

[Redacted]

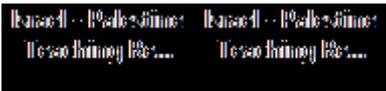
From: Bruce A (Andrew)
Sent: 22 May 2017 12:47
To: Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills
Cc: DG Learning & Justice; Robertson FMG (Fiona); [Redacted]
Maxwell B (Bill); Armstrong A (Alan); [Redacted]

Subject: religious and moral education - submission on Israel/Palestine teaching resource next steps - 22 may 2017

Please find attached a submission providing advice for DFM on next steps in relation to the Israel/Palestine teaching resource, along with an annex providing draft responses to the range of correspondence received on this matter.

Thanks

Andy



Andy Bruce
Deputy Director, Curriculum, Qualifications and Gaelic
Scottish Government

[Redacted]

From: Andy Bruce
Learning Directorate
22 May 2017

PS/Deputy First Minister

SCHOOL MATERIAL ON ISRAEL AND PALESTINE

Purpose

1. To provide advice to the Deputy First Minister on proposed actions in relation to the draft school material prepared on Israel and Palestine and to provide draft responses to various correspondence addressed to the Deputy First Minister on issues relating to the material.

Priority

2. **URGENT.** The Deputy First Minister met with the Scottish Council of Jewish Communities (SCoJeC) and the Scottish Friends of Israel (SFI) recently. Given the sensitivities involved there is merit in him writing to relevant stakeholders, a number of which have already written to him and/or to Education Scotland, to clarify the measures being taken.

Detail

Review of Draft Material

3. In his recent meetings with representatives of SCoJeC and SFI, the Deputy First Minister agreed to consider how best to ensure the teaching materials prepared on Israel and Palestine represented a fair and balanced package. He stated that he would consider with Education Scotland how best to ensure this and agreed that, in the meantime, the resources would be held in a password protected area of Glow and would not be made available publicly.
4. The intention is that Education Scotland will now work with the partners involved in the development of the draft materials to review them, taking into account the responses received to the consultation in late 2016. Any additional related material placed on Glow since the consultation will be identified and also reviewed as part of this task. Following this work, Education Scotland will make arrangements to pilot the material with partners proposing schools for this exercise. Feedback on the material will be collated and assessed and, should there be requirement for further change, refinements can be made in discussion with partners prior to making the material available more widely.
5. The objective of this work is to reach a point where Education Scotland can confirm that partners assess the resources to be appropriate and balanced, with the best possible support from those partners having been secured. Given the point in the school session, further consultation and preparation for piloting would take place over the summer with a view to pilots running in the autumn. Piloting may need to take place over a few months to enable teachers to fit in these materials to their normal cycle of class topics and activities. Subject to his agreement of this approach, we will

keep the Deputy First Minister informed of progress and likely timing for finalising the materials following the outcomes of the pilot exercise.

6. Subject to the Deputy First Minister being content with the proposed arrangements for reviewing and developing the draft material, Education Scotland will write to all partners to invite them to participate in the process. The Deputy First Minister should be aware, however, that this process may result in some frustration being expressed by organisations representing the Palestinian community. These stakeholders consider the materials to have already been through an appropriate consultation and quality assurance process.

Access to Draft Material

7. There is some sensitivity about where the draft material is located and a decision is required as to where the material is placed and who should have access to it over the interim period while they are reviewed and developed.

8. There are essentially two areas of Glow that would be suitable for teaching materials such as those in question, Glow Blog and Glow SharePoint:

- The **Glow Blog** is an area of Glow which can be made public but which can also have specific pages password protected. In such circumstances anyone can request a password and the blog's owner decides whether or not to grant access. No disclosure is required. Any comments posted in this space can be viewed by all those given password access to it. If the password is removed, content becomes available to all.

- The **Glow SharePoint** is an area of Glow which can be accessed by anyone who has undergone disclosure and been given a Glow account, entailing a personalised registration and password. In practice this is how the majority of teachers access material on Glow. It is possible to create a limited defined group of Glow members to be given access to any particular page (sub-site) of Glow. Doing so makes it possible to have the resources on Glow Sharepoint but limit access to only specific named people (probably teachers) involved in a pilot.

9. In the case of the draft material on Israel and Palestine, this was initially located on Glow Blog where it was managed by the Glasgow and Clyde Rights-Based Learning Group (GCRBL), with password access granted to those involved in developing the material.

10. At the point at which the GCRBL Group judged the materials to be ready for piloting, it agreed with Education Scotland that the resources would need to be moved from their current position on the Glow Blog to Glow SharePoint (and its global citizenship area). This was to allow teaching staff to access the materials and to have a facility to share the findings from pilots with teaching professionals. Education Scotland's understanding was that all parties involved in the consultation were aware that the resources would be piloted in a few schools for this purpose. In such a circumstance Education Scotland has clear expectations that practitioners would not post comments on an outward facing website, especially with an issue as sensitive as this one.

