

**REPORT TO: CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S SERVICES COMMITTEE ON
20 AUGUST 2008**

SUBJECT: OPEN ACCESS TO SCHOOL GROUNDS

BY: DIRECTOR OF EDUCATIONAL SERVICES

1. REASON FOR REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek Committee's approval to place a limit on the times during which school grounds are open to the public outwith school times.
- 1.2 This report is submitted to Committee in terms of Section D1 of the Council's Administrative Scheme relating to exercising all the functions of the Council as Education Authority within the terms of the relevant legislation with regard to nursery, primary, secondary, further, community education and Lifelong learning.

2. RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 It is recommended that Committee agrees to place a limit of 10p.m. on the times when school grounds are open to the public and that this be reviewed in 12 months time.**

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 For many years this Council, and its predecessor Councils, has operated an "Open Access Policy" with regard to school grounds outwith the school day. This policy is in place to enable community use of the grounds for leisure, sport and recreational pastimes. In the main, the policy works well and there are no major issues.
- 3.2 However, in recent years there has been an increasing prevalence of anti-social behaviour and vandalism in certain areas of Moray with a particular focus on Secondary and Primary schools in the Elgin area. A number of measures have been put in place in conjunction with Community Planning partners, in particular Grampian Police and again, in the main, these measures have proved successful.
- 3.3 It is felt however that the current policy is somewhat too liberal and open-ended and therefore it is proposed that a 10 p.m. limit be placed upon the access times to all school grounds in Moray.

4. SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS

(a) Corporate Development Plan/Community Plan/Service Improvement Plan

This proposal accords with the stated aims of the Corporate Plan "To improve the quality of life for all people in the area"

(b) Policy and Legal

This proposal would be an amendment to current policy.

(c) Resources (Financial, Risks, Staffing and Property)

It is anticipated that this policy change will impact positively upon the financial and property risks associated with vandalism.

(d) Consultations

Karen Wiles, Principal Solicitor, Sgt Colin Taylor, Grampian Police and the Senior Management Team of Educational Services have been consulted and are in agreement with the proposals. Deborah Brands, Principal Accountant, has been consulted and agrees with the financial implications of the report.

5. CONCLUSION

5.1 That Committee agrees to place a limit of 10p.m. on the times when school grounds are open to the public and that this be reviewed in 12 months time.

Author of Report: Alistair C. Farquhar, Head of Educational Resource Services
Background Papers:
Ref: DMD/JR/Reports/Children and Young People's Services
Committee/20 August 2008/Open Access to School Grounds