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First aid scheme rolls out to Scots primaries

PRIMARY schools across Scotland are being encouraged to teach first aid, as a national training scheme is rolled out.

The Scottish Primary School First Aid Programme, launched by St Andrew's First Aid, provides free and easy online access for teachers to download and teach first aid in their class.

The initiative was proposed in 2018 due to research which showed children as young as five were able to play a life-saving role.

A training programme for teachers was created to enable them to teach first aid to pupils from primary one to primary seven, with the objective of having young people across Scotland skilled and confident in first aid.

A pilot project with Stirling Council was launched in 2021, which trained 56 teachers from 31 of the 40 primary schools in the region.

The charity is encouraging teachers to find out more and to register to receive access to its online learning platform and comprehensive suite of digital teaching resources.

Training days will be made available to support staff, aimed at helping them feel confident in the

delivery of the programme.

Sessions are designed to be delivered in short, age-appropriate lessons, either over seven years or as one full, four-hour course.

Schools will be able to apply for certificates for every pupil who has completed the course.

The charity is also set to launch "Safe: St Andrew's Framework for Education" ahead of the new academic session in August, with four banded levels – bronze, silver, gold and platinum.

Education Secretary Jenny Gilruth, who visited the training centre in Glenrothes, Fife, last year, said: "Learning and teaching in school is about equipping young people with knowledge, understanding and skills to prepare them for life beyond school."

"No-one expects to have to deal with a medical emergency, but first aid skills can be crucial in supporting the response to one."

Ms Gilruth added: "This initiative from St Andrew's First Aid will help equip primary pupils with potentially life-saving skills, benefiting them and our wider society."

Jim Dorman, director of operations and community

engagement at St Andrew's First Aid, added: "The launch of this initiative is the culmination of many years of research, engagement and hard work, and we are thrilled to be in a position to finally make our ambition a reality."

"There are considerable amounts of evidence, including our own, which demonstrates that young children can play an active and valuable role in helping to save a life."

"This project is about giving teachers the confidence and resources to introduce first aid into their classrooms, helping to ensure children across Scotland gain the knowledge and skills they need to act in an emergency."

Mr Dorman added: "The success of the Stirling pilot has shown us just how much of a difference this programme can make, and we're excited to now be offering this opportunity to schools nationwide."

St Andrew's First Aid can trace its history back to 1882, when the St Andrew's Ambulance Association was established by a group of medics for the purpose of providing an ambulance service.

The 1900s brought the introduction of the St Andrew's

Ambulance Corps.

This consisted of volunteers who provided first aid classes, as well as first aid services at various events.

In 2006, it began operating as St Andrew's First Aid, to distinguish it from the Ambulance Service.

It now delivers first aid, health and safety, and mental health first aid training to companies, local

authorities, schools and members of the public across a number of training venues.

These include hubs in Aberdeen, Dundee, Edinburgh, Falkirk, Glasgow, Glenrothes, Hamilton, Inverness, Stirling, Perth and Livingston.

The new teaching materials can be found online at <https://www.firstaid.org.uk/get-involved/>

primary-school-programme/ and more information about St Andrew's First Aid is available at <https://www.firstaid.org.uk>.