

**C-19 Education Recovery Group**  
**Minutes of meeting, Wednesday 2 December 2020**

**Attendees**

- John Swinney MSP, *Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills (Chair)*
- Councillor Stephen McCabe, *Children and Young People spokesperson, Convention of Scottish Local Authorities (COSLA)*
- Sam Anson, *Deputy Director, Scottish Government*
- Jane Brumpton, *Chief Executive, Early Years Scotland*
- Alison Cumming, *Deputy Director, Scottish Government*
- Greg Dempster, *General Secretary, Association of Headteachers and Deputies in Scotland (AHDS)*
- Sheena Devlin, *Executive Director, Perth & Kinross Council (ADES)*
- Andrew Drought, *Deputy Director, Scottish Government*
- Larry Flanagan, *General Secretary, Educational Institute of Scotland (EIS)*
- Eddie Follan, *Convention of Scottish Local Authorities (COSLA)*
- Liam Fowley, *Children and Young Person's Representative, Scottish Youth Parliament*
- Gayle Gorman, *Chief Executive and Chief Inspector, Education Scotland*
- Gillian Hamilton, *Strategic Director, Education Scotland*
- Carrie Lindsay, *President, Association of Directors of Education in Scotland (ADES)*
- Graeme Logan, *Director of Learning, Scottish Government*
- Ben McKendrick, *Scottish Youth Parliament*
- Janie McManus, *Deputy Director, Scottish Government*
- Elizabeth Morrison, *Deputy Director, Scottish Government*
- Ken Muir, *Chief Executive, General Teaching Council for Scotland (GTCS)*
- Malcolm Pentland, *Deputy Director, Scottish Government*
- Fiona Robertson, *SQA*
- Kay Sillars, *Unison*
- Gill Stewart, *SQA*
- Diane Stockton, *Public Health Scotland*
- Matthew Sweeney, *Convention of Scottish Local Authorities (COSLA)*
- Jim Thewliss, *General Secretary, School Leaders Scotland (SLS)*
- Margaret Wilson, *Chair, National Parent Forum of Scotland (NPFS)*

## **School holidays**

The Deputy First Minister raised the issue of possibly extending the school Christmas holidays across Scotland. He highlighted that scientific guidance advised against making any changes, but recognised that others may have different views.

Some group members raised counter arguments, including the impact on school staff should there be an outbreak in the final few days of term. There was recognition of the impact of contact tracing on the workload of school leaders, and the need for clarity on how this system would continue into the school holidays.

## **Surveillance data**

Public Health Scotland provided an update on the weekly figures that show a decline in the number of cases amongst children.

It was also shared that the cases across the general population are also declining, which is expected to have a positive impact for schools.

Union representatives raised the number of cases in the teaching population, which is currently not comparable to other government figures.

## **National qualifications**

Following the decision to cancel National 5 exams in 2021, the decision on Highers and Advanced Highers remained under review. SQA presented the work of the National Qualifications Working Group looking into viable options for Higher and Advanced Higher certification in 2021. Key points included the importance of fair and credible delivery, equality for learners, the role of schools, colleges and their staff, the appeals process, and the importance of clear communication with learners, parents and schools.

Group members raised the importance of timely decision making, and requested for teacher workload to be kept in mind throughout planning.

**Next meeting:** Thursday 10 December 2020