

Scottish Conservatives force 'screeching' SNP school u-turn

23 Jun 2020



The Scottish Conservatives have forced the SNP government to perform a 'screeching u-turn' on its plans for blended learning and part-time schooling.

Scottish Education Secretary John Swinney today announced that the SNP government will not be implementing a blended education model in August and 50% targets for face to face learning, but will now aim to return children to full time education.

This is in stark contrast to previous directions given by Mr Swinney to local authorities to focus only on providing blended education – where children could attend classrooms for as little as one day a week.

In a statement to the Scottish Parliament this afternoon, Mr Swinney said that due to the progress made in suppressing the Covid virus the Government "believes that we should prepare for children to be able to return to school full time in August."

In addition, Mr Swinney confirmed that the Scottish Government will review their approach to physical distancing in schools and equivalent measures in early learning and childcare but stopped short of confirming that all learning will take place in classrooms and that there will now be no social distancing in place in August.

Jamie Greene, Scottish Conservative shadow education secretary said:

"This screeching u-turn from the SNP government will be music to the ears of parents right across the country who were outraged by the lack of ambition shown to date.

"The sad truth is that events of recent weeks have exposed a leadership vacuum in how these plans were put together and communicated.

"The fact that the SNP government were the last people to realise that their part time plans were simply no good, sums up their ignorance of the public mood on this issue.

"Up until now local authorities were working towards part time schooling plans as commanded by Mr Swinney, the question remains how thrilled Cosla will be with this dramatic 180 about turn.

"Warm words must now be followed by real actions, today's statement leaves councils with more questions than answers.

"The SNP must now deliver on its new found promise of full time schooling by August, through whichever means necessary, if it stands any chance of rebuilding the trust of parents."