11. In preparing to make these access changes, the password protection was removed from the Glow Blog area on 23 March, however, feedback received indicated that

public access was not appropriate and the material was moved swiftly onto Sharepoint and removed from the Blog. This, in turn, caused concern among some of the partner organisations (Palestinian groups) which expressed dissatisfaction over what they perceived to be a greater restriction on access to the material.

12. Education Scotland has not been able to issue access rights to GCRBL partners to view the material on Glow SharePoint as safeguarding procedures require all adults to have undergone disclosure checks, which is not the case with all the partner organisations. It has, however, copied the material back onto the Blog (27 April 2017) but with a clear statement that the materials are still undergoing consultation.
13. In summary, the material is only accessible currently:
 - on Glow SharePoint by those with Glow registration and passwords (mostly teachers).
 - on the Glow Blog by partners who are provided with the password.

The Deputy First Minister has also been given access to view the material on the Glow Blog should he wish to see how it is accessed.

14. In determining where the material is best located for the period during which it will be reviewed, developed and piloted, we have identified three options:

Option 1: Material is held on the Glow Blog and Glow SharePoint (the current position).

This could support piloting and consultation with teachers in the way Glow SharePoint is typically used but would place a clear separation between practitioners commenting and sharing their views of the material and the partner organisations who have been involved in developing the material thus far and who have a key interest in their usefulness. This option may risk heightening any sense of suspicion or/and mistrust and serve to inhibit improved collaborative working

Option 2: The material is held on Glow SharePoint only.

This could support piloting and consultation with teachers in the way Glow SharePoint is typically used but would be likely to cause dissatisfaction among the partner organisations who have developed the material so far. They may well perceive themselves as excluded from the piloting process and this may heighten existing suspicions over the handling of the material. This option would also not support improved collaborative working. The potential risks to stakeholder relations associated with this approach apply whether or not the materials are available to all teachers or limited to a select group only.

Option 3: The material held on Glow Blog only.

This could support piloting and consultation with teachers, albeit not via SharePoint. Both partner organisations and a defined group of teaching professionals could be given access to the material by password. Comments would be visible by all parties, although teaching professionals could be given guidance about how they might most constructively offer feedback and comments, given the sensitivities of the subject matter and the nature of the online platform with all partners involved. A named 'teacher only' area in SharePoint could also be established to hold teacher feedback.

Education Scotland advises that these specifics can be discussed with partners as details in an agreed process for piloting.

15. Our advice is that option 3 is the best option for the next stage of piloting and development of the material.

Correspondence and an FoI Request

16. The Deputy First Minister will wish to be aware that Education Scotland has received a request under the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002 from Hugh Humphries, Secretary of the Scottish Friends of Palestine. His request is attached in full at **Annex A** and Education Scotland will ensure the Deputy First Minister and special adviser colleagues see and clear the response to Mr Humphries.

17. The Deputy First Minister is familiar with the correspondence received from Micheline Brannan, Chair of Scottish Council of Jewish Communities (9 February and 7 December). However, the Deputy First Minister has also now received correspondence from a number of stakeholders representing the Palestinian community:

- Hugh Humphries, Scottish Friends of Palestine - 7 April and 14 May
- John Mitchell, Scottish Friends of Palestine – 14 April
- Levette Callander, Scottish Palestinian Forum – 26 April
- Arthur West – Scottish Friends of Palestine – 16 May
- [Redacted] – North Lanarkshire Council – 3 May

18. These correspondents are critical of the decision to retain the password access to the materials, expressing the view that the materials have been sufficiently quality assured and should be made available for use.

19. Copies of the above correspondence along with draft replies are attached at **Annex B**.

Recommendations

20. That the Deputy First Minister:

- agrees to the proposed arrangements for Education Scotland to lead the partners in a review and piloting of the draft material on Israel and Palestine and, subject to that agreement, notes that Education Scotland will write to partners inviting them to participate;
- agrees that while this process of further review is taking place, the draft material should be placed on the Glow Blog with password protection (**option 3**), which will enable access to the material to be limited, but granted specifically to the partners involved in their development and to anyone involved in a piloting process;
- notes the FoI request received by Education Scotland (attached at **Annex A**) and that he will get the opportunity to see and clear a draft response to this; and
- considers the draft responses in his name to various correspondents on this issue attached at **Annex B**.

Andy Bruce
Deputy Director, Curriculum, Qualifications & Gaelic
22 May 2017

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST TO EDUCATION SCOTLAND FROM THE SCOTTISH FRIENDS OF PALESTINE

Education Scotland has received the following request under the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002 from Hugh Humphries, Secretary of the Scottish Friends of Palestine.

