

**C-19 Education Recovery Group**  
**Minutes of meeting, Thursday 10 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)*
- Maree Todd MSP, *Minister for Children & Young People*
- Sam Anson, *Deputy Director, Scottish Government*
- Rona Blackwood, *Children's Parliament*
- 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*
- Colin Morrison, *Children's Parliament*
- 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 (NPFSS)*

## **Surveillance data**

Public Health Scotland provided an update on the weekly figures that show a decline in the number of cases across Scotland per 100,000 people, with the number of cases amongst 2-17 year olds remaining stable. Data also showed that cases remain higher amongst older pupils than younger pupils.

Union representatives sought clarity on not-in-school figures in comparison to attendance figures. Officials confirmed that pupils who are not in school for COVID-related reasons will be classed as not-in-school, but not as absent in the end-of-year attendance statistics.

## **Stakeholder feedback**

Union representatives raised the impact on school staff morale of the decision not to extend the school Christmas break at a national level. The broader impact of varying school holiday dates across different local authorities was also raised as something to consider in the long-term. It was recognised that issues in schools are not happening in isolation to the rest of society, and that Public Health advice recommends an organised environment is better for the suppression of the virus overall.

## **Testing**

Officials provided an update on work underway to develop two main strands of testing within school communities. Pilots are intended to start in January, with the scalability of options being a key concern.

It was requested that student teachers and university tutors observing students on placement are considered alongside testing for staff.

Public Health colleagues also updated that the School Infection Survey (SIS) will be rolled out from January 2021 now the feasibility test is complete.

## **Feedback from the Children's Parliament**

Representatives from the Children's Parliament highlighted the importance of making decisions with a children's rights approach, as well as listening to and learning from feedback from children as we progress through education recovery. It was raised that, while the pandemic has been challenging, it has exacerbated issues that were already problematic for disadvantaged families.

Key issues raised included exam anxiety amongst pupils, and the capacity within schools to offer a varied curriculum eg. to include outdoor learning, at a time when COVID restrictions impact the number of volunteers a school can rely upon for support.

**Next meeting:** Thursday 17 December 2020