



The Essential Guide to Summer Schools

Study Support Co-ordinators in schools and LEAs

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Overview

This guide is based on the experiences of 25 Summer School pilot projects funded by DfES to encourage young people to take part in out of school hours learning activities (study support) in the 1999 summer holidays. This document aims to provide simple guidance for schools and others wishing to set up a summer school.

Outline of contents

This guide covers planning, setting up and running summer schools. Each section is introduced with 'Top Tips' suggested by the pilot projects.

Related documents

Extending opportunity: a national framework for study support (EOSS)

Study Support Summer Schools 1999: an evaluation of 25 pilot schemes (RR200)

Background and Introduction

This guide describes 25 Summer School pilot projects funded by DfES to encourage young people to participate in out of school hours learning (study support) activities during the 1999 summer holidays. Over 5,000 students aged between 4 and 16, from 120 schools, took part in a variety of different programmes ranging from art, drama and sport to landscape gardening and producing a community newspaper.

In this document we refer to the pilot projects run in 1999 as the 'pilot projects'. We use the term scheme to cover summer schools generally, recognising that many schemes use different names (eg Summer Universities, Learning Festivals). We use the term programme to describe the particular provision within a scheme made from a group of young people.

Aims and Objectives

The pilot projects set out to improve pupils' motivation and self esteem and support higher standards of achievement. While the aims and objectives of individual projects varied according to the needs they were addressing, there were a number of common goals. These included;

- Raising achievement and aspirations.
- Making learning enjoyable and fun.
- Encouraging independent learning.
- Extending the range of learning opportunities available.
- Working with partners from a wide range of organisations in the public, private and voluntary sectors.
- Involving students who do not usually participate in out of school hours activities.

All the pilot projects set clear learning outcomes for participants, including strategies to build on what they had learned during the pilot project when they returned to school.

Based on the experiences of the 1999 pilot projects, this document is a simple guide for schools and others who want to run a summer scheme. It covers planning, setting up and running summer schemes. Each section is introduced with 'Top Tips' suggested by pilot projects. The guide was written for DfES by two consultants - Rex Hall and Marian Wood - who worked with some of the pilot projects and who have extensive knowledge of study support.

More detailed evaluation of the 1999 pilot projects, including in depth case studies carried out in eight schemes where good practice was demonstrated, can be found in the National Foundation for Educational Research Report No: RR178 available from DfES Publications on 0845 60 222 60 priced £4.95.

The Pilot Projects were run by:

Archway School, Gloucestershire
Ashby Grammar School, Leicestershire
Beeches Primary School, Peterborough
Bircotes and Harworth Community School, Doncaster
Blackburn with Darwen LEA
Brookfield High School, Liverpool
Coventry LEA
The Florence Brown School, Bristol
Glenburn School, Skelmersdale, Lancashire
Harborough School, London Borough of Islington
Hertfordshire LEA
Holsworthy Community College, Devon
Kirklees Metropolitan Council
Langdon School, Newham, London
Middleton Technology College
Minsthorpe Community College, Wakefield LEA
Padgate School, Warrington
Piper Hill School, Manchester LEA
Salford and Trafford EAZ, Manchester
Sittingborne Community College, Kent

Somerset LEA

Thomas Tallis School, Greenwich, London

Tower Hamlets Summer University, London

University of the First Age, Birmingham

Woodlands School, Basildon, Essex

DfES is grateful to all the schools, organisations and individuals who worked hard to ensure the success of pilot projects.

The New Opportunities Fund (NOF) is now providing £205 million of lottery money to fund summer schools, and other out of school hours learning activities throughout the UK, of which £25 million is specifically allocated for summer schools.

Planning Ahead

- TOP TIPS:**
1. Start planning your summer scheme as soon as is possible and plan carefully - success is all in the planning.
 2. Establish a working group of all the interested parties and meet on a regular basis.
 3. Allow staff to develop the programme - don't dictate it too rigidly.
 4. Involve students in planning.

Planning nearly always takes longer than expected. The pilot projects found they generally needed at least six months and that twelve would have been ideal. Consortia arrangements, involving several schools, usually demand more planning time. The scheme should be linked to the school or LEA development plan.

