



The Educational  
Institute of Scotland

# NEWS RELEASE

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## **Teachers in Edinburgh back move to Dispute over School Safety**

Teachers in Edinburgh have today (Wednesday) voted overwhelmingly in favour of declaring a formal dispute with their employer over failure to provide a safe working environment for staff in light of the continuing threat from the COVID-19 pandemic. This is the fourth Local Association to declare a dispute over health and safety, with similar ballots in Argyll and Bute and Midlothian still open.

91% of teachers supported the move to a dispute, on a turnout of 65%. The Local Association will now engage in talks with Edinburgh City Council to urgently address members' concerns around health and safety.

Commenting on the result, EIS Local Association Secretary Alison Murphy said, "This is a clear message from Edinburgh members that more needs to be done to support them. Since the start of the pandemic, teachers – and all school staff – have been working incredibly hard to support the pupils in their care, and often their families, too. Whilst there have been many fine words of praise from politicians, the reality is that actions have fallen far short of rhetoric.

Ms Murphy continued, "Teachers have been left feeling demoralised, undervalued, under constant attack from certain fringe pressure groups, and at real risk from working in schools where the mitigations that so much of the rest of society take for granted are just not happening. Edinburgh members have said, loudly and clearly, that this cannot go on. We desire the same consideration, and the same levels of protection as other key workers."

Ms Murphy added, "Over the coming weeks, the Edinburgh EIS executive will talk to City of Edinburgh Council about what steps it can take to make sure our schools are safe places to work, that staff feel valued and that our health, safety and wellbeing is supported, so that we are able to give our pupils the education they deserve."

**(ENDS)**

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