



eis

Scotland's largest
education trade union



STAND UP

FOR QUALITY EDUCATION

PUPIL BEHAVIOUR

ASN

WORKLOAD

EIS Scottish Parliament Election Manifesto 2026



STAND UP FOR QUALITY EDUCATION



In 1847, the EIS was founded to advance the working conditions of teachers and to promote sound learning for students. In 2026, 179 years later, as we approach a Scottish Parliamentary Election, the EIS continues to Stand Up for Quality Education.

The EIS is committed to protecting and advancing quality education in the firm knowledge of its criticality to democracy, social cohesion and peace. We encourage all voters and political parties to join us in the protection and advancement of quality education in Scotland.

This manifesto sets out EIS policies debated and agreed by our members. It is designed to inform members of our policies to assist them in deciding which party or parties to vote for. This manifesto is also shared with political parties to influence their manifestos and inform the discussions that parliamentary candidates have with EIS members and others during the campaign.

The EIS is not affiliated with any political party and does not support or endorse any political party.

Rationale

The EIS is the largest teacher trade union in Scotland, representing more than 60,000 members - that's over 80% of all teachers and lecturers across early years, special, primary and secondary school education, and the further and higher education sectors. The EIS also represents a large group of associated professionals in education - including Quality Improvement Officers, Educational Psychologists and Instrumental Music Teachers.

Scotland has a good education system that benefits from the commitment and professionalism of teachers and lecturers who deliver strong outcomes for children and young people, despite the significant challenges of under-resourcing. These challenges, however, are becoming greater, as are the demands on teachers and lecturers, as are the external pressures on young people from those sharing ideologies that threaten social cohesion, equality, human rights and democracy. The EIS believes that education is a vital antidote

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to the poisonous, corrosive narratives that have been taking hold through social media and increasingly making their way into the mainstream.

The EIS believes that the Scottish Government and the Scottish Parliament need to do more to ensure that all children and young people in Scotland, from Early Years to Higher Education, receive a quality education, and that the system is resourced at a level that realises this aim. Currently, it is not.

The decimation of teacher numbers in Early Years does Scotland's youngest learners a disservice

The ratio of qualified teachers (FTE) to pupils (aged 3 and over) in Early Years in 2010 was 1:60, but with a 54% reduction in the number of nursery teachers over that period, the ratio in 2025 was sitting at almost 1:120, one teacher to 119 pupils – teachers now having double the number of pupils to support.

When we compare these statistics to those available for OECD countries which reflect an average of 13 pupils per teacher in Early Years settings, it is clear that Scotland can and must do better in resourcing the education of our youngest learners at the earliest stages of their learner journeys. The financial cost of doing so is modest and the long-term benefits significant and lifelong.

School teachers under significant strain

Teaching is a satisfying and fulfilling profession, which positively impacts pupils and students, and helps to shape our society.

In our schools, however, large class sizes and high levels of teaching time, fewer promoted staff, proportionally less specialist support and worsening pupil behaviour see teachers in Scotland straining to do all that is demanded of them with insufficient resources.

This is especially true now that 43% of young people in schools have a recognised additional support

need (ASN), yet ASN support has spectacularly failed to rise with demand year upon year over the past decade or so.

As a result, teachers in Scotland are tired, have high stress levels, low job satisfaction and work a significant number of unpaid hours every week, at the expense of their own health and wellbeing. This is neither fair nor sustainable. And neither is it fair that children and young people in large classes with over-stretched staff are unable to get the time, attention and support that they deserve.

There are simply not enough teachers in the education system to do all the work that is required to provide quality education for all children and young people on a sustainable basis, and in the face of the growing societal and geopolitical challenges before us.


To compound matters further, since the onset of austerity in 2010, teachers' salaries have significantly declined in their real terms value, falling further and further behind the salary levels in many of the education systems amongst OECD countries, including Ireland.

Further and Higher Education must be funded properly too

Our colleges and universities also play a critical role, and we must ensure that all learning pathways have parity of esteem with sufficient funding to make this a reality.

Colleges, in particular, provide a second chance for many learners to thrive. Many college learners go on to university, and equally as important, to staff many of society's essential jobs, such as care workers, plumbers, and other vital roles.

Most school leavers move on to college or university after school in order to continue their education, both for their own development and to prepare for the world of work. Colleges and universities have different roles



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and tailor their work to the needs of their students. For many young people and adults, further and higher education builds on the foundation laid by schools to provide the opportunities for success for individuals and thus society as a whole.

Education at all stages is a social good from which everyone in society benefits

Investment in education not only ensures that our citizens are equipped to be able to live more fulfilled lives and make more worthwhile contributions to our society, but it also leads to better long-term health outcomes - better physical and mental health, better jobs, fewer addiction-related issues, better family and community relationships, and it results in fewer interactions with the criminal justice system.

In essence, if properly resourced, education nurtures and saves lives, in the short and long term; and saves the economy a significant amount of money in remedying the damaging societal consequences of short-term policies and under-investment in Education.

Teachers and lecturers are mission-critical to enabling such social good, and so must be supported by government and employers.