- Be clear about visions and aims.
- Identify partners to contribute to delivery of the scheme.
- Share the vision with all partners.
- Identify who the scheme is for [See Targeting on page 16].
- Think about staffing early on [See Staffing on page 17].
- Consult the school caretaker about arrangements for the holiday cleaning programme and refurbishment work.
- Start promoting the Summer Scheme as early as possible, so that participants and staff can plan holidays.
- Talk about refreshments - will you provide lunch? If so, how?
- Ensure everyone is clear about the intended ethos (likely to be more informal than school).
- Take account of other planned activities in the local community and the scope for links, eg. the project at Holsworthy built on an existing playscheme and Minsthorpe developed an existing summer festival. Early contact can prevent tension and conflict.
- Give clear messages to parents about the scheme and its purpose.

- Make clear that students who sign up really are expected to turn up.
- Set out clearly details of activities so participants can decide what to do.
- Keep non-participating staff informed about the scheme, particularly where their rooms or resources may be used.
- Establish clear and thorough pre-course registration procedures.

When and Where

Timing

No one part of the summer holiday automatically or always lends itself to a successful scheme more than others. While the pilot projects operated right across the holiday period, the most popular weeks were the last week in July and the first week in August.

Pilot Projects involving single schools or small groups of schools generally operated for one or two weeks, while LEA run pilot projects often provided courses at different venues over the major part of the holiday.

- The preferences of staff and students may determine when a scheme operates. Teaching staff and students may want a well earned break before embarking on a scheme.
- Take into account other schemes e.g. summer literacy / numeracy - if they run concurrently there can be problems if pupils see the more prescriptive course as less 'fun' than other provision. On the other hand, you may want to organise some joint activities with summer literacy and numeracy schools. This approach makes best use of premises and allows for valuable cross-fertilisation between schemes.
- For the secondary sector, running the scheme during the week of GCSE or 'A' level exam results can be a good way of making the best use of staff time.
- If there is a break between the end of term and the start of the programme, there is a need for more intensive marketing to remind students of their commitment.

Length of the day and duration of the scheme

Some schemes may run for the morning or afternoon only, while others may run for a full day. Access to resources, transport for students, availability of staff, school cleaning programme may affect the length and timing of sessions.

The ideal duration of each scheme will also vary. This should be based on the amount of time you judge necessary to achieve your aims and should take into account, the need of ages and capabilities of students. Some schemes, eg. video making, may need a very different schedule from others, eg. maths revision.

Early consultation with students, parents and staff to ensure that the length of day and duration of the scheme is convenient for participants will pay off in terms of high levels of attendance.

- Local planners should consider the impact of projects on childcare.
- Schemes should be planned carefully to complement other local provision.
- Half day workshops may be a better model for older students who may have other commitments such as part time work.

Build in time to share success and celebrate achievements. Some pilot projects recognised achievement by holding a 'graduation' ceremony, others used school assemblies to present certificates to participants and display work produced during the pilot project.

Venues for Summer Schools

Schemes do not have to be based in schools. Other venues can be attractive to students and schools may not be easily available if redecoration, cleaning or refurbishment are underway. Only a quarter of the pilot projects held their entire provision at a single school.

- Schemes designed to help transition from primary to secondary school are usually best held at the secondary site.
- Universities and Further Education Colleges may have facilities and resources not available in schools. ICT resources, in particular, tend to be superior in FE /HE colleges.
- Libraries, Art Galleries, Museums, Heritage Centres and others may have facilities relevant to the theme of particular schemes.

- Community centres, youth clubs, libraries and other LEA facilities may be available free or at low cost.
- Outdoor facilities and residential centres can offer a different and challenging environment for students' learning.
- Health and safety is important *wherever* a project is based.

Types of Programmes / Courses / Activities

- TOP TIPS:**
1. Challenge the students.
 2. Have a creative programme which combines learning with fun!
 3. Be adventurous - try to catch the imagination of the target group.

Think about the type of scheme you want to run. Schemes can be set up by individual schools, by a consortia of schools or by a borough or county.

Some pilot projects ran specialist programmes such as Arts courses, while others delivered a range of activities under a banner e.g. Minsthorpe Community College Summer Learning Festival. One special school, Baginton Fields in Coventry, worked with West Midlands Arts to run a life skills week for 93 students with complex learning difficulties.

