

Saturday Schools - Programme to Support Education Recovery and Address the Impact of Covid-19 in East Renfrewshire Schools

Introduction

The impact of lockdown in response to the Covid-19 pandemic has affected all pupils as a result of the interruption to, and loss of learning. It has also exacerbated inequities in attainment and access to enrichment, out-hours-activities and support, especially for the most disadvantaged, while compounding universal issues of health, wellbeing, and resilience.

The Scottish Government has recognised this with additional funding for both teaching staff and education support staff, whilst also noting that a future flare-up of the virus may require a flexible response from the Education Sector.

This proposal outlines a Saturday School programme of activities which:

- combines supported study, sports, arts, music and cultural activities;
- utilises school estate venues in both the east and west of the Council area to minimise barriers to participation such as physical, geographical or emotional access;
- includes lunch to support learning, nutrition, health & wellbeing;
- involves additionalities in line with the SG guidance, combining a range of professionals to complement each other and support closing the attainment gap; and,
- is scalable, should the impact merit, or the future course of the virus require it.

Education Gap and Enrichment – Partnership between the Education Department and the Culture and Leisure Trust

Alongside the recognised gap in education and associated learning loss there has been a corresponding gap in the access many pupils have to vital enrichment activities (sports, arts, culture, nature, music and digital learning) during lockdown which can boost their academic achievement, academic attainment and social behaviours, increase disadvantaged pupils' cultural capital, improve pupils' critical thinking, and increase resilience. This proposal aims to address the gaps in learning that pupils have experienced through the Covid-19 lockdown and builds on the experience from the Easter and Summer Holiday Hubs in engaging vulnerable children in positive experiences whilst maintaining social contact with peers.

The direct education intervention of the programme will concentrate on essential life skills (or 'character'). By 'character' we mean a set of attitudes, skills and behaviours – such as self-control, confidence, social skills, motivation, and resilience – that underpin success in school and beyond. These are also referred to as 'social and emotional skills', 'non-cognitive skills', or 'essential skills'. They include the ability to respond to set backs, work well with others, build relationships, manage emotions, and cope with difficult situations. There is growing evidence that these skills are important to children's academic attainment and later outcomes.

Schools should consider how the programme being offered by East Renfrewshire Culture and Leisure Trust could complement their own approaches, and collectively address the impact of COVID-19 in their local context. Schools should identify and target those pupils who would benefit most from the experience.

Saturday School Enrichment Hubs

We know a great deal about what works within East Renfrewshire:

- Activities have to be local to where pupils live for them to be able to access opportunities readily;
- Pupils find it comfortable accessing activities in their local schools;
- Price is a barrier to pupils from disadvantaged households;
- Parents have confidence in school based programmes in East Renfrewshire;
- Multi-activity provision is more successful in engaging disadvantaged pupils than single activity programmes;
- Multi-activity staffed provision engages staff more successfully than single activity programmes and pupils don't engage and learn if they are hungry.

A partnership model will be required to successfully deliver this approach including ERC, ERCL, local employers (construction), colleges and clubs. It is envisaged the Saturday Schools model will include a skills training component. Ideas being considered include:

- Technology;
- Construction;
- Sports coaching;
- Duke of Edinburgh Award to provide pupils with practical skills; and,
- Awards and qualifications to assist the step into employment.

Operating Model

Saturday Schools in Barrhead High and Maidenhill Primary (two Saturdays every month). They will operate from 10.00am to 3.00pm and will be open to primary and secondary pupils nominated by base school.

A broad programme (indoors and outdoors) will provide a range of opportunities including sports, arts, library/digital learning/music and multi-activity programme. A focus on developing essential study skills will be a vital element of the programme.

Participants will be organised in age group bubbles: P1-3; P4-7; S1-S3 and S4-S6. A healthy lunch will be provided for each pupil. ERCL will lead on the management and coordination.

Staffing Requirement

ERC	Number Required for 2 Hubs
Teacher (supported study)	x 2 (1 per hub)
PSA'S	x 4 (2 per hub)
Instrumental Music Instructor	x 2 (1 per hub)
Caretaker/Janitor cover	x 4 (2 per hub)

ERCL	Number Required for 2 Hubs
Hub Leaders	x 4 (2 per hub)
Group Leaders	x 8 (4 per hub)
Sports Coach	x 2 (1 per hub)
Arts/Drama Tutor	x 2 (1 per hub)
Librarian	x 2 (1 per hub)

Measuring Impact

We will link with the QIO team and Educational Psychology Services to develop a more holistic approach to assessment (engagement, motivation, interpersonal skills and wellbeing) with the possibility of involving families in the process. Being able to measure the impact of this sort of intervention will be beneficial to the future design and delivery similar interventions.