Currently, the challenging aspects of teaching are exacerbated, not mitigated, by the low levels of investment in Education. Together with workload strains and over-stretched capacity, non-competitive graduate pay and limited career pathways, teaching is neither recruiting nor retaining a sufficient number of teachers across the country or in a range of secondary subjects.

The EIS believes unequivocally that public spending on education is money well spent

With all of this in mind, and a clear view that not enough is being spent on education in Scotland currently, the EIS launched its Stand Up for Quality Education (SU4QE) campaign at its AGM in June 2023.

This manifesto sets out the aims of the Stand Up for Quality Education campaign as well as other policies debated and adopted by EIS representatives from across Scotland. Our policies are ambitious and will set Scotland's education system and people up for generations to come – but such change and positive reform requires investment and requires political vision and will.

Five key policies for schools

The five key policies for early years and school education below have been independently costed and modelled by an external company, The Institute for Public Policy Research (IPPR), for the EIS. The EIS believes that Scotland should have the ambition and confidence to implement them as a single package over the medium term:

- ▶ Reduce all class sizes to a maximum of 20 pupils
- ▶ Reduce weekly class contact to a maximum of 20 hours
- ▶ Restore the number of Early Years GTCS-registered teachers to at least 2012 levels, ideally 2007 levels
- ▶ To put in place the requisite additional staffing and resources to fully implement in practice the relevant legal duties and commitments for all pupils with additional support needs
- ▶ Provide Universal Free School Meals to all school pupils.

The EIS Stand Up for Quality Education (SU4QE) Manifesto outlines key EIS priorities for an ambitious and resilient early-years and school sector that delivers equitably for pupils and students, that becomes the cornerstone of a just, cohesive and prosperous society, and that truly values, respects and supports its teachers to best deliver for our children and young people.

One aspect that is a significant concern to the EIS is that ASN demands are not being met, and that the gap between ASL legislation and guidance, and practice on the ground, is significant and growing. More resources and professional support need to be put into ASN, and ASN funding needs to be ringfenced.

We hope that all the political parties will adopt the policies and aims of our manifesto and present them in their own manifestos. There is, however, the responsibility of the elected party (or parties) to deliver what they promised. Otherwise, the repeated failure to deliver manifesto promises will erode trust in political parties and fuel voter cynicism, which can then be exploited by populists and those even further on the right wing of politics.

Currently, the challenging aspects of teaching are exacerbated, not mitigated, by the low levels of investment in Education.

STAND UP FOR QUALITY

EARLY YEARS EDUCATION

▶▶ **As** we seek to improve the quality of our education system, we must start with our youngest learners.

Scotland has, in recent years, expanded the early years sector, but it has done so by primarily relying on differently qualified and generally lower-paid staff than teachers. The EIS believes that all of Scotland's youngest learners within the 3-18 curriculum deserve to be taught by qualified teachers, who provide leadership of learning and continuity of experience across the Early Level and at vital transition periods.

The Scottish Government's policy of 'access to a nursery teacher for every nursery age child' is not delivered for most early years children. IPPR data analysis shows, in 2012 the ratio of registered children (age 3 and above plus deferred) per FTE GTCS registered teacher stood at 1 teacher per 67 pupils, by 2024 it had risen to 1 teacher per 122 pupils.

The key role that qualified Nursery Teachers and Childhood Practice graduates have in supporting young children to foster nurturing and attached relationships, as well as learning through play, cannot and should not be underestimated. The benefits are immediately plain to see, are lifelong and have been well documented in research studies.

The recent increase in spending on ELC somewhat acknowledges that early education can provide a foundation for life for every child, irrespective of their background. The OECD highlights the importance of early intervention strategies in Early Years Education in responding to the holistic needs of the child and addressing the gaps resulting from poverty and