In relation to the development of the Israel-Palestine Learning and Teaching Resource, I request the following information dating from April 2015:

- 1. On how many occasions have the representatives of Scottish Council for Jewish Communities, Scottish Friends of Israel, Glasgow Jewish Representative Council and other related bodies such as the Israeli Embassy met with John Swinney MSP and /or officers from Education Scotland?*
- 2. What were the dates of the meetings and which organisations were represented?*
- 3. On how many occasions have the representatives of the Association of Palestinian Communities, Scottish Friends of Palestine, Scottish Palestinian Forum and other related bodies such as the Palestine Alliance met with John Swinney MSP and /or officers from Education Scotland?*
- 4. What were the dates of the meetings and which organisations were represented?*

In relation to the development of the Israel-Palestine Learning and Teaching Resource, I request the following information dating from April 2015:

- 1. How many FOI requests have been received (not including this one)?*
- 2. Of these requests how many were received from the Scottish Council for Jewish Communities, Scottish Friends of Israel, Glasgow Jewish Representative Council and other related bodies such as the Israeli Embassy?*
- 3. How many were received from the Association of Palestinian Communities, Scottish Friends of Palestine, Scottish Palestinian Forum and other related bodies such as the Palestine Alliance?*

Please provide copies of all correspondence dating from April 2015 in relation to the development and "signing off" of the Israel-Palestine Learning and Teaching Resource. These should include correspondence with Education Scotland, other members of education staff, local authorities, head teachers and the various organisations mentioned above.

ANNEX B

SCHOOL MATERIAL ON ISRAEL AND PALESTINE - CORRESPONDENCE TO THE DEPUTY FIRST MINISTER AND DRAFT RESPONSES

Correspondence addressed to the Deputy First Minister on the issue of the school material on Israel and Palestine has been received from the following:

1. Micheline Brannan, Scottish Council of Jewish Communities – 9 February (and 7 December)
2. John Mitchell, Scottish Friends of Palestine – 14 April
3. Levette Callander, Scottish Palestinian Forum – 26 April
4. Arthur West – Scottish Friends of Palestine – 16 May
5. [Redacted] – North Lanarkshire Council – 3 May

The Deputy First Minister has also been copied into correspondence to Education Scotland from:

6. Hugh Humphries, Scottish Friends of Palestine – 7 April and 14 May

Copies of the above correspondence along with draft replies for the Deputy First Minister's consideration follow.



RECEIVED 20 FEB 2017
MSA

9 February 2017

John Swinney Esq MSP
Deputy First Minister / Cabinet Secretary for Skills and Education
The Scottish Government
St. Andrew's House
Regent Road
Edinburgh
EH1 3DG

Dear Mr Swinney

EDUCATION SCOTLAND: PROPOSED ISRAEL PALESTINE TEACHING RESOURCE

I enclose a copy of a letter I sent you by email on 7 December 2016. I received an acknowledgement dated 16 December.

However I have not received a substantive reply to the letter and this is becoming a matter of concern to the organisations on behalf of which I wrote to you.

I would be most grateful if you could let me know when I can expect to receive a reply to my letter, and also whether you will agree to meet us to discuss our concerns.

Yours sincerely

[Redacted]

MICHELINE H BRANNAN
Chair, Scottish Council of Jewish Communities

[Redacted]



7 December 2016

John Swinney Esq MSP
Deputy First Minister / Cabinet Secretary for Skills and Education
The Scottish Government
St. Andrew's House
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Edinburgh
EH1 3DG

Dear Mr Swinney

EDUCATION SCOTLAND: PROPOSED ISRAEL PALESTINE TEACHING RESOURCE

I am writing to you formally on behalf of the Scottish Council of Jewish Communities (SCoJeC), the Glasgow Jewish Representative Council (GJRC), the Scottish Association of Jewish Teachers (SJAC) and the Scottish Friends of Israel (SFI) about the plans to launch a teaching resource on Israel and Palestine that is being prepared by the Clyde Rights group under the auspices of Education Scotland.

The background to this initiative is that, in March 2015, a North Lanarkshire school had to apologise after issuing a worksheet to 11-year-old pupils describing Palestinians as "terrorists". This was immediately condemned by, amongst others, the Israeli Embassy who described it as "abhorrent ... deeply hurtful to Israelis affected by terrorist attacks, a betrayal of Palestinians who stand up against terrorist groups, and above all, an educational and moral abuse of the young students themselves."

(<http://www.bbc.com/news/uk-scotland-glasgow-west-31727699>). In response to this incident, we understand that a meeting was called of the 8 West of Scotland local authorities involved in Clyde Rights; this was attended by 6 representatives of the relevant councils, who, with support from [Redacted] of Education Scotland, decided to develop teaching materials on Israel and Palestine for Scottish schools as discussed by the Cross-Party Group (CPG) on Palestine on 22 April 2015

(http://www.parliament.scot/CrossPartyGroups/Palestine/minutes_20150422.pdf).

During its development, the resource has been placed in a protected area of the GLOW website which we could not access.

[Redacted]

of West Dunbartonshire Council, has been leading the project. Following representations from the Jewish Community, convened a 'Consultative Group' but no access to the resource was given.