The range of activities offered in the pilot projects was very diverse. While some courses offered subjects similar to those covered in school, many were very adventurous, for example, a DJ workshop and a drivers' hazard perception course. Where the curriculum content was familiar, the style of delivery and hands-on approach ensured that it was very different from the school experience. This was often achieved with the use of innovative approaches to learning such as those based on multiple intelligences theory, as at Kirklees Summer University and the University of the First Age in Birmingham.

If you are catering for groups with SEN or those in rural communities, you need to think carefully about transport, so that those who would benefit most are able to get to the scheme and feel encouraged to take part.

Large schemes involving consortia of schools

Large schemes, which we define here as those catering for 120 or more participants drawn from two or more schools, face particular challenges of organisation and management. Such pilot projects found it helpful to;

- Establish a working party and delegate different responsibilities to working group members.
- Hold regular and well minuted planning meetings to ensure that everyone know exactly what was expected of them.
- Ensure clear lines of communication between all staff once the programme was up and running.

Rather than creating bureaucracy, these arrangements generate a clear sense of purpose and team spirit amongst teaching and non-teaching staff.

Larger schemes will also need to be particularly careful to ensure that health and safety arrangements and emergency procedures are understood by all staff, volunteers and students.

How do you make it different?

- TOP TIPS:**
1. Consult with and involve students when planning the scheme.
 2. Offer activities or approaches not normally possible in school.

It is important to establish the right ethos to attract pupils especially those who do not already attend out of school hours learning. This means thinking carefully about the *nature* and *style* of the scheme.

- Involve external specialists working alongside teachers. (See also Partnerships on page 21). Stanchester Community School ran a summer arts school staffed by independent artists and the Beeches Primary School ran a garden scheme involving a landscape architect. A wide range of 'experts' can contribute and share their interests and skills.
- Use venues other than schools e.g. heritage centres, museums and galleries either as above for the scheme or organise visits to places of interest (See further suggestions under Types of Programme on page 12).
- Try and bring in local 'personalities'.
- Plan plenty of media coverage - local media are very keen to cover good news stories.
- Have a theme: Middleton Technology School divided the whole scheme into teams using a Star Wars theme with group leaders, including Princess Leia and Darth Vader. The participants were Stormtroopers.
- Providing T-shirts or badges for participants helps to create a distinct identity. At Beeches Primary Garden Scheme, adults and students alike wore Beeches Ground Force T-shirts.

Give courses snappy titles

- Swash Buckling Slam (Fencing)
 - Create Glass with Class
 - Be crafty for the millennium
- Blackburn with Darwen*
- Funky Junk
 - River Deep, Mountain High
 - Hot Video/chill at zero
- M54WT (Salford and Trafford)*
- Funky maths Experience
 - The Bright Lights
- Tower Hamlets
Summer University*
- Black Thunder
 - Caribbean Day
- Some 'R' Set to learn
Holsworthy Community
College*

Targetting

- TOP TIPS:**
1. Individual programmes or courses within a scheme can be targeted at different groups of students.
 2. Develop clear selection criteria to help school staff identify students who would benefit from the scheme.

All schemes should add value to the education experience of those who take part. They should not be seen solely as making up for past failures. You may decide to take all comers or specifically target those who:

- are disaffected;
- are underachieving;
- are identified as 'Gifted and Talented';
- are about to transfer from the primary to secondary sector;
- have low reading attainment;
- do not generally take part in out of school activities;
- have particular needs.

This may be more straight forward in school based schemes where the students are well known to the staff than in large consortium schemes. Consortium schemes will need to consult closely with schools and set clear criteria for selection of students.

Staffing

- TOP TIPS:**
1. Think carefully about staffing (including student : staff ratios), taking account of the proposed activities and the target group.
 2. Allow some flexibility in staffing; try to involve others as well as teachers.
 3. Think carefully about who will lead the scheme.

Who should staff the programme?

Teachers are obviously key, but may well not be the only staff you want to involve to achieve your aims. For example at Stanchester Community School in Somerset, local artists played a key role so allowing the scheme to offer high quality professional arts experience. Teachers were also involved to provide their professional perspective.

You do not need every member of staff from every school concerned to take part in your scheme, but the more support you have the better. The support of the senior management team is essential, to provide encouragement and unlock resources and to ensure that the scheme is part of a whole school approach to study support.