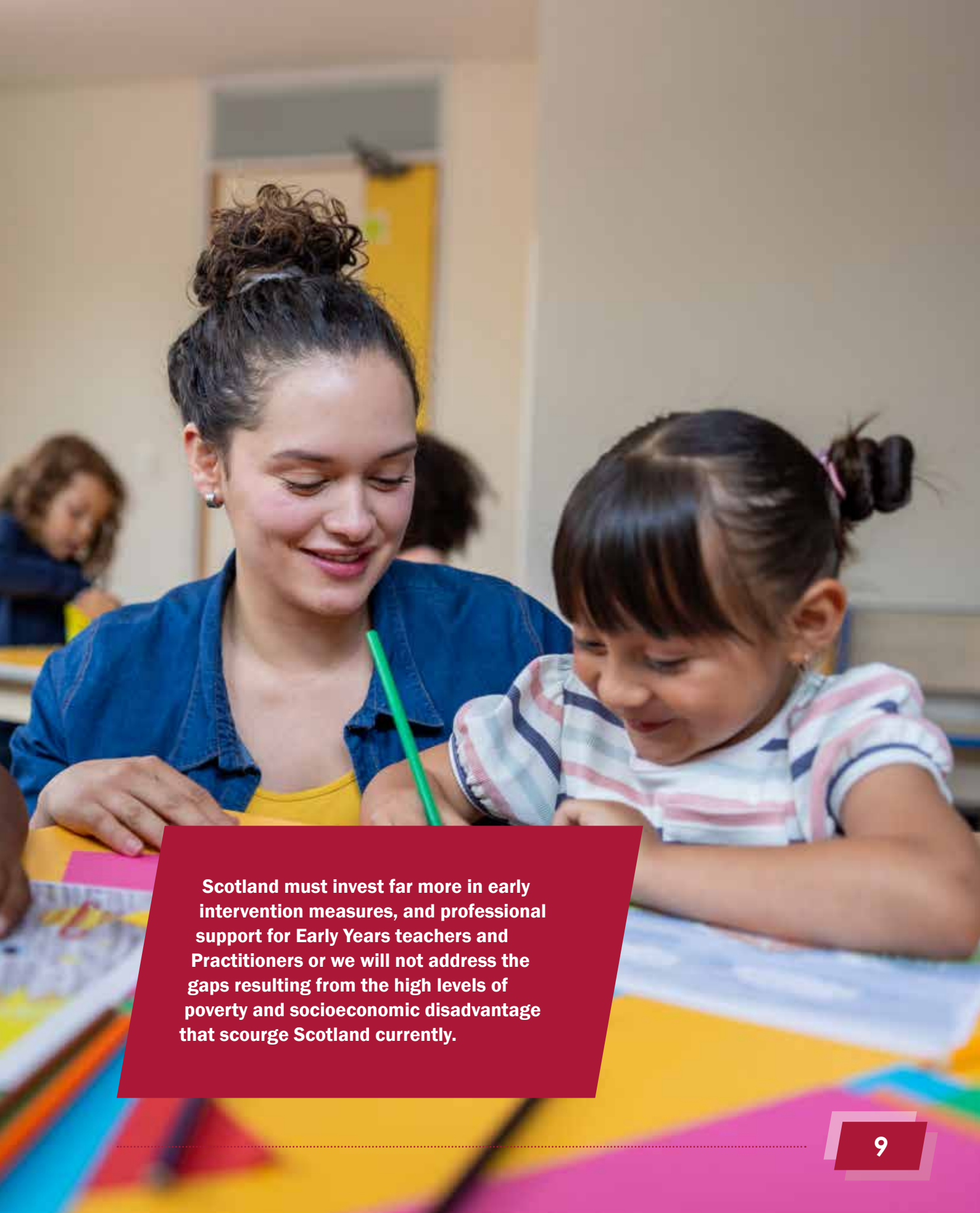
socio-economic disadvantage. Early Years education is therefore crucial in the strive for equity and in improving outcomes in later life.

To deliver this, Scotland must invest far more in early intervention measures, and professional support for Early Years teachers and Practitioners or we will not address the gaps resulting from the high levels of poverty and socioeconomic disadvantage that scourge Scotland currently.

At a cost of £50 million per year, as modelled by IPPR using 2012 as a baseline, this is wholly affordable.

In standing up for Early Years provision for our youngest learners, the EIS calls for:

- ▶ Greater investment in high quality, free at the point of use and publicly delivered, Early Years provision in which GTCS registered teachers are wholly included alongside other professionals
- ▶ Restoration of the number of GTCS registered teachers to at least 2012 levels, ideally 2007 levels
- ▶ Minimum guaranteed access to a GTCS registered teacher for all 3-5 year olds
- ▶ Full embedding and resourcing of play-based pedagogy in Early Learning and Childcare settings and in the early years of Primary.



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STAND UP FOR QUALITY

SCHOOL EDUCATION

► **There** are considerable challenges facing Scotland's schools in seeking to achieve the shared ambitions for Scotland's children and young people. Lack of sufficient funding is at the heart of these challenges. Government is about making decisions, and the reality is that the Scottish Government has not invested enough in education.

EIS members have identified the three biggest stressors within schools as:


1. Pupil behaviour

The EIS believes that the Scottish Government should facilitate and put additional funding into schools so that they have the time and resources to address distressed, violent and aggressive pupil behaviour, and embed positive school culture and ethos.

