17th February 2021

Derek

I am writing to you as Chair of Firpark parent council, in my role I have a duty to represent my Parent Forum in its entirety in all matters relating to our school.

I understand how difficult a time this must be with all the changing of guidance and do appreciate all the work that is being done in the background.

However, I am extremely disappointed in the way that NLC have handled the update on Social media today. I feel that this information should have come via our Head Teacher. By posting the update on social media NLC have caused the level of anxiety to rise among some parents which has resulted in our Head Teacher being unfairly inundated with requests for clarification which Mrs Webster is unable to do at this moment because her meeting is not till tomorrow.

Yet again NLC have shared information without showing an ounce of respect or decency towards Head teachers. It is obvious that parents will automatically call their school to find out what is happening and NLC have put the Head Teachers in this position before they have had any sort of briefing to gather correct information and properly prepare to answer questions or clarify decisions. It is our opinion that this decision was inconsiderate and Ill conceived to say the least.

I ask you to consider how this situation affects our Parent Forum. The announcement states that only P1-P3 children can return which essentially suggests that our infants are more important than our seniors. Our children are all struggling, yes, there are varying degrees as to how much the children are struggling but these variations cannot be defined solely on age and a blanket decision whereby it is assumed that primaries 1-3 are automatically more in need is not only outrageous and a blatant form of discrimination, but is also clearly a decision made by people that do not have anywhere near the knowledge or insight into the needs of ASN children that they would claim to have. Some of our children may have cognitive skills that are more at an educational standing of a P1-P3. What about our P7 children, the last time they spent a full year in school was in P5. Can you explain to parents why the GIRFEC is not being followed for our P4 – P7 children.

The first minister stated yesterday there would be increased provision for vulnerable children, specifically those with the most significant additional support needs where schools believe this to be essential, when you take this into consideration, I believe that the model that Mrs Webster has offered to our parents is inclusive to all families. We are ALL struggling, and this offered hope to the parents in both ends of the school who are struggling the most and are quite frankly closest to breaking point. Are we now supposed to say to these parents and children that they matter less? Are we to strip this last glimmer of hope away? Aren’t we supposed to be inclusive to all children? I ask that you consider this model be allowed to continue thereby allowing all of our children to be given equal rights under the GIRFEC to achieve a balance in their education.

ASN Children have suffered the most during this whole pandemic, I know that many may disagree, but we are always the last to be thought of, side statements from the FM, no one standing up for our children to say this is not fair, Parents are at breaking points, the gap between ASN and mainstream is only becoming larger. Our children have missed out on nearly a year of school I understand all children are the same, but studies show that regression in ASN children can be double that of a mainstream child. Our children have enough disadvantages in life without them being added to through a lack of understanding from the people in positions to make decisions that affect their life in fundamental ways. I understand that this may be government level and we will seek to send the same letter to our MSPS and now take this further.

Kind Regards

Fiona Graham

Firpark Chairperson