

[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 11 August 2020 19:56
To: Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills
Cc: [REDACTED]
Subject: Exam shambles, Case reference 202000071493

Case reference 202000071493

Further to my email of 4th August which has been allocated the above case number I wish to add some further points for Mr Swinney's attention:

I am thankful that you have made the decision you have made and maybe I should just stop there. However, I am not going to stop there as some serious questions remain unanswered following your performance in the Scottish Parliament today (11th August).

In Parliament today you stated that you had taken the earliest possible opportunity to make the announcement you did today. I don't know the ins and outs of the procedures in Parliament but you were either lying or being extremely tricky with words when you made that claim. You admitted today that you knew about the problem as far back as Thursday 30th July yet you did NOTHING about it. On results day, 4th August, you stood before the nation on TV and claimed the moderation was needed to make the results credible (I even complimented you on making this brave step of attending the briefing). Had I known then that you were actually already involved in a cover up there is no way I would have complimented you!

The fact is that you knew about the problem and instead of accepting it, admitting it and saying you'd sort it then, you stood there with your boss and tried to cover it up. That is nothing short of disgraceful. You did NOT take the earliest opportunity to sort the problem. You tried to hide the problem and said the appeal process would sort any errors.

You and your boss continued to try to front out the issue. Even on Friday 7th August the First Minister was still telling pupils to submit appeals!

I am grateful that the education spokespeople for the opposition parties continued to press you on the issue. Had they not done so I do not believe for a second you would have stopped the cover up. It is clear to me now that you are not actually interested in my daughter's future. You were willing to ignore her pain, ignore other pupils' anger, ignore teachers' anguish, ignore parents' pleas all the way from Tuesday 4th August until Sunday 9th August. I was not the only parent to contact you on 4th August yet you did nothing apart from try to ride out the storm and hope it would disappear. It was only once it became YOUR future on the line with warnings of a vote of no-confidence that you sprang into action on Twitter.

I am disgusted at your self-interested behaviour and to think that you are the at the head of Scottish Education is an affront. I am not among those who call for politicians to resign just because I have a different opinion but watching you today makes it tough for me to hold that position. I simply cannot accept that you knew about this situation the week before the results came out and that you did NOTHING about it. That is unforgivable. You should have immediately taken action to avoid all that has happened since. You certainly can't stand in front of Parliament and the nation and claim that you took the earliest opportunity to fix the problem. YOU DIDN'T EVEN ADMIT THERE WAS A PROBLEM until you were faced with a vote of no confidence. That does not display the integrity that your position demands.

You went on today to try to defend yourself by saying that the system used by the SQA is similar to that being used in other parts of the UK. Forgive me if I've been mishearing things but your boss has been saying regularly over the last few months that she wouldn't hesitate to go in a different direction from the rest of the UK if the situation required it. This situation required it! Education is devolved. But you, and your boss, did NOTHING other than hide behind the system and say it would work out in the end through the free appeal system. You would have known on Thursday 30th July that there was going to be a deluge of appeals that would swamp the system but you did NOTHING about it. You actually continued to try to claim the system was fine and encouraged pupils to submit appeals through their schools.

It appears that you spent the time between finding out the results on 30th July and results day on 4th August not finding a solution to the problem but actually writing a strategy on how to defend the indefensible. On this occasion your bluff and bluster failed and people saw through the shambles you have presided over. Instead of coming up with the strategy you did, you could easily have sorted the problem before it became a problem. You have managed to do this between Sunday 9th August and today so it shows what can be done when you put your mind to it. I state again that I am pleased with the outcome of your announcement today but YOUR DELAY in making this announcement has resulted in teachers, in particular the SQA points of contact, in each affected school having to carry out a lot of additional work which is now pointless. The return to school this year is far more stressful than usual and the extra stress, hassle and workload that your actions (probably better to say your LACK of actions) have resulted in have made it even harder. I don't think you even begin to recognise this side of the problem your inaction caused.

I get that you are a family man and you will be trying to do your best. I understand that but I have had my eyes opened today and can't believe you would do nothing when you were handed the data on 30th July. Through the whole of last week you were more interested in trying to make yourself, and your political party, look good than you were in getting things right for the young people of Scotland. Only when faced with a vote against you and the prospect of a negative voter reaction at next year's election did you decide to do something about it. You have fixed it, thank you, but the young folk of Scotland can't face more cover ups like this in the future.

I'll leave it to the education spokespeople and MSPs to pass judgement on your future. I'd be amazed after hearing your answer to his question today if Ross Greer felt able to go on supporting you though. If you do survive the vote of no confidence maybe Nicola will tell you that you've had your yellow card and that any future failures will see it become red. I wish you no ill personally and get that this will be a difficult time for your family so stay strong together but Scotland should have a far better education system than what it has just now.