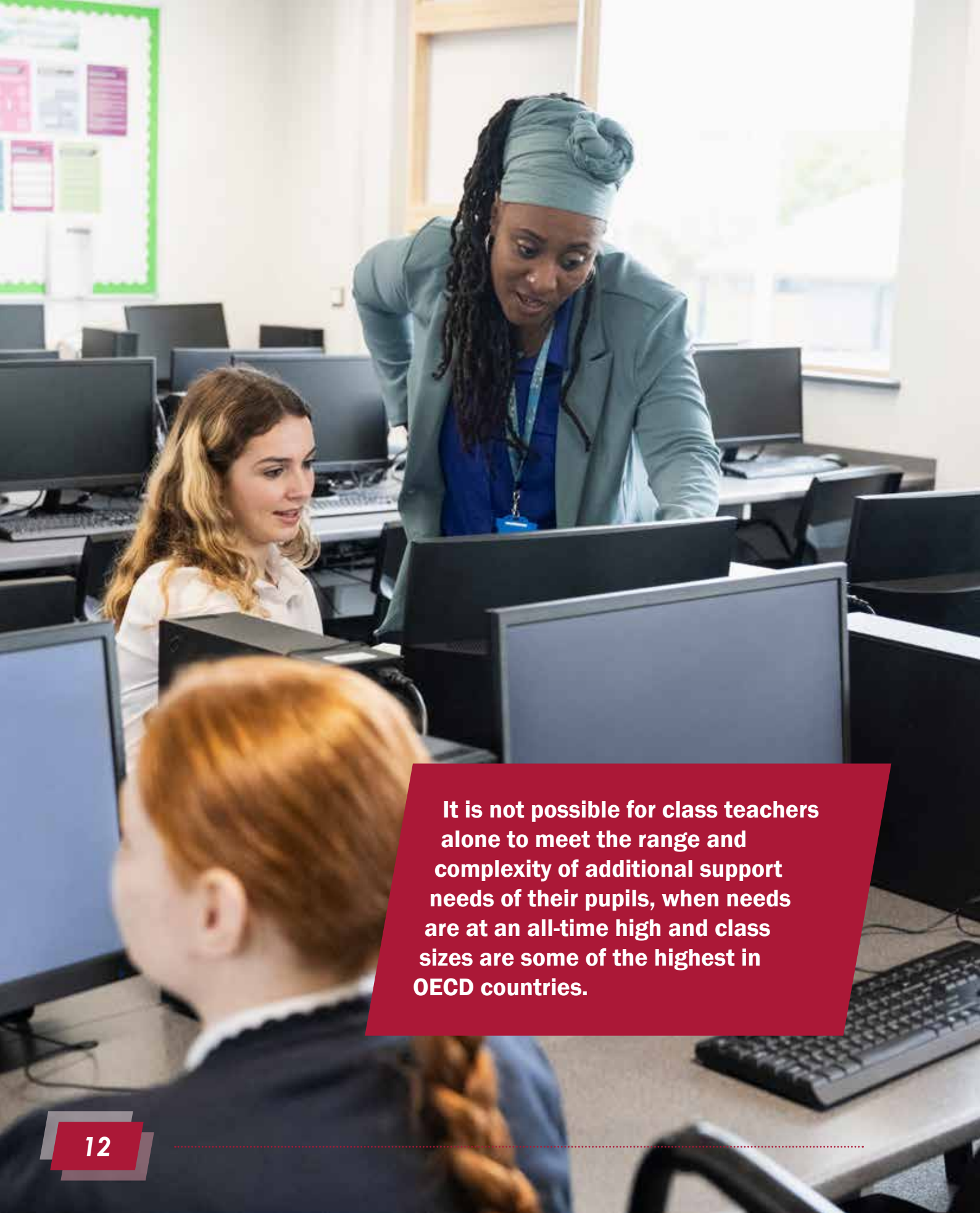
Teachers have the right to work and pupils have the right to learn in an environment which is safe and free from violence and aggression. Over the last five years, we have seen a significant growth in the levels of violence and aggression within schools, towards teachers and school staff, and between pupils.

This is affecting the health, safety and wellbeing of a large number of pupils, teachers and school staff. The disruption in learning is significant for pupils within those classes that experience violence and aggression. Schools and local authorities simply do not have sufficient staff, resources, policy frameworks or professional support to log and follow up on all incidents of violence and aggression or, ultimately, to enable appropriate and peaceful learning conditions for all pupils. Teachers need to be better protected from violence in their workplaces, and pupils from violence in their learning environments.





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It is not possible for class teachers alone to meet the range and complexity of additional support needs of their pupils, when needs are at an all-time high and class sizes are some of the highest in OECD countries.

2. Insufficient provision for Additional Support Needs (ASN)

The EIS supports the Scottish Government's commitment to 'getting it right for every child' to provide all children, young people and their families with the right support at the right time, so that every child and young person in Scotland can reach their full potential. However, the gap between ASN policy and practice is now intolerable primarily because of the insufficient levels of funding to sustain the resources, decreasing numbers of specialist ASN teachers, insufficient associated professional staff (especially Educational Psychologists) and insufficient time to effectively deliver additional support for learning to the 43% of pupils who require it. This has led to teachers being left to develop and deliver personalised learning to large numbers of pupils without adequate support in their lessons.

It is simply not possible for class teachers alone to meet the range and complexity of additional support needs of their pupils, when needs are at an all-time high and class sizes are some of the highest in OECD countries.

The consequences of unmet additional support needs have adverse impacts on the specific pupil, on the other pupils in the class and on teachers, who feel isolated, overworked, exhausted, stressed, demotivated and frustrated that they cannot, through any fault of their own, meet the needs of their pupils and consequently, have to deal with the behavioural issues which ensue.

3. Workload

Teacher workload is at unsustainable levels. This is clear from our national member surveys and the issues that were captured in the independent research report on teacher workload commissioned by the EIS and published in 2024. The report found that, on average, teachers are spending 11.39 hours per week outside of contracted hours on work-related activity, undertaken in the morning before work, into the evening and at home at the weekend.