In October 2016 invited representatives of Jewish organisations (which [Redacted] conflated with the 'Israeli community') to a meeting on 29 November at Education Scotland's Optima Building. At this meeting 8 representatives of 4 Jewish organisations were invited, for the first time, to view the complex materials along with their teaching guides, activities and background reading. As [Redacted] is no longer in post, [Redacted]

[Redacted]

Education Scotland was also present along with [Redacted] ed]

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The Scottish Council of Jewish Communities (SCoJeC) is Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation no. SC043838

digital officer to assist with the technology. [Redacted] joined us for part of the time, along with representatives of Glasgow City, North Lanarkshire, and the Commissioner for Children and Young People in Scotland.

We understand that there will be a separate meeting with Palestinian associations and pro-Palestinian activists, and another with teachers and students, and that [Redacted] will be meeting you for a progress report on 14 December, which suggests that there is interest in the project at the most senior level of the Scottish Government. This is why I am writing to you at this time to raise our concerns.

[Redacted] has a track record as an activist for Palestinian rights and is on record as supporting the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) movement. This gave us some doubts as to whether the work would be impartial, but as [R] expressed commitment to consultation we decided to wait and see. We were, however, concerned to learn from someone who attended and took notes that [Redacted] had said at the CPG on Palestine in April 2015 that something was needed "to counteract the Holocaust narrative". Nothing in our study of the materials at the 29 November 2016 meeting served to allay our concerns about the whole concept of the resource, or its supposed impartiality.

The resource is intended for use in global citizenship and rights based education, as well as, potentially, modern studies and history. We question why this long-standing and most intractable of conflicts should have been chosen as the focus for such education, and particularly for primary 6 to secondary 2. We were told on 29 November that the primary school is the right place for this as there is time in the curriculum, whereas the secondary school curriculum is overcrowded. We were also told that the subject is already being taught at this level, but no evidence was provided for this statement – apart from the North Lanarkshire worksheet mentioned above. [Redacted] who introduced himself as an expert on the teaching of controversial subjects in school, but is known to be active in a small group called "Scottish Jews for a Just Peace", likened this to Holocaust education, which is sometimes considered an inappropriate subject for primary schools, but which is taught in primary schools because that is where curricular time is available.

With reference to Holocaust education, when [Redacted] was reminded of what she had said to the CPG, she at first denied that [Redacted] had said this, but then said that, in Holocaust education, the creation of the State of Israel is sometimes presented as 'the happy ending' and the resource is designed to counter that view. We had in our delegation a teacher with 30 years' experience of Holocaust education, who confirmed that this is incorrect and that the establishment of the State of Israel is not relevant to and is therefore not included in teaching about the Holocaust.

Our delegation at the meeting represented a cross section of the Jewish community in Scotland, including one person of Israeli origin, but could not be regarded as representing Israel. As you know, antisemitism is at an unprecedented level for 80 years and has rarely been more topical or hotly discussed in the UK as it has recently, with, for example, the Labour Party inquiry into antisemitism closely followed by the Home Affairs Select Committee report. It is impossible to separate discussion of the Israel-Palestine conflict from the wider question of the Jewish people and their safety and security wherever they live, as they can be seen as a proxy target for Israel. Moreover, studies have shown that Israel is an important part of the identity of more than 90% of Jews living in the UK and when Israel is attacked we all suffer.

Research carried out by SCoJeC into *What's Changed About Being Jewish in Scotland*, which was funded by the Scottish Government (2014, www.scojec.org/bjis2_findings.html) has found that Jewish people living here are becoming more anxious and afraid to identify openly as Jews and that this is directly related to the growth of anti-Israel sentiments in the public discourse. As you may be aware, Israel is subject to relentless vilification in social media by Scottish pro-Palestinian groups, and to weekly hostile demonstrations in our major cities, as well as particular hatred at times when it is in the news. For example, on 17 August this year, when a celebration of the diversity of Israeli culture, including Druze, Samaritan, and Bedouin, as well as Jewish presenters, was held as part of the Edinburgh Festival Fringe, this was subject to a baying mob of protesters outside who shouted abuse, including "Your tickets are covered in Palestinian blood", continuously for a 12 hour period.

In summary, Jewish people in Scotland are often the direct target for anti-Israel campaigns, and thus find themselves the object of abuse and occasionally physical attack (as recently happened to Student Chaplain Rabbi Bodenheim, in Edinburgh, which he described when he led Time for Reflection on 22 November 2016).

In these circumstances, we do not believe it is appropriate for a resource on Israel and Palestine to be offered to Scottish schoolchildren as a way of educating about human rights. The constantly changing political situation regarding Israel and Palestine, and extremely complex rights and wrongs of the history, are hotly debated by academics (including in Israel itself), and the wider Middle East situation changes radically from day to day. While we accept that teachers can deal with complex issues and ones on which there are varying points of view, there are many other topics that could be chosen for human rights education which would be more appropriate. The topic is likely to be divisive, for the following reasons.

