

Consultation

Launch Date 3 November 2011

Respond by 26 January 2012

Ref: Department for Education

Consultation on Revised School Premises Regulations

This consultation aims to seek views on revisions to the regulations governing school premises, and on a reduction in the amount of guidance produced by the Department.

Department for
Education

Consultation on Revised School Premises Regulations

A Consultation

- To** Users and designers of, and those responsible for, school premises.
- Issued** 3 November 2011
- Enquiries To** If your enquiry is related to the policy content of the consultation you can contact telephone 0370 000 2288 ore-mail:
PremisesRegulations.CONULTATION@education.gsi.gov.uk

Contact Details

If your enquiry is related to the DfE e-consultation website or the consultation process in general, you can contact the Consultation Unit by e-mail: consultation.unit@education.gsi.gov.uk or by telephone: 0370 000 2288.

1 Summary

1.1 Regulations

Currently there are two sets of school premises regulations set by the Department for Education (DfE):

- Part 5 of The Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2010 (ISSs), covering independent schools, including academies and free schools;
- The Education (School Premises) Regulations 1999 (SPRs), covering schools maintained by local authorities(1).

(1) The Regulations apply to nursery, community, community special, foundation, foundation special and voluntary schools and to pupil referral units.

1.2 There is also a substantial amount of other legislation that applies to all buildings, including schools. Compliance with this other legislation will go a long way towards ensuring the physical safety and well-being of pupils. However, schools also need to ensure that their premises are conducive to education, that pupils are provided with facilities appropriate for delivering the curriculum, and that pupils' specific welfare needs are met.

1.3 School premises regulations are therefore needed to ensure that the specific needs of pupils are met - particularly on issues considered to be high risk because of their impact on welfare or on education, such as washroom facilities, lighting and acoustics. However, they do not need to replicate what is adequately covered in other legislation. Our objectives are to remove any school-specific premises regulations where they duplicate other legislation, to

simplify those that are still needed, and to establish one clear set of requirements that apply to all types of schools.

1.4 The regulations that we propose to retain, simplify or remove are set out in the consultation document. Where they are retained, we have tried to set them out more clearly than before. You are asked whether or not you agree with the wording of the new regulations and if not, why not. Where we propose removing regulations, we set out the rationale for doing so and ask whether or not you agree with this and if not, why not.

1.5 If you can identify that there would be risks to pupils' welfare or possible adverse effects on education through making these changes, or that the proposals do not go far enough to remove unnecessary regulation, please elaborate in the appropriate comments boxes in the consultation response form.

1.6 **Specific Guidance**

As with the current SPRs, the new premises regulations will be supported by guidance that describes the minimum standards, and advises on how they can be satisfied. A draft of this guidance is included in the consultation document and you are asked whether or not you agree that the information set out is accessible and adequate and, if not, why not.

1.7 **Protection of playing fields**

To ensure that existing school playing fields are protected to provide for the future needs of schools and their communities, new draft guidance has been produced. A draft of this guidance is included in the consultation document and you are asked whether or not you agree that the information set out is accessible and adequate, and, if not, why not.

1.8 **Wider Guidance**

Currently there are over 5,000 pages of departmental guidance on the design and management of school premises available in hard copy and/or on-line. Some of this is out of date, or has been superseded by later documents, while other material could be much more concise. Our objective is to significantly reduce the amount of guidance available. To do this we will withdraw all documents that are of limited value and streamline the rest. How we propose to do this is set out in the consultation document and you are asked for your views on this.

2 How To Respond

- 2.1 Consultation responses can be completed online at www.education.gov.uk/consultations by emailing PremisesRegulations.CONULTATION@education.gsi.gov.uk or by downloading a response form which should be completed and sent to:

Sally Smith
Central Capital Unit
Sanctuary Buildings
Great Smith Street
London
SW1P 3BT

3 Additional Copies

- 3.1 Additional copies are available electronically and can be downloaded from the Department for Education e-consultation website at: www.education.gov.uk/consultations

4 Plans for making results public

- 4.1 The results of the consultation and the Department's response will be published on the DfE e-consultation website in spring 2012.