When recruiting

- Be open and try to ensure that all staff have an equal chance to apply, but remember that not all staff will want, or be able, to take part.
- Decide roles, responsibilities and pay rates across the whole scheme and make these public.
- Remember that part-time FE/ adult education staff may be available in the summer. Such staff took part in a number of the pilot projects.
- Youth workers staff many study support projects. Their style of working is particularly appropriate for out of school hours learning.
- Look for enthusiasm and for people who enjoy working in informal settings.

It is important that all staff meet before the scheme starts to consider key issues relating to programme content, practical day to day administration, health and safety and so on. The pilot projects found that several meetings were needed.

What about pay?

- Many LEAs are now developing standard policies for paying staff for study support. Schemes will want to take these into account.
- Think carefully about the right level of pay for the co-ordinator, staff and non-teaching staff.
- School staff are usually paid through the school payroll. If using external providers talk to the LEA about how they should be paid.
- Take account of the need to meet the travel and other cost of volunteers and about any rewards or incentives you might want to offer to volunteers.

What are the Health and Safety implications?

- Child protection is crucially important. You need to check that all staff who will have unsupervised access to students are properly checked and vetted. This includes police checks, checks against the DfES List 99 and taking up and checking references.
- If off site activities are planned, a member of the staff team should visit, to carry out a risk assessment and to ensure course aims can be achieved (the DfES's publication, *Health and Safety of Pupils on Educational Visits*, gives advice on risk assessment and exploratory visits).
- Take account of LEA guidelines for such provision.

Using Volunteers

- TOP TIPS:**
1. Use student volunteers as peer tutors / mentors and role models.
 2. Recognise the contribution of volunteers and their achievements. These could range from NVQ accreditation through to book tokens for students to letters of thanks.
 3. Evaluate the volunteer scheme on a regular basis.

Volunteers have an important role to play in out of school hours learning. Many projects benefit from using older students, for example students from a partner school or older students from within the school.

How do you use volunteers?

Volunteers can:

- provide one to one support to participate, eg hearing children read;
- provide additional ICT support;
- deliver elements of the programme where they have expert knowledge;
- market the scheme;
- provide refreshments (in one of the pilot projects a local pensioner did this).

Student volunteers can:

- be trained as anti-bullying counsellors as part of their programme (Sittingbourne Community College's pilot project used student volunteers in this way);
- organise the closing ceremony (at Archway School for their volunteer Y10 and Y12 students took on this role);
- be effective tutors and mentors for young pupils and members.

How and where do you recruit volunteers?

- University students, not only those following PGCE courses, are often keen to develop their skills and collect evidence for their CVs. Many universities run student tutor programmes, offering HE students the opportunity to support classroom activities. Students from Edge Hill supported young people with special needs at Glenburn School in Skelmersdale.
- Further Education colleges often run volunteer programmes for their students, sometimes linked directly to their studies.
- Primary schools can recruit secondary age students to work with pupils.
- Secondary schools can recruit Y10, Y11 and sixth form students.
- Local community organisations and local businesses can be good source of volunteers.
- Local businesses.

Training volunteers

- All volunteers should be given some kind of job specification so they understand why they are there, what they should be doing and who they are accountable to.
- Training relevant to their role as volunteers should be offered. THSU uses a range of trainers to support the Peer Motivators. They are usually training professionals from youth and community and sometimes arts/business backgrounds. The Millennium Award Recipients (Millies) are young people who receive training to enhance their effectiveness as advocates for their generation and motivators for their peers.

Rewarding volunteers

- Accreditation is a way of encouraging volunteer support. Some projects used the Duke of Edinburgh Award or ASDAN Youth Award. Other students used the experience to collect evidence for their GNVQ courses.
- Arrangements and criteria for rewards and/or expenses need to be set out clearly before the scheme.

NB NOF guidelines state that volunteers are unpaid.

Partnerships

- TOP TIPS:**
1. Think broadly about partners - every community, however small, has potential partners.
 2. Involve partners from the outset, so they have a say in how the project evolves. Remember that effective partnerships take time and effort.
 3. Involve partners throughout and thank them at the end.

Summer schemes offer an ideal opportunity for a school to bring in partners. Partners can bring enthusiasm, expertise and experience. They can offer options that are beyond the resources, knowledge and expertise of the school. Partners can offer role models to pupils. Partners can also help with funding projects - contributions in kind are as valuable as cash.