The vast majority of Scottish schools have no Jewish pupils. A discussion on Israel and Palestine would for many pupils be their first introduction to Jews and Judaism, and pupils could come to identify Jews with Israel, and Muslims with Palestine as if this were their defining issue.

It is inevitable that the resource will polarise opinions among pupils. From what we read of the materials, there is an unconscious but unremitting bias towards the perspective of certain groups of Palestinians, and even some of the selected vignettes of Israeli voices sound as if they are apologising to the Palestinians. Because the materials have been consciously and deliberately presented in terms of 'two sides', pupils will inevitably take sides, and support those portrayed as victims and deserving. It will be challenging – to say the least – for any children who arrive at their own conclusions for whatever reason and want to go against the tide. Jewish children and those of Israeli origin will be under pressure whichever 'side' they take and Muslim children are also at risk of being stereotyped and forced into a box. There is a real risk of bullying and intimidation for children at our schools.

Use of the resource in schools may also reinforce dangerous misinformation propagated by certain groups such as the claim that Zionism is 'Jewish supremacism'. Potentially this will lead to further persecution of Jewish people and those of Israeli origin living in Scotland, and exacerbate divisions between Jewish and Muslim communities at a time when both communities are working well together and striving for improved collaboration.

On 6 December we were given formal access to the resource via a weblink and told that we must submit detailed comments by 9 December. Even if we were to engage with this process, that is an insultingly short deadline for materials that have been in preparation for more than 18 months.

For all the reasons given above, we do not propose to send a detailed critique. We are concerned that this resource is not compliant with the Scottish framework of "Getting It Right for Every Child", and do not believe that Education Scotland should be supporting this project. We ask that no further work be supported on this resource and it should be withdrawn from circulation.

We would be willing to meet you to discuss this further if you would find that helpful.

We look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely

[Redacted]

MICHELINE H BRANNAN
Chair, Scottish Council of Jewish Communities

Copy, [Redacted] Education Scotland

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Ms Micheline Brannan
Chair
Scottish Council of Jewish Communities
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G46 6UE

May 2017

I am writing in response to your correspondence of 7 December and 9 February and following our meeting of 11 May.

I valued the discussion we had at our meeting regarding the draft school material on Israel and Palestine and acknowledge the significance of the points raised by you and your colleagues. I have considered how best to proceed in relation to this matter in order to ensure that fair and balanced material is available to schools. Given the sensitivity of the issues, I have asked Education Scotland to work with partners in leading a review of all the draft material. This will involve taking account of the consultation responses and will include a piloting exercise in a number of schools with feedback being used to develop the material further. Through this review and development work, and with effective collaborative working between the partners, I am confident that we can arrive at an appropriate and balanced package of material.

You will also wish to be aware that while this process of further review is taking place, the draft material will be placed on the Glow Blog with password protection which will enable access to the material to be limited but granted specifically to the partners involved in its development and to anyone involved in a piloting process.

Education Scotland will be in touch about arrangements for reviewing the material but, in the meantime, I want to take this opportunity to say how much I and my colleagues in both Scottish Government and Education Scotland welcome the willingness of SCoJeC and other organisations to be involved and engaged in educational developments. I thank you for your contributions and I look forward to this valued relationship continuing into the future.

JOHN SWINNEY

John Mitchell's Correspondence (by email) – 14 April

Dear Mr Swinney,

I have received a number of emails from friends in the teaching profession about the Israel and Palestine teaching resource. They have informed me that they cannot access the resource.

In a letter from Education Scotland we were told it would be on the Education Scotland GLOW blog. This location was ideal as the resource was accessed without difficulty. Within a week the resource was not available and teachers were unable to find it.

My question is: why has the resource been moved from an open area on the blog to a password protected area where teachers are finding it impossible to access the resource?. The whole purpose of the resource was to make sure that the unfortunate situation that occurred in North Lanarkshire, when an inexperienced teacher issued homework that was extremely offensive to the Palestinian Community, would not happen again. The resource was supported by Dr Allan at a meeting in the Scottish Parliament where he gave an assurance that, 'the Palestinian story would be told.' The Minister instructed Education Scotland to facilitate this resource.

[Redacted]

I find this situation very disconcerting, especially when you and the Party are trying to make Scotland a fair and open society where all groups are treated fairly.

I am assuming you have not yet met with the Jewish representatives (or those Jewish partners supportive of Israel's position) , as you mentioned at the meeting on 14 December, since you have not made a decision. Attached is a copy of the consultation carried out at Education Scotland's offices in Glasgow in which I participated. You will no doubt note that the Jewish representatives supportive of Israel contributed nothing to the resource. Obstruction seems to have been their byword.