Workload was found to be driven by:

- ▶ Budget and staffing cuts, including fewer principal teachers and headteachers
- ▶ Increases in pupil numbers and rising class sizes
- ▶ Education reform churn and uncertainty
- ▶ The rising number of pupils with Additional Support Needs, as well as more generally diverse learning needs
- ▶ Additional responsibilities upon all teachers for Literacy and Numeracy
- ▶ Challenges following the lockdowns during the COVID pandemic
- ▶ Decline in pupil behaviour and increased disengagement behaviours in classrooms
- ▶ Unproductive workload, for example collating swathes of data for the purposes of 'quality assurance'.

Workload was a contributing factor influencing teachers' career decisions i.e. whether to seek promotion, move schools, move into education-related work, or exit the profession entirely. In our 2025 national member survey, less than half of respondents stated that they planned to stay in teaching in five years' time.

The EIS message to the next Scottish Government is that it must take action to address these three issues as a matter of urgency.

OTHER KEY CHALLENGES NEEDING TO BE ADDRESSED IN SCHOOLS

AI & Education Technology in Schools

The EIS is clear that education is fundamentally based on human-based relationships, engagement and judgements; and that Scottish schools must retain the presence of GTCS registered teachers in classrooms to continue the fundamental role of teachers as leaders of learning, exercising professional judgement and skills in a human-centred system.

Education technology (Edtech) has the potential to enhance aspects of teaching, learning, and assessment. However, it cannot replace teachers nor make decisions in place of teachers or other professionals; and it carries many risks in respect of reliability, cognitive growth, inbuilt bias, equality and data protection.

The use of Edtech, including AI, needs to be collectively planned and agreed with teacher trade unions in order that it is safely and effectively delivered, where appropriate, in schools on a fully funded model, with teacher professional judgement determining if and when it should be used in education and learning at classroom level.

The EIS as a co-creator of the Scottish Guidelines and Guardrails for the Use of AI in Schools, endorses the guidelines, encourages their use in schools and local authorities, and supports continued partnership working and trade union involvement in further Edtech, including AI, policy development.

Instrumental Music in Schools

The Scottish Government has not delivered its promises to the electorate made in the 2021 manifesto.

1. To ensure instrumental music lessons are delivered free of charge, abolishing fees for music and arts education, including instrumental music tuition in schools
2. To mainstream music, including instrumental music tuition, as a core subject in Scotland's education system
3. To deliver GTCS registration for Scotland's school-based instrumental music teachers - creating a professionally-recognised national music teaching force.

The next government should fund and prioritise the implementation of these policies. Mainstreaming instrumental music education and honouring the promise of GTCS registration would deliver clear benefits for pupils and instrumental music teachers, and ensure that the benefits of music are not lost by it being treated as a second class subject or as a subject that only the children of wealthier parents can afford to learn.

Whilst most fees have been removed, the EIS is concerned that some fees – especially for ensembles and groups are now being reintroduced. Despite a clear statement that Scottish Government funding for instrumental music tuition was designed to compensate for the removal of fees and not to meet the full cost of the service, some local authorities have elected to withdraw their contribution. Others have maintained their contributions and continued to invest in the service. This has led to a postcode lottery in the funding available to support instrumental music provision across Scotland.

The School Estate

Many school buildings are not well designed for the needs of the school community and are packed beyond capacity. This means that creative approaches are curtailed, and over-full classrooms, corridors and social spaces combine to create challenging environments for children and young people. Many

older school buildings are literally crumbling due to structural defects arising from the use of RAAC concrete, whilst others have asbestos, wind or water ingress, poor ventilation or have fire safety issues.

The positive impact of well-designed and maintained schools on pupil achievement and attainment is well understood by academic researchers and teachers themselves. It is important that the school estate in Scotland is of sufficient quality to play its part in facilitating positive outcomes for young people, otherwise, issues of inequality are only exacerbated.

The EIS therefore calls for more capital investment in school buildings, accelerated timeframes for new-builds, and school expansion, and greater teacher involvement at the planning and design stages to ensure that buildings are fully fit for educational purpose and meet the highest health and safety standards.

A Long-term Vision for Schools

The EIS believes that implementation of the following five education policies will deliver a positive impact for all of today's learners and for teachers, and will best serve Scotland's long-term interests as the place for our young people to live happy, healthy, prosperous lives, working in good jobs, otherwise contributing to society and participating in our democracy, being able to realise their own rights and respect the rights of others:

- 1.** Reduce all class sizes to a maximum of 20 pupils
- 2.** Reduce weekly class contact to a maximum of 20 hours
- 3.** Restore the number of GTCS-registered teachers to at least 2012 levels, ideally 2007
- 4.** Provide Universal Free School Meals to all school pupils
- 5.** Increase ASN resourcing and ring fence the funding.



Mainstreaming instrumental music education honouring the promise of GTCS registration would deliver clear benefits for pupils and instrumental music teachers, and ensure that the benefits of music are not lost by being treated as a second class subject.

The EIS has commissioned independent research that considers the costs and benefits of the policies above, that we believe will deliver significant, lasting benefits at an acceptable, affordable cost. Previous commitments to implement parts of these policies have petered out as the Scottish Government prioritises its resources elsewhere.

