

NPFS Parental View of the FM Statement on School Closures – 04/01/2021

The National Parent Forum of Scotland as part of their continued work in supporting Parents and Carers across Scotland, in response to concerns expressed among the education sector, have consulted widely with the Parents and Carers of our young people who, following a new strain of coronavirus are undertaking another period of remote learning. While the closures evoke disappointment for our children and young people, we understand the need for schools to close in order to ensure the health and safety of children, young people, teachers and other staff, as well as the wider community, until such time it is safe to re-open.

We received a huge range of responses from Parents and Carers from all regions of Scotland and have taken all views and issues into consideration. We have collated the varying views received and raised them at the latest CERG meeting. We will continue to provide feedback to CERG as the situation evolves and encourage all parents to keep in touch with us. Thanks go to all those who shared their views.


The Forum acknowledge that the closures are a very emotive topic at this time. however, as active members of a variety of Governments groups, we believe we are here to help influence and develop policy on behalf of Parents and Carers across Scotland at this difficult time.


Below are some of the key concerns our findings have identified: -

- A need for clear and consistent communication regarding the pandemic and its impact on educational settings from Scottish Government, Local Authorities and Schools
- Assurances around the quality and consistency of remote learning and clarity about how it will be delivered. It is crucial that every child receives the high-quality educational experience that they are entitled to and that measures are taken to prevent the widening of the poverty and attainment gap.
- The impact that school and Early Learning & Childcare setting closures will have on those pupils (and their families) with additional support needs. It is imperative that consideration be given to all ASN pupils, especially those with underlying health conditions.
- There is also concern about the impact that the school closures will have on the employment status of parents – parents are having to juggle employment needs with the challenges of supporting remote learning, childcare, caring responsibilities and individual and collective wellbeing. There is a crucial need for consideration to be given to how this will affect the mental health of children, young people and families.

It is important for parents to communicate with their schools and seek assistance,

Level 1, Rosebery House, 9 Haymarket Terrace, Edinburgh, EH12 5EZ
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guidance and resources whenever they need them. Likewise we would urge schools to have open channels of communication.

Frequent, accurate communication is key to a positive outcome to the current situation.

Speaking on behalf of the NPFS, Chair Margaret Wilson said...

“There is no decision today that is going to please everyone in this situation. The pressures faced by families, living with restricted measures, coping with stress created by the pandemic, supporting remote learning whilst balancing many other issues will be a challenge to all Parents/carers. Our young people have already been through a significantly stressful time. However, the safety of our children and young people is paramount. Most importantly we must ensure parents are aware that their school is available for support and to make contact with them as soon as possible.”


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National Parent Forum of Scotland Media Contact: enquiries@npfs.org.uk

NOTES TO EDITORS

- The National Parent Forum of Scotland is a national body led by and for parents. Since its inception in 2009, it has undergone rapid development and is now an influential national and independent body, working on behalf of parents across Scotland to help every pre-school and school pupil maximise their potential.
- The National Parent Forum of Scotland is comprised of one volunteer parent/carer representative from each of Scotland's 32 local authority areas. Please visit www.npfs.org.uk for more details.

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