What is needed now is for the resource to be returned to its original location and for you to give it your support since a member of your Government sanctioned its development. For teachers to be able to use a resource which has been quality assured, it has to be easily accessible to all schools and teachers in Scotland.

John Mitchell

Scottish Friends of Palestine, executive.

Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for
Education and Skills
John Swinney MSP



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Mr John Mitchell
Executive
Scottish Friends of Palestine

[Redacted]

May 2017

I am writing in response to your email of 14 April regarding accessing the draft Israel and Palestine school material.

I have given consideration as to how best to proceed to ensure that fair and balanced material is available to schools. Given the sensitivity of the issues, I have asked Education Scotland to work with partners in leading a review of all the draft material. This will involve taking account of the consultation responses and will include a piloting exercise in a number of schools with feedback being used to develop the material further.

With regard to the matter you raise of access to the material, it is appropriate that the material remains accessible on a restricted basis with password protection during this phase of development. Such an approach ensures access to the material can be granted to all of the partners involved in its development and to anyone involved in a piloting process.

Education Scotland will be in touch about arrangements for reviewing the material but, in the meantime, I want to say how much I and my colleagues in both Scottish Government and Education Scotland welcome the willingness of the Scottish Friends of Palestine and other organisations to be involved and engaged in educational developments. I thank you for your contributions and I look forward to this valued relationship continuing into the future.

JOHN SWINNEY

Levette Callander's Correspondence (emailed) – 26 April

Dear Mr. Swinney,

Having been part of the consultation group at the offices of Education Scotland, in my capacity as Chair of the Scottish Palestinian Forum, I write to express my dismay at the withdrawal of the Israel a& Palestine teaching resource from the GLOW blog. When I received the e-mail of 24 March, I was delighted that you had made a positive decision, and I immediately informed former teaching colleagues and others of the resource's availability on GLOW.

I still cannot comprehend the rationale behind the ensuing e-mail of 5 April. As someone who was heavily involved in developing teaching resources for Health & Wellbeing, as part of the Health Promoting Schools Unit, I am well aware of what constitutes good practice in terms of robust quality assurance, and, having been part of the process at the consultation day, I can state categorically that no elements of the practice of quality assurance were omitted.

I would have found it strange if this had not been the case, given that the lead officer in charge of the consultation days was a former Quality Assurance Officer. This resource is well suited to meeting 4 Capacities of CfE and, I believe, is underpinned by the words on our Mace in parliament – wisdom, justice, compassion and integrity.

The committee of Scottish Palestinian Forum has asked me to express their collective concerns about this apparent volte-face. I would therefore be grateful if you would respond to these concerns and those of professional colleagues who also seek clarification.

With best wishes,

Mrs. Levette Callander

Chair, Scottish Palestinian Forum
Member of the SNP Dumbarton Branch.

Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for
Education and Skills
John Swinney MSP



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Mrs Levette Callander
Chair
Scottish Palestinian Forum

[Redacted]

May 2017

I am writing in response to your email of 26 April regarding accessing the draft Israel and Palestine school material.

I have given consideration as to how best to proceed to ensure that fair and balanced material is available to schools. Given the sensitivity of the issues, I have asked Education Scotland to work with partners in leading a review of all the draft material. This will involve taking account of the consultation responses and will include a piloting exercise in a number of schools with feedback being used to develop the material further.

With regard to matter you raise of access to the material, it is appropriate that the material remains accessible on a restricted basis with password protection during this phase of development. Such an approach ensures access to the material can be granted to all of the partners involved in its development and to anyone involved in a piloting process.

Education Scotland will be in touch about arrangements for reviewing the material but, in the meantime, I want to say how much I and my colleagues in both Scottish Government and Education Scotland welcome the willingness of the Scottish Palestinian Forum and other organisations to be involved and engaged in educational developments. I thank you for your contributions and I look forward to this valued relationship continuing into the future.

JOHN SWINNEY

Arthur West's Correspondence – 16 May

Dear Mr Swinney

The above resource has been the subject of detailed discussion.

Our organisation Scottish Friends of Palestine understood some weeks ago that you had given ministerial approval for the resource.

We also understood that the resource had been quality assured and that as a result of this was placed on the open area of the GLOW intranet.

Given the current situation I would be grateful for clarification of the following two points-

1. Why is the resource no longer on the open area of the GLOW intranet.?
2. What is the timescale for clear ministerial approval being given to the resource given that Scottish Friends of Palestine understood that this approval would be given some months ago?

I would ask that these points are given urgent consideration and I look forward to your response.

Yours faithfully

Arthur West
Chair -Scottish Friends of Palestine

[Redacted]

Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for
Education and Skills
John Swinney MSP



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E: dfmcse@gov.scot

Mr Arthur West
Chair
Scottish Friends of Palestine
[Redacted]

May 2017

I am writing in response to your email of 26 April regarding accessing the draft Israel and Palestine school material.