Having sought evidence-based costings, the EIS believes that the short to medium-term costs of delivering all these policies are manageable within the Scottish Government's budget. Furthermore, the increased short to medium term spending will lead to more economic activity and less spending in other areas over the long term. In effect, spending on education now mitigates the need for spending later, laying a strong foundation for learners' educational, employment and socio-economic outcomes; better physical and mental health in adulthood; and positive contributions to society.

1. Reducing all class sizes to a maximum of 20 pupils – A costed approach

In Scotland, P1 classes are capped at 25 pupils, P2 and P3 classes are capped at 30 pupils and P4-7 classes are capped at 33 pupils, with practical subjects in Secondary schools capped at a maximum of 20 pupils, while S1 to S3, and S4 to S6 non-practical classes are capped at a maximum of 33 and 30 pupils, respectively.

The 2007 SNP Manifesto promised to cap all class sizes to 20. We believe the rationale for doing so remains compelling:

- I. Smaller classes lead to more teacher-time per child, and would better enable teachers to respond to the needs of all pupils, including those with ASN. The EIS believes that a class size of 20 is optimal.
- II. International research has shown that small classes can mitigate the impact of socio-economic

disadvantage, thereby assisting in closing the poverty related achievement and attainment gap.

- III. OECD average class size is 21 in the primary sector and 23 in 'lower secondary'. Scotland's average primary class size is 23.1 and there are no figures published regarding the Scottish average class size in the secondary sector. That said, we do know that in many Secondary subjects, class sizes are at the maxima of 33 up to S3, and up to 30 for S4-S6. The OECD states that the UK average for the secondary sector is 26 pupils. Scotland's large classes are an international outlier – especially as this is exacerbated by high teacher class contact hours.
- IV. Research shows that decreasing class sizes can increase pupil outcomes and, crucially, their earnings as adults. Increased earnings lead to increased economic activity and taxes that can then be invested in quality public services.

The independent modelling commissioned by the EIS has calculated that capping class sizes at 20 would cost around £510 million per year in 2030, for around 450,000 pupils with the average class size reduction being around 4 pupils. At these rates, the policy is likely to result in an average increase in earnings equivalent to 0.7 per cent of Scottish median earnings per one-pupil reduction in class sizes. Our independent modelling concludes that this is possible given similar results from implementation of this policy approach in Sweden. The boost to prosperity in Scotland should, therefore, outweigh policy costs over the long term.

2. Reducing weekly class contact time – A costed approach

Contractually, teachers currently deliver 22.5 hours of teaching (weekly class contact) although the Scottish Government and COSLA have, in principle, agreed to implement the 2021 SNP manifesto promise of 21



Smaller classes lead to more teacher-time per child, and would better enable teachers to respond to the needs of all pupils, including those with ASN.

weekly class contact hours. Reducing weekly class contact, over the medium term, to 20 hours per week is based on the following strong rationale:

- I. Twenty hours of teaching with 10 hours of preparation and correction time would better allow teachers to plan and deliver lessons adapted for the educational needs of all learners including those pupils with additional support needs.
- II. The OECD 2024 Education at a Glance Report shows that primary teachers internationally have an average of 773 class contact hours and upper secondary teachers have an average of 679 hours a year. Scotland's annual teaching hours for both sectors is 855 hours. On a weekly basis, Scotland's class contact hours are an outlier and moving the maximum to 20 hours would be in line with the OCED average for primary but still above the average for the secondary sector.
- III. Our independently commissioned research on delivering our five policies has found that high teaching loads are bad for teachers' health, wellbeing and job retention, and that some studies also find knock-on consequences for pupils' learning.

The independent modelling commissioned by the EIS has calculated that the cost of reducing teacher weekly class contact varies depending on the timescale adopted. This is because the number of primary school pupils is slowly dropping, the number of secondary pupils is still increasing but is expected to peak then fall in about 3 years' time – the longer the implementation timescale, the easier and cheaper class contact reduction is to implement.

Our independent IPPR modelling found that reducing weekly class contact time from 22.5 to 20 hours would involve employing extra teachers and that the costs for this would be around £330m per annum if 2030 was the implementation date due to falling pupil rolls.

3. Restoring the number of Early Years GTCS Registered Teachers – A costed approach

It is of vital importance to give Early Years children actual meaningful access to qualified GTCS registered nursery teachers, in accordance with the policy of the Scottish Government.

GTCS registered teachers in nursery education are graduates with degree level training in pedagogy and child development. Increasing children's access to GTCS registered teachers will bring a higher level of pedagogical expertise which can help ensure that learning activities are purposeful and aligned with early years frameworks- thereby preparing children for a smooth transition to primary school and equipping them with benefits that are lifelong.

The EIS believes that the greater the role of teachers, given their training and expertise, in early years then the greater the benefit to pupils in terms of their language acquisition, cognitive development, and socialisation. Furthermore, teachers have greater expertise in identifying and responding to Additional Support Needs early, adapting pedagogical approaches, coordinating interventions and liaising with specialists. This will help pupils and, also, mitigate socio-economic disadvantage.

