



The Educational
Institute of Scotland

NEWS RELEASE

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Wednesday 27 April 2022

EIS DEMANDS WESTERN ISLES COUNCIL TO DESIST FROM MISREPRESENTING UNION POSITION

The Educational Institute of Scotland (EIS), the country's largest teaching union, has written to Western Isles Council to demand that the authority desist from misrepresenting the union's position on remote learning in an apparent attempt to justify the Council's proposals to reduce teacher involvement in online learning provision.

The EIS has previously [raised serious concerns about the proposals from Western Isles Council](#), and [remains firmly opposed to plans](#) which would reduce the role of the teacher in remote learning and dilute the quality of education available to young people in the Western Isles.

In the letter to Western Isles Council, EIS Assistant Secretary Andrea Bradley states: "It has been brought to my attention that Western Isles Council is apparently quite deliberately misconstruing on social media and press releases, comments that I made in last week's evidence session of the Education, Children and Young People's Committee of the Scottish Parliament, regarding Education recovery, in order to justify what the EIS considers to be an indefensible move to dilute the quality of education within the Authority."

Ms Bradley continues, "The EIS wishes Western Isles Council to desist from such twisting of my words on behalf of the EIS, immediately. To be absolutely clear, the EIS does not in any way consider the moves by the Council to deny learners the experience of quality, in-person learning with their peers and their teachers an acceptable approach to Education recovery."

Ms Bradley's letter goes on to add, "If there was one thing that the pandemic has underlined, it is the importance of young people being able to engage with their teachers and their friends face to face, in school buildings, to support their learning and their mental health and wellbeing.

"Online learning was an emergency provision in direct response to a public health crisis. There should be no cynical attempts to use it as we emerge from the pandemic and look towards recovery, as a cheap substitute for vital in-person learning and teaching."

A copy of the full text of Ms Bradley's letter to Western Isles Council is attached, for information.

(ENDS)

Further Information:

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The EIS is the largest organisation of teachers and lecturers in Scotland representing around 80% of the profession in Nursery, Primary, Special, Secondary and Further and Higher Education
General Secretary · Larry Flanagan

William MacDonald
Director of Education

Ref: AB/LM
26 April 2022

Via email only

Dear Mr MacDonald

It has been brought to my attention that Western Isles Council is apparently quite deliberately misconstruing on social media and press releases, comments that I made in last week's evidence session of the Education, Children and Young People's Committee of the Scottish Parliament, regarding Education recovery, in order to justify what the EIS considers to be an indefensible move to dilute the quality of education within the Authority.

The EIS wishes Western Isles Council to desist from such twisting of my words on behalf of the EIS, immediately.

To be absolutely clear, the EIS does not in any way consider the moves by the Council to deny learners the experience of quality, in-person learning with their peers and their teachers an acceptable approach to Education recovery.

If there was one thing that the pandemic has underlined, it is the importance of young people being able to engage with their teachers and their friends face to face, in school buildings, to support their learning and their mental health and wellbeing.

Online learning was an emergency provision in direct response to a public health crisis. There should be no cynical attempts to use it as we emerge from the pandemic and look towards recovery, as a cheap substitute for vital in-person learning and teaching.

Cuts of this kind would do a huge disservice to our young people, would represent a failure to understand and value the critical role of teachers in the learning process, and would be calamitous for Education recovery in the Western Isles.

To suggest that the EIS is saying otherwise is deliberate misrepresentation, dissembling and tantamount to a 'fake news' approach, something the EIS would not expect from public sector servants.

Yours sincerely



Andrea Bradley
EIS Assistant Secretary