[REDACTED]

This email has been scanned by the Symantec Email Security.cloud service.

[REDACTED]

From: Public Engagement Unit
Sent: 14 August 2020 07:22
To: First Minister; Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills
Subject: FW: John Swinney

Morning POs,

Please see below email which I do not believe it suitable for MiCase response.

Many thanks,

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] | Public Engagement Unit | [REDACTED]

-----Original Message-----

From: First Ministers Website Mailbox <FirstMinisterWebsite@gov.scot>
Sent: 13 August 2020 17:24
To: Public Engagement Unit <CorrespondenceUnit@gov.scot>
Subject: FW: John Swinney

From: [FirstMinisterWebsite@gov.scot][SMTP:FIRSTMINISTERWEBSITE@GOV.SCOT]
Sent: 13 August 2020 17:21:12
To: First Ministers Website Mailbox
Subject: John Swinney
Auto forwarded by a Rule

From: [REDACTED]
Subject: John Swinney

Message Body:

Did John Swinney offer you his resignation? You didn't answer that question today in parliament.

--
This e-mail was sent from a contact form on the First Minister of Scotlands website
(<https://firstminister.gov.scot>)

This email has been scanned by the Symantec Email Security.cloud service.

[REDACTED]

From: Public Engagement Unit
Sent: 13 August 2020 17:15
To: Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills
Subject: FW: Support

Hi there,

Sending this for your awareness as its more of a thank you than something for policy.

Thanks,

[REDACTED]

-----Original Message-----

From: [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]> On Behalf Of Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills
Sent: 13 August 2020 14:25
To: Public Engagement Unit <CorrespondenceUnit@gov.scot>
Subject: FW: Support

OR please

[REDACTED] | Correspondence Secretary to John Swinney MSP | Deputy First Minister of Scotland and Cabinet Secretary for Education & Skills | Scottish Government | St Andrew's House | Edinburgh | EH1 3DG [REDACTED] E: DFMCS@gov.scot

All e-mails and attachments sent by a Ministerial Private Office to any other official on behalf of a Minister relating to a decision, request or comment made by a Minister, or a note of a Ministerial meeting, must be filed appropriately by the recipient. Private Offices do not keep official records of such e-mails or attachments.

-----Original Message-----

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 13 August 2020 13:31
To: Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills <DFMCSE@gov.scot>
Subject: FW: Support

-----Original Message-----

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 13 August 2020 13:07
To: Swinney J (John), MSP <John.Swinney.msp@parliament.scot>
Subject: Support

Dear Mr Swinney,
I email you in support of the current situation and, in particular, around the vote of no confidence.

I was head teacher in the East End of Glasgow for a number of years. I fully understand the difficulties around moderation. I feel that you and the Scottish government was always in a very difficult position around exam results.

I believe you have shown commitment to Scottish education and sincerely hope that you continue in your role as we navigate these difficult times.

[REDACTED]

Sent from my iPad

The Scottish Parliament: Making a positive difference to the lives of the people of Scotland
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba: A' toirt deagh bhuidh air beatha sluagh na h-Alba

www.parliament.scot<<http://www.parliament.scot>> :
facebook.com/scottishparliament<<http://facebook.com/scottishparliament>> :
[twitter.com/scotparl](http://twitter.com/ScotParl)<<http://twitter.com/ScotParl>>

The information in this email may be confidential. If you think you have received this email in error please delete it and do not share its contents.

This email has been scanned by the Symantec Email Security.cloud service.

[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 13 August 2020 17:09
To: Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills
Subject: Today's motion in Parliament

I have watched the debate and feel impelled to send you my best wishes. My heart was aching for you having to sit and listen to such hypocrites.

My daughter is a head teacher in a secondary school and had utter confidence in you. She was upset by the exam result and was delighted with your apology and action.

She said you are an excellent Cabinet Secretary for Education and hoped and prayed you wouldn't lose that position.

While I am delighted at the outcome today I am sorry you had sit through this debate. Onwards and upwards.

Yours faithfully,

[REDACTED]

This email has been scanned by the Symantec Email Security.cloud service.

[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 14 August 2020 08:06
To: Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills
Subject: Confidence

Dear Mr Swinney,

No doubt like many thousands I was truly pleased at your support by your fellow MSPs and at the result. The behaviour of the opposition parties and particularly their leaders was disgraceful unacceptable. You have plenty of justified support and I am confident you will continue with your work for the future with renewed enthusiasm and determination. I wish you sincerely every success in your future support of our First Minister and our hopes for 2021.

[REDACTED]

Sent from my Huawei phone

This email has been scanned by the Symantec Email Security.cloud service.