The independent IPPR modelling commissioned by the EIS has concluded that restoring the teacher ratios in the Early Years Sector to 2012 levels would require around 80% more teachers in that sector built on the assumption that every child receives 2 hours and forty minutes of learning in groups of 8.* The annual cost of this would be £50m based on a maximum of 20-hours of weekly class contact for teachers, if implemented in 2030. The EIS would wish teacher numbers to be restored at least to 2012 levels, ideally 2007 levels, before local authorities began making cuts to teacher numbers for budgetary reasons.

* Whilst this assumption does not reflect the pedagogical approach adopted by nursery teachers in practice, it is a realistic reflection of time upon which to base the calculation and to make an accurate assessment of the level of resource required.



Critically, universal provision would cut household costs, especially for low-income families, and particularly for families with more than one child.

4. Providing Universal Free School Meals (UFSM) to all school pupils – A costed approach

Both in the short and the longer-term, hunger, undernourishment and the stress and trauma that arise from food insecurity, erode physical, emotional and mental health, and undermine a young person's ability to learn and to socialise, and therefore to benefit fully from their school education.

Hunger and food insecurity, therefore, contribute to the poverty-related achievement and attainment gap, which evidence shows, can have lifelong negative consequences for the young people who are on the wrong side of the gap.

The EIS recognises the progress made in expanding universal free school meals in the primary sector, but more is needed for all school pupils. Providing school meals for every child will improve child nutrition and health, leading to better educational outcomes and removes the social stigma associated with means-tested free meals.

Our independent modelling found that delivering universal free school meals across primary and secondary schools, together with a holiday meal provision for those who need it, would cost £160m per annum. This spending would create long-term savings for our public health systems by reducing diet-related illnesses, not only through the nourishment from the food itself but by establishing healthy eating habits early in life, as well as the positive social habits that develop from the sharing of meals with one another.

Critically, universal provision would cut household costs, especially for low-income families, and particularly for families with more than one child. Universal free school meals are an effective means of delivering the current Scottish Government's flagship policy of reducing child poverty by helping to mitigate the impact of rising food prices and cost-of-living pressures for low-income families.

Delivering all Stand Up for Quality Education Campaign Aims:

Delivering the full package of SU4QE policies would need more than 8,500 additional teachers (even with the long-run reduction in pupil numbers) by 2030.

The total cost of implementing all five policies as a single package depends on the timescales chosen. If implemented in 2030, the costs would be around £860m per annum (including capital for classrooms and additional staffing), whereas maintaining teacher numbers whilst waiting until 2030 to implement all five policies would give annual costs of around £700m - due to falling pupil rolls. These annualised costs would fall over time, i.e. after the new classrooms are built.

The EIS is clear that whilst there is an opportunity to reduce the total cost by phasing in these five policy areas over the medium term, we cannot afford to wait longer than the next Parliamentary term for full implementation. The need is pressing, and it would be wrong to sacrifice the interests of the current cohort of pupils, and to risk perpetuation of the issues that are negatively impacting teacher recruitment and retention.

In standing up for our schools, pupils and teachers, the EIS calls for:

- ▶ A significant increase in the numbers of permanently employed teachers, starting with the 3500 previously promised by 2026 (SNP 2021 Scottish Parliamentary Election Manifesto which became the Programme of Government)
- ▶ A veto on cuts to teacher numbers in any local authority
- ▶ An end to precarity for the thousands of qualified teachers seeking security of employment
- ▶ An individual Headteacher in each school,

reversal of cuts to management time for promoted staff and sufficient, protected management time to enable the safe and effective delivery of Education in all schools

- ▶ A national minimum staffing standard – with ringfenced funding to local authorities - to be developed and adopted to ensure sustainable, fair and consistent teacher staffing levels throughout the country, taking full account of deprivation, additional support needs, and rurality
- ▶ Probationer placements centrally funded by the Scottish Government and treated as additional staffing
- ▶ Reduction in class sizes to 20 pupils per class across all stages and subjects.

Decisive action to tackle excessive teacher workload through:

- ▶ Reduction of class contact time to a maximum of 20 hours per week, starting with delivery of the promised reduction to 21 hours by 2026 (SNP 2021 Scottish Parliament Election Manifesto)


(ii) The additional time given to teachers for preparation and correction to reduce the significant amount of unpaid work being done by teachers

- ▶ A greater commitment to culture change and a truly Empowered School system, where the professional judgement and autonomy of teachers is valued and is supported to be central to the implementation of 'human-centred' educational reform, in line with the raft of recommendations in education reform reports - 'Bring the joy back to teaching!'
- ▶ Elimination of needless bureaucracy and top-down accountability processes which negatively impact the health and wellbeing of teachers - let teachers teach
- ▶ De-cluttering of the BGE curriculum in Primary

- ▶ Alignment of the senior phase with the BGE and urgent implementation of senior phase reform
- ▶ Prioritisation of assessment that genuinely benefits learning at all stages of the curriculum
- ▶ Trust in teachers and in teacher agency in an empowered school system that focuses on quality learning and teaching for children and young people
- ▶ Time for all teachers to engage in quality professional learning to support development, with associated provision for self-reflection and peer discussion on the impact of learning, where appropriate
- ▶ Investment in teachers as valued professionals: restoration of the real-terms value of teacher pay to pre-austerity levels
- ▶ Increased investment in school buildings to make them the safe, healthy, secure and nurturing environments that they must be for children and young people, and for the teachers and other staff who work in them.