Examples of effective partnership working:

- In Somerset, The Cosmic Casper Club brought their computers into primary schools to teach students how to create web sites.
- Salford and Trafford Summer University worked with the local Roller Hockey Team who ran a 'Roller Hockey for Beginners' course.
- Tower Hamlets Summer University works with over twenty partners in a variety of ways (See Planning on page 7)
- Baginton Fields Special School used an external Arts group to teach circus skills to SLD students.
- Bircotes and Harworth involved local health workers who were interviewed by students for an article in their local newspaper.
- Ashby Grammar School involved The Sealed Knot, a military historian, and The National Trust, among others, when they took a group on a visit to a castle to participate in a re-enactment of the civil war.
- Kirklees involved the Playing for Success study centre at Huddersfield Football Club in their UFA Maths workshops.
- Blackburn with Darwen involved the local FE college to run a

vehicle painting course. This allowed students access to workshop facilities which are not available in school.

- Florence Brown Special School took students on visits to British Aerospace to see 'how things stay up in the air'. Another of their partners was Bristol University who lent powerful microscopes so the students could examine finds from their pond-dipping activity.
- Padgate Summer Learning worked with the youth service to run sessions for disaffected young people who would not, usually get involved in out of school hours activities.

Funding

TOP TIPS:

1. Budget carefully: remember to cost all the elements.
2. Most of your funding will probably go on staffing.
Consider carefully the allocation of staff to courses and the extent to which this is providing value for money.
3. Estimate and value in-kind contributions eg. free use of premises. Keep all your funders happy through positive feedback, involvement in evaluation/dissemination, etc.
4. Be realistic about your costs and seek funds accordingly. It is sensible to develop a full business plan, especially for large schemes. Many funders require this.

Many funding streams can support the development of summer school programmes. LEA advisers will be able to provide schools with information about potential funding bodies.

- Regeneration Funding such as SRB is supporting out of school hours learning in many parts of the country.
- Tower Hamlets Local Education Authority has been successful in bidding for Lottery funding from the Charity Lottery Board for their term time study support. This does, however, require long term planning.
- Private sector funding should be considered. Do some homework to find out what local companies are supporting in your area - check the local press and contact your Education Business Partnership.
- Charging students for provision may lead to some students being excluded, and charging will thus affect targeting. In some cases, time spent collecting fees negates any financial gain. An element of charging may be appropriate for residential experiences or if you believe it can help with commitment. *NB. NOF will only accept charging in exceptional circumstances.*
- Charitable Trusts, especially if your scheme has a theme, e.g. Arts.

- Partners may prefer to provide support in-kind (expertise, experience, enthusiasm and goods and services other than cash).
- The contribution of volunteers should be included as an in-kind contribution. See page 19 'Using Volunteers'.

Marketing and Branding

- TOP TIPS:**
1. Make sure all staff are kept informed about the scheme.
 2. Invest in clear publicity material and programmes.

Marketing to colleagues across the schools involved

- All staff need to be kept informed about the scheme. The better informed they are, the more able they will be to encourage students to attend. Partner agencies e.g. the Education Welfare Service and English as Another Language workers might help by talking to parents about the scheme as they visit homes.
- Think about how best to keep staff not participating informed about:
 - what's happening;
 - when;
 - outcomes.

Marketing/promoting the programme to pupils

- Offer 'taster' sessions for pupils before the end of the academic year.
- Use catchy titles and printed T-shirts to give identity. This helps to make activities seem different from school and can help to make courses more appealing e.g. 'Funky Maths'.
- Use descriptors similar to adult education programmes to make the content, outcomes and target group clear.
- Use Peer Marketing and Promotion. For example, detached work on the 'street', word of mouth and school assemblies to promote the scheme.
- For schemes running later in the holidays, consider reminding students by:
 - sending letters home to remind pupils of their commitment;
 - teachers directly marketing the scheme.

School based schemes can rely on individual contact which also gives the chance to promote the scheme. Large consortium schemes cannot do this so easily, and need to rely on promotional material which will capture student's interest and imagination. In addition the larger the scheme, the more likely that some students will fail to show up. Have a reserve list in case some students do not turn up on the first day.

