



Northern Ireland
Assembly

Committee for Education

Minutes of Proceedings

1 September 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 Justin McNulty MLA
Mr Robin Newton MBE MLA

Apologies: Mr Daniel McCrossan MLA

In Attendance by Video or Teleconference:

Ms Aoibhinn Treanor (Assembly Clerk)
Mr Mark McQuade (Assistant Clerk)



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The meeting commenced at 9:08am in public session

1. Apologies

Apologies as above.

2. Chairperson's Business

There was no Chairperson's business.

3. Matters Arising

There were no matters arising.

4. Schools Restart – Oral briefing from the Northern Ireland Teachers Council

The following witnesses joined the meeting by video conference at 9:09am:

Mr Justin McCamphill, National Association of Schoolmasters Union of Women Teachers (NASUWT)

Ms Caroline McCarthy, Irish National Teachers' Organisation (INTO)

Ms Jacquie White, Ulster Teachers' Union (UTU)

Mr Alastair Donaghy, National Education Union (NEU)

Dr Graham Gault, National Association Of Head Teachers (NAHT)

The witnesses provided the Committee with an update on concerns about school restart following the summer holidays; and the General Teaching Council for Northern Ireland (GTCNI).



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Mrs Dodds joined the meeting at 9:40am.

Mr Butler left the meeting at 10:45am.

Mr Newton joined the meeting at 10:49am.

Mr Harvey left the meeting at 11:01am

This was followed by a question and answer session.

The Chairperson thanked the witnesses for the briefing.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to invite the Public Health Agency and Medical and Scientific Officers to brief it on restart.

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

- Seeking clarity on the medical, scientific and departmental rationale for the isolation policy for pupils in respect of close contact pupils attending school and the consequences of different treatment of 18 year olds in school and 18 year olds outside school;
- Seeking information on how compliance by schools with guidance will be monitored, particularly in respect of home working for school staff in late stage pregnancy, and suggesting that ETI might take this forward;
- Asking how transportation has been planned to avoid crowding at school gates and how the Department has communicated and consulted with parents and unions about restart and public health arrangements;
- Raising concerns regarding the availability of the Public Health Agency helpline;
- Suggesting that the Department deploy staff from elsewhere to help school leaders with the administration of contact tracing; and
- Suggesting that Department carry out a school by school audit of ventilation to gather data and cost and implment measures for adequate air quality such as CO2 monitors and minimum ventilation standards.

5. Any Other Business

No other business was discussed.



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6. Date, Time and Place of the next meeting

The next formal Committee meeting will be held on Wednesday 8 September 2021 by video conference at 9:00am.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:05am

Chris Lyttle MLA

**Chairperson, Committee for Education
8 September 2021**