I have given consideration as to how best to proceed to ensure that fair and balanced material is available to schools. Given the sensitivity of the issues, I have asked Education Scotland to work with partners in leading a review of all the draft material. This will involve taking account of the consultation responses and will include a piloting exercise in a number of schools with feedback being used to develop the material further.

With regard to matter you raise of access to the material, it is appropriate that the material remains accessible on a restricted basis with password protection during this phase of development. Such an approach ensures access to the material can be granted to all of the partners involved in its development and to anyone involved in a piloting process.

Education Scotland will be in touch about arrangements for reviewing the material but, in the meantime, I want to say how much I and my colleagues in both Scottish Government and Education Scotland welcome the willingness of the Scottish Friends of Palestine and other organisations to be involved and engaged in educational developments. I thank you for your contributions and I look forward to this valued relationship continuing into the future.

JOHN SWINNEY

[Redacted]

Correspondence (emailed) – 3 May

From: [Redacted]

[Redacted]

Date: 3 May 2017 at 10:52:44 BST

To:

"John.Swinney.msp@parliament.scot<mailto:John.Swinney.msp@parliament.scot>"
<John.Swinney.msp@parliament.scot<mailto:John.Swinney.msp@parliament.scot>>

[Redacted]

Subject: Israel/Palestine Resources

Dear Deputy First Minister,

You met with my colleague [Redacted] some months ago to discuss the above resource. I understand from further correspondence that the result of this meeting was that Education Scotland were to go ahead and host the materials on the Glow website, given that they had been endorsed as robust, unbiased and appropriate for use in classrooms as the brief required. We were of course, delighted with this outcome, given the amount of time we invested in working on the resource, and, as you know, [Redacted]

Thankfully, in general the materials were very well received.) I was given the task almost two years ago by my own authority, North Lanarkshire Council, as at the time a wholly inappropriate resource was being used, as reported in the press. My fear is still, that up and down the country inappropriate resources are being used to tackle this topic, which is very popular with students and teachers alike. I was very pleased, therefore, to be able to share the link to these resources in Glow, and several schools indicated a desire to access the resources immediately. I was, however, quickly informed by several teachers that the materials were not accessible via Glow and that the link did not work. There was then a mixed response from Education Scotland ? having told us the resources were available, they removed the hyperlink, and despite our best efforts to access materials, continue to change these links.

I have been unable to get any clarity on the reason for this, and would be most grateful for clarification from your office if that?s at all possible. I did contact your office some weeks ago [Redacted] but as yet have received no reply. I perfectly understand how busy things are at this time, but I fear that our young people are being denied a most useful resource as instigated by our Rights ?Based Learning group (led last year by [Redacted] at Education Scotland.)

Best Regards,

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

North Lanarkshire Council

Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for
Education and Skills
John Swinney MSP



Scottish Government
Riaghaltas na h-Alba
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F/T: 0300 244 4000
E: dfmcse@gov.scot

[Redacted]

North Lanarkshire Council

[Redacted]

May 2017

I am writing in response to your email of 3 May concerning the draft school material on Israel and Palestine.

I have given consideration as to how best to proceed to ensure that fair and balanced material is available to schools. Given the sensitivity of the issues, I have asked Education Scotland to work with partners in leading a review of all the draft material. This will involve taking account of the consultation responses and will include a piloting exercise in a number of schools with feedback being used to develop the material further.

With regard to matter you raise of access to the material, it is appropriate that the material remains accessible on a restricted basis with password protection during this phase of development. Such an approach ensures access to the material can be granted to all of the partners involved in its development and to anyone involved in a piloting process.

Education Scotland will be in touch about arrangements for reviewing the material but, in the meantime, can I thank you for your contributions to date.

JOHN SWINNEY

Correspondence to Education Scotland from Hugh Humphries, Scottish Friends of Palestine – 7 April

Education Scotland
Denholm House
Almondvale Business Park
Almondvale Way
Livingston
EH54 6GA
By email ps/educationscotland@educationscotland.gsi.gov.uk

7th April 2017

[Redacted]

Your ref: 2017/000849 & 2017/000974

I refer to the two undernoted items of correspondence

Your ref: 2017/000849 to Mr Wael Shawish, Vice-Chair of APCS

Your ref: 2017/000974 to Mr Hugh Humphries Sec of SFoP

Both address the same subject matter, namely the absence of a decision by the Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills, Mr John Swinney MSP, in relation to the learning resource on Israel-Palestine. Both were sent on behalf of Mr Swinney.

Yet these two items of correspondence contradict each other.

Reply 2017/000849 to Mr Shawish indicates Mr Swinney's approval of the Israel-Palestine learning resource. It indicates that, having been quality assured, the resource has been placed on the open area of the GLOW intranet where all stakeholders, and this does include parents and pupils, can access the content. This indeed was verified by members of Scottish Friends of Palestine, some teachers or former teachers, more aware of the existence of GLOW than others. The important point here is that the reply to Mr Shawish confirmed open access to the resource – a very important and necessary facility, given that the impetus for the formation of the working group did not come from practitioners in the main, but from parents who found their children being ill-educated and misinformed by their teachers.

