for an extended period of time.’*

**84% agreed** a school should be reviewed when *‘a school is near to maximum capacity’*

**70% agreed** a school should be reviewed when *‘the utilisation of a school will drop below an agreed minimum level for an extended period of time.’*

**85% agreed** a school should be reviewed when there is *‘a significant change within the catchment area.’*

**70% agreed** a school should be reviewed when *‘there are significant changes to schools nearby which change demand for places.’*

**58% agreed** a school should be reviewed when *‘the ‘costs-per-pupil’ is disproportionate to other schools in the authority.’*

## Next Steps

- There is a shared understanding from consultees that change is required. We need to make sure we are providing the best education possible to children in all of our communities, and school buildings are a key (but not the only) part in that.
- The pace of change needs to be realistic for quality implementation and sustainable improvement. Communities need to be consulted where changes will impact them, and quality of children’s education needs to be the driver for change.
- We will use the results of this consultation to develop a set of principles for our School Estate. Once these have been agreed by Dumfries and Galloway Education & Learning Committee, we will use these to create a ‘School Model’, which outlines any proposed changes.

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*“Sustainable buildings with space for community hubs [and] partner agencies.”*

*“Costings-per-pupil should depend on the needs of those children (i.e., special needs) and because of rural local costs-per-pupils might be higher but if there is enough demand for a local school then it should stay open.”*

*“It is vital that we operate an efficient school estate since resources are so limited.”*

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thank  
YOU

We would like to acknowledge and thank everyone who contributed their views and voices to help shape a future Dumfries and Galloway School Model.