Courses which offer certificates or external qualifications can add to the attraction, especially for older students. Examples include;

- Y7 pupils from Middleton School received the CLAIT Award (Computer Literacy and Information Technology).
- Tower Hamlets Summer University offered:
 - the chance to achieve the Community Sports Leadership Award which could help them to get part-time employment as sports coaches;
 - Tower Hamlets: 'First Aid', run by St. John's Ambulance;
 - 'Basics of Babysitting' certificate - a course compiled by the Red Cross.

Marketing the programme to parents and carers

- Send letters/flyers to parents and carers about the scheme's value and aims to encourage participation.
- Staff who are visiting parents as part of their work in the community could help to promote the scheme (See Marketing to colleagues on page 25).

Marketing the programme to the local community and the media

- Advertisements in the local press can be very useful. Try to get such advertising free of charge or negotiate a reduced fee.
- Invite the local media to cover particularly interesting aspects of the programme, e.g. the official opening or graduation event.

- Inviting local celebrities and/or dignitaries such as the Mayor or local MPs can attract the attention of the press.

Consider a marketing strategy which is appropriate to the programme, target group, budget and resources. For example, if you have hundreds of flyers to distribute you will need an efficient distribution network and timescale thought through in advance.

Measuring Success

- TOP TIPS:**
1. Build in evaluation measures from the earliest planning meetings.
 2. Build up a strong database to help with evaluation and monitoring.
 3. Make sure your programme feeds into other year-round initiatives, projects and programmes.

Evaluation has to be fit for purpose and match the scheme and its aims and objectives. It does not need to be a complicated process but should allow you to demonstrate the impact the scheme has had. Simple measures, such as getting feedback from staff and pupils as you go along, can inform future provision. The success of the scheme should be measured against a set of criteria agreed by the planning group, e.g.

- Did all the pupils attend every session?
- Did pupils' confidence and self esteem improve?
- Were pupils better able to work with others?
- Did pupils improve specific skills e.g. ICT skills?

Points to consider when evaluating;

- A well constructed questionnaire is a useful tool for evaluation.
- Pupils' diaries kept during the programme can form part of the evaluation.
- Photographic and video evidence were used as part of the evaluation on some of the pilot projects.
- Review meetings were held on a daily basis on many pilot projects.
- You can involve all participants or a representative sample in evaluation.
- For schemes designed to assist a particular group of students, ensure that students see the gains they make.
- Think about how best to ensure that the gains continue after the summer school.

- Once the scheme has finished, a report on the lessons learned should be prepared to share with participants and adults involved.

An evaluation programme for larger schemes will be more complex and may need to build in flexibility as well as commonality. For such schemes evaluation might cover:

- How can you help students use what they have learned?
- How will you feed back to schools? Some pilot projects provided schools with a list of children participating and the learning outcomes they achieved.
- How can you encourage students to build on their learning and feed back to school themselves?

Some pilot projects found it useful to assign the evaluation role at the outset an 'outsider' rather than the co-ordinator; perhaps another senior member of the school staff or an appropriate outside agency eg. LEA officer or HE institution.

Associated further reading/publications

The following DfES publications are available, free of charge, from the DfES Publications Centre, PO Box 5050, Sudbury, Suffolk, CO10 6ZQ
Tel: 0845 602 2260

To order please quote title and order code.

Study Support: A Code of Practice for the Primary Sector (Order Code COP-PRIM)

Study Support: A Code of Practice for the Secondary School (Order Code COP-SEC)

The Code of Practice for Public Libraries (Order Code COP-LIB)

Extending Opportunity: a national framework for study support (Order Code EOSS)

Tower Hamlets Summer University Good Practice Guide (Order Code GPRSU)

Other useful publications:

Learning Beyond the Classroom
Education for a Changing World
Tom Bentley, Demos,
Routledge

Multiple Intelligences
The Theory in Practice
Howard Gardner, Basic Books,
New York 1993

Get Ahead
A Short Cut to Straight As
Tony Buzan

Succeeding at Study Support
An evaluation of twelve model projects in primary and secondary schools
Education Extra 1998

Making the Most of the Holidays
What schools are doing in the holidays to raise achievement
Education Extra (for Lloyds/TSB Foundation) 1998

Available from:
Education Extra, 17 Old Ford Road, London E2 9PL
Tel: 0208 709 9900