

Extra-curricular activity

29 October 2020

If your school can offer any extra curricular activities they will let parents and carers know in the usual way. As teachers are key workers they are under huge pressure to keep schools open. We hope that everyone understands this, as it means that they might not be able to offer the normal range of clubs for some time.

This information updates parents/carers about extra-curricular activity (ECA) which is being re-introduced incrementally. Our priority is safety when re-introducing a wide range of extra-curricular activities delivered by us and by our partners. We are following national guidance to ensure we maintain the highest possible standards of safety for your children and our staff.

We've answered the questions we've been asked by parents, carers and our partners. Our answers reflect current guidance from Education Scotland. You should read this information in the context schools re-opening guidance. This guidance does not relate to leisure activity delivered in the community by

- non-Council organisations or volunteers
- in libraries, community centres or community-based youth work.

We are frequently asked about Scottish Government or specific governing body guidance for activities such as professional/non-professional sport, performing arts and events for adults/industry. Schools may supplement the Council's guidance for curricular and extra-curricular activity with specific governing body or equivalent advice. However, their advice should not replace or undermine the Council's guidance.

The current position and principles regarding extra-curricular activity are that it's:

- essential for literacy, numeracy, and health and wellbeing
- important for your child's learning, development and wellbeing (for example part of a pupil's plan and can be justified by using appropriate risk mitigations)
- something that can safely take place within school as an extension to school learning because the R number suggests it is safe to do so, following the relevant guidance

There is a hierarchy of risk which takes account of activity taking place indoors/outdoors and whether it is exertive or non-exertive. Exertive activity is when:

- someone's resting or walking breathing rate is significantly increased
- it generates sweat or
- the voice or breath is projected at volume or speed and carried over distance.

Questions and answers

[What is extracurricular activity?](#)

[How will you ensure that ECA will be safe?](#)

[Why have the clubs and groups in my school not started yet?](#)

[Why can't volunteers deliver ECA but external providers can?](#)

[I'm worried that my child's activity \(eg study club, orchestra\) has stopped and therefore they might not get their wider achievement qualification. What can be done?](#)

[I can pay for private virtual lessons, so why can't the Council provide this service?](#)

[I am a parent volunteer and want to get my group or club up and running again. Why is this not possible?](#)

[Infections between children under 12 are extremely low so why can't all outdoor ECA take place when there is such low risk?](#)

[Why are some private schools running a full ECA programme but Council schools are not?](#)

[Why are different activities available at different schools?](#)

[How do I find out what is available for my child to do at their school?](#)

[Why are school and city orchestras and choirs not running yet?](#)

[Can primary football team training take place at weekends?](#)

[When will the Active Schools programme start?](#)

[When will the Sports Academy start?](#)

What is extracurricular activity?

Extracurricular activity (ECA) is Council-run activity beyond the standard school day/week and school curriculum (indoors/outdoors and onsite/offsite):

- weekdays before school curriculum time
- weekdays after school curriculum time (up to 6pm)
- lunchtimes
- weekends.

ECA is discretionary but is acknowledged as being important for pupils' learning and achievement, skills development and health and wellbeing.

How will you ensure that ECA will be safe?

We have in place robust infection control and hygiene measures as well as strict guidelines for people who are delivering the activities. We'll complete a risk assessment for each activity.

Why have the clubs and groups in my school not started yet?

We are gradually and cautiously introducing ECA and each school context is different. Each school will start ECAs when it is safe and possible. We'll consider available space, available and approved deliverers and hygiene measures.

Why can't volunteers deliver ECA but external providers can?

Due to the current situation with covid-19, we're gradually increasing adult/external interaction across the school estate. We'll review using volunteers to deliver ECA regularly.

[Back to top](#)

I'm worried that my child's activity (eg study club, orchestra) has stopped and therefore they might not get their wider achievement qualification. What can be done?

Please contact your school for advice. Schools will make every attempt to provide ECA where it is essential.

We are asking awarding bodies to consider this and provide further guidance on assessing achievement, where it's not possible to bring groups of young together due to restrictions.

I can pay for private virtual lessons, so why can't the Council provide this service?

We have protocols in place for all online learning which are designed to make sure staff and young people are safe. Private tutors can use online platforms that are not approved for use in Council schools. Private tutors are not Council employees and we cannot dictate or regulate what they offer.

I am a parent volunteer and want to get my group or club up and running again. Why is this not possible?

Due to covid-19, we're gradually increasing adult/external interaction across the schools. While volunteers are currently not able to deliver ECA, we're reviewing this position regularly.

Schools are working hard to keep your children safe and within bubbles. Many extra-curricular groups and clubs bring children and young people from different ages and schools together. This would create a high-risk situation for your children. Council extra-curricular activity must also maintain the same bubbles.

Infections between children under 12 are extremely low so why can't all outdoor ECA take place when there is such low risk?

We need to consider more than the infections between children under 12. ECA requires adult supervision and sometimes involves transporting children from one place to another. This increases the overall risk of transmission between adults as well as children. For this reason. We have guidelines for what is permitted for outdoor ECA.

[Back to top](#)

Why are some private schools running a full ECA programme but Council schools are not?

The Council has a duty of care to all pupils and staff. We're responsible for making sure everyone is safe as they return to our school, early years centres and special schools. We've prioritised the safety of staff and pupils in a curricular setting so we're gradually introducing other activities such as ECA. Other organisations will be assessing their risks for their own operations.

Why are different activities available at different schools?

Each school will re-start ECA according to its own context and the needs of its pupils. For example, each school will consider:

- available spaces for ECA
- wider achievement awards being undertaken
- availability of approved delivery partners.

We'll restart ECA following guidelines, infection control measures and hygiene controls as well as assessing the risks.

How do I find out what is available for my child to do at their school?

Please contact your school directly to find out what ECA opportunities are available.

Why are school and city orchestras and choirs not running yet?

We cannot safely bring large numbers of children of different ages and from different schools together to play, sing and rehearse

Education Scotland has issued guidance which states that due to the higher risk of infection, we should avoid singing and playing brass and wind instruments. We'll update guidelines for schools and extra-curricular activity as Scottish Government updates their guidance.

[Back to top](#)

Can primary football team training take place at weekends?

We are running team training following the guidance about who is delivering the training and the pupil grouping. Please note that volunteers are not currently permitted to deliver ECA and school groupings need to be maintained.

When will the Active Schools programme start?

Active Schools Co-ordinators are currently working in schools to support children with physical activity and are not currently available to resume the Active Schools programme. We'll review this on a regular basis and will update you when this changes.

When will the Sports Academy start?

We'll re-start the Sports Academy depending on:

- infection rates
- facility and coach availability
- when guidelines allow for pupils from multiple schools to come together.

We'll let you know when we've reviewed this and are able to re-start this activity.

[Back to top](#)