

C-19 Education Recovery Group

Minutes of meeting, Friday 21 August 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 of Improvement, Attainment & Wellbeing, Scottish Government*
- Jane Brumpton, *Chief Executive, Early Years Scotland*
- Alison Cumming, *Interim Director of Early Learning & Childcare, 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 for Workforce, Infrastructure & Reform, Scottish Government*
- Larry Flanagan, *General Secretary, Educational Institute of Scotland (EIS)*
- Eddie Follan, *Convention of Scottish Local Authorities (CoSLA)*
- John Gallacher, *Regional Manager (UNISON)*
- 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)*
- Elizabeth Morrison, *Deputy Director, Scottish Government*
- Ken Muir, *Chief Executive, General Teaching Council for Scotland (GTCS)*
- Joanna Murphy, *Chair, National Parent Forum of Scotland (NPFSS)*
- Dr Eileen Scott, *NHS Health Scotland*
- Diane Stockton, *Public Health Scotland*
- Frank Strang, *Deputy Director, Scottish Government*
- Jim Thewliss, *General Secretary, School Leaders Scotland (SLS)*
- Marie Todd MSP, *Minister for Children and Young People*
- Maria Walker, *Strategic Director, Education Scotland*
- Mick Wilson, *Deputy Director, Scottish Government*

Apologies

- Graeme Logan, *Director of Learning, Scottish Government*

The meeting opened with a discussion on how best to share weekly feedback and data from group members as well as from local authorities across Scotland. The group welcomed the ongoing development of a weekly dashboard showing national data, and discussed the key elements to incorporate if possible.

CERG members were then invited to share key issues from groups they represent that have arisen since the last meeting. Feedback from young people and teaching staff on the return to school remains positive overall, with many reported to be settling in well and schools making good use of outdoor settings where possible.

Although members highlighted the need for guidance to continue developing as issues unfold, and we move beyond the physical return and are able to emphasise focus on supporting the recovery of learning and wellbeing.

Key issues that arose include a request for further information on the exam diet for 2021 to be developed as soon as possible, to support teaching staff in their planning for the academic year, as well as nervousness for the term ahead due to possible staff absence levels and the demands on school leaders.

An update was then provided on work underway around monitoring and surveillance, describing existing systems and aspirations for school-specific data collection. This work is still in development and officials are working with group members in order to implement at pace.

The Deputy First Minister highlighted that the group has always been committed to updating guidance as new information emerges, and therefore work has been underway to analyse new data, particularly in the context of face coverings. Dr Eileen Scott advised that all possible mitigation measures should be taken where appropriate and possible. We should acknowledge that current guidance assumes low rates of the virus in the wider community, and therefore gradual changes may be necessary to ensure infection levels remain low. The group considered the wearing of face coverings in varying school contexts and for different age groups, as well as how best to communicate any changes in messaging.

It was agreed that the group would work with scientific advisors over the next few days to gather further information and consider practicalities around a possible update to guidance on the wearing of face coverings in education settings.

Next meeting: Thursday 27 August 2020