The later reply 2017/000974 to me, as Secretary of Scottish Friends of Palestine, now clearly indicates a *volte-face*. There is no mention of being quality assured – and hence reliable. However the statement that Mr Swinney is “currently considering this resource and will make a decision in due course” together with the withdrawal of the resource from the open area of GLOW gives a clear indication of changed opinion in a short period of time.

The feedback to which Scottish Friends of Palestine, as one of the partners in the process of quality assurance, was allowed access, clearly indicated that all stakeholders approached their duties in a positive and constructive manner – with one exception. And this is confirmed by your comment that the materials were “not well received by all groups”. We are confident, however, that sense of responsibility will prevail, where with the quality assurance having

been carried out, the correct decision will be taken with full access available to the principal stakeholders – namely the pupils and parents.

Finally, where we do lack confidence is in the timeline for Mr Swinney to make the correct decision. Mr Shawish, when he met with Mr Swinney, was told by the end of January. We are now being told “in due course”. Why the change?

At the meeting attended by Mr Shawish, Education Scotland was represented. There was no mention whatsoever of the “standard approach” or “further consultation” with practitioners. There was no mention of this in the correspondence to Mr Shawish. Indeed, the purpose of the working group was surely to produce appropriate teaching and learning materials for use by practitioners, not for the latter, with their probable limited knowledge of the subject matter, to sit in judgment? This resource is just that, a resource, not the content of a course - where the judgment of practitioners is crucial in the selection of content which meets the needs of their students, not the content itself.

The Association of Palestinian Communities in Scotland, Scottish Friends of Palestine and Scottish Palestinian Forum request a meeting with Mr Swinney.

Yours faithfully,

Hugh Humphries
Sec
Scottish Friends of Palestine

Contact: info@scottish-friends-of-palestine.org tel: 0141 637 8046

Cc John SwinneyMSP

Correspondence to Education Scotland from Hugh Humphries, Scottish Friends of Palestine – 14 May

From: Scottish Friends of Palestine [mailto:info@scottish-friends-of-palestine.org]

Sent: 14 May 2017 22:08

To: PS/Education Scotland

Cc: Scottish Ministers; John.Swinney.msp@parliament.scot

Subject: SFoP: FAO G[Redacted]

[Redacted]

I refer to the attached letter sent to you on 7th April 2017. To date there has been no reply nor an acknowledgement. This failure to reply or even acknowledge receipt of the letter was discussed at the most recent meeting of the Executive of Scottish Friends of Palestine where disappointment was expressed. We have not experienced the level of cooperation and communication from Education Scotland which, about 2 years ago, led to the formation of the working group tasked to produce the teaching and learning resource on Israel-Palestine.

Further, the faith and trust which parents of North Lanarkshire placed in Education Scotland/Scottish Government to address their concerns over the defective teaching of the Israel-Palestine topic increasingly appears to be misplaced. And it is important to remember that the incubus for setting up the working group arose from parents, not practitioners.

Ironically, it is the practitioners who are now being let down by Education Scotland. The resource has been removed from the public area of GLOW. It is next to impossible for practitioners to access the resource on GLOW. And yet May is an ideal time in the school calendar for teachers to review their resources and sources before June when, for many, a new timetable commences.

The attached letter contains a request to meet with Mr Swinney. Increasingly it is an imperative that this meeting takes place.

I look forward to a reply.

Yours faithfully,

Hugh Humphries
Sec
Scottish Friends of Palestine

cc John Swinney MSP
SFoP Exec.

Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for
Education and Skills
John Swinney MSP



F/T: 0300 244 4000
E: dfmcse@gov.scot

Mr Hugh Humphries
Secretary
Scottish Friends of Palestine

Email: info@scottish-friends-of-palestine.org

May 2017

Thank you for copying me into your letter of 7 April and email of 14 May to Education Scotland regarding the draft Israel and Palestine school material. I am writing in response to this.

I have given consideration as to how best to proceed to ensure that fair and balanced material is available to schools. Given the sensitivity of the issues, I have asked Education Scotland to work with partners in leading a review of all the draft material. This will involve taking account of the consultation responses and will include a piloting exercise in a number of schools with feedback being used to develop the material further.

With regard to matter you raise of access to the material, it is appropriate that the material remains accessible on a restricted basis with password protection during this phase of development. Such an approach ensures access to the material can be granted to all of the partners involved in its development and to anyone involved in a piloting process.

Education Scotland will be in touch about arrangements for reviewing the material but I do want to take this opportunity to say how much I and my colleagues in both Scottish Government and Education Scotland welcome the willingness of the Scottish Friends of Palestine and other organisations to be involved and engaged in educational developments. I thank you for your contributions and I look forward to this valued relationship continuing into the future.

JOHN SWINNEY