



Northern Ireland  
Assembly

## Committee for Education

### Minutes of Proceedings

7 December 2021

**Meeting Location:** Teleconference

**Present by Video or Teleconference:**

Mr Chris Lyttle MLA (Chairperson)  
Mr Pat Sheehan MLA (Deputy Chairperson)  
Ms Nicola Brogan MLA  
Mr Robbie Butler MLA  
Mrs Diane Dodds MLA  
Mr Harry Harvey MLA  
Mr Daniel McCrossan MLA  
Mr Justin McNulty MLA  
Mr Robin Newton MBE MLA

Ms Aoibhinn Treanor (Assembly Clerk)  
Mr Mark McQuade (Assistant Clerk)  
Mr Marcus Matthews (Clerical Supervisor)  
Mr Craig Mealey (Clerical Officer)

**Apologies:** None



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The meeting commenced at 9:10am in public session.

**1. Apologies**

No apologies received.

**2. Covid-19 safety in schools and staff shortages - Oral briefing from the Northern Ireland Teaching Council (NITC)**

The following witness joined the meeting by video conference at 9:10am:

Ms Maxine Murphy-Higgins, NASUWT

Ms Marie O'Shea, INTO

Ms Alison Steen, UTU

Mr Graham Gault, NAHT

Mr Alastair Donaghy, NEU

The witness briefed Covid-19 safety in schools and staff shortages.

This was followed by a question and answer session.

Mrs Dodds joined the meeting at 9:15am.

The following witness joined the meeting by video conference at 9:31am:

Mr Stephen Moore, ASCL NI President

Mr Graham Montgomery ASCL NI Vice President

Mr Butler left the meeting at 9:40am.

Mr Newton joined the meeting at 9:41am.

Mrs Dodds left the meeting at 9:43am.



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Mr Harvey joined the meeting at 9:50am.

The Chairperson thanked the witnesses for the briefing.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to write to the Minister of Education:

- Asking that she provide comprehensive guidance on mass gatherings in school, particularly with regard to open evenings/taster days;
- Asking that she provide further guidance on ventilation;
- Relaying the unions' concerns about substitute cover;
- Asking whether the Department has considered screens at teacher's desks; and
- Asking that she promote the availability of CO2 monitors and air filtration devices for schools.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to ask the Public Health Agency to detail its communication and engagement protocols with school principals.

### **3. Any Other Business**

No other business was discussed.

### **4. Date, Time and Place of the next meeting**

The next formal Committee meeting will be held on Wednesday 8 December 2021 by video conference at 9:30am.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:37pm.

**Chris Lyttle MLA**

**Chairperson, Committee for Education  
15 December 2021**