And specifically, to enable and promote positive pupil behaviour:

- ▶ An explicit recognition that violent and aggressive behaviour in schools is a Health and Safety issue that must be addressed in accordance with the relevant legislation to ensure that school environments are safe for all pupils and staff
- ▶ Establishment of a nationally agreed definition of 'violence and aggression' in accordance with the Health and Safety Executive's definition
- ▶ Effective systems of reporting and monitoring of violent incidents and of subsequent interventions
- ▶ Monitoring of prejudice-based violence and aggression with a national approach that is integrated with Local Authorities' work
- ▶ Increased recruitment of and appropriate professional learning for specialist teachers,

A young woman with long dark hair and glasses, wearing a white short-sleeved shirt and a striped tie, stands on the left. To her right is a woman with blonde hair wearing a teal long-sleeved shirt and a lanyard with a badge. They are in a classroom with a whiteboard and green wall in the background. A red text box is overlaid on the bottom right of the image.

**Elimination of needless
bureaucracy and top-down
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educational psychologists and other specialist roles to help prevent violence and aggression, and to assist appropriate responses where it does occur

- ▶ Increased mental health support for children and young people and for teachers impacted by violent and aggressive behaviour in schools
- ▶ Increased staffing, including promoted posts with the associated protected management time, to enable effective implementation of early intervention approaches to prevent violent and aggressive behaviour and to support sound restorative practice.


To ensure adequate resourcing of Additional Support Needs provision:

- ▶ Funding to support the effective implementation of the UNCRC (Incorporation) (Scotland) Act 2024 in practice
- ▶ Ring fenced funding to support the 'presumption of mainstreaming' and to fill the gap between the promise of ASL legislation and the reality of under-delivery for pupils with ASN
- ▶ Additional funding for specialist staff to support pupils with specific needs, including ASN teachers and Pupil Support Assistants
- ▶ Provision of time for teachers to undertake professional learning in Additional Support Needs, as appropriate
- ▶ Increased staffing and professional learning to enable coherent adoption of Trauma Informed Practice
- ▶ Urgent enhancement of specialist mental health support for the rising numbers of children and young people who are struggling with their mental health - accessible, local, publicly funded support services for pupils – including CAMHS and speech and language therapy

- ▶ Reversal of cuts to English as an Additional Language (EAL) provision and an expansion across Councils of this vital service.

And to enable schools to play their part in mitigating the impact of child poverty:

- ▶ Universal provision of free school meals (including provision over holiday periods) for all nursery and school-aged children
- ▶ Guaranteed access to appropriate digital hardware, broadband and data for all pupils on an equitable basis, to help tackle digital poverty
- ▶ Progress on and resourcing of, the commitment to genuinely free instrumental tuition for all pupils who wish it - an end to Instrumental Music Teacher staffing cuts and waiting lists for children and young people
- ▶ Proper resourcing of free out of school activities and free wraparound childcare to mitigate the worst impacts of poverty on young people's wellbeing, achievement and attainment.

A young man with dark, curly hair, wearing a white short-sleeved shirt and a dark striped tie, is smiling and looking down at a small, purple, spherical robot with two eyes. He is holding the robot with his right hand. In the background, a classroom setting is visible with a blue bulletin board and another student working at a desk.

**Ring fenced funding to support the
‘presumption of mainstreaming’
and to fill the gap between the
promise of ASL legislation and
the reality of under-delivery for
pupils with ASN.**

STAND UP FOR QUALITY

FURTHER AND HIGHER EDUCATION

► **Further** and Higher Education in Scotland provide a vast range of opportunities for students to grow as individuals, enabling them to acquire essential knowledge, skills and qualifications in order to improve life chances, including future work, training or education destinations. Universities and colleges, are an important resource for the communities they serve.

Colleges and universities fulfil different functions, and they should be encouraged to fulfil their distinct and different roles. Colleges in particular support learners who wish to upskill, reskill, or change careers, are a vital foundation of employability and are particularly important for people from disadvantaged backgrounds. Colleges also provide a second chance for education for many learners. All parts of Scotland must be served by a local FE college to provide access to the distinct education and training for locally based people from all backgrounds and ages.


More needs to be done in Higher Education to facilitate improved and proportionate access for young people from disadvantaged backgrounds, and Scottish universities must have sufficient capacity to meet Scottish domiciled student demand and be funded to cover those costs.

Despite the importance of the Higher and Further Education Sectors, these sectors have been subject to significant and sustained cuts in funding, leading to fewer Further Education qualifications delivered and a cap on Higher Education places for Scottish domiciled students. There was a 20 per cent real-terms reduction in Scottish Government funding for colleges between 2021/22 and 2025/26. The Scottish

Government's teaching grant funding has also fallen by around 20% since 2013-14 for universities. Whilst this year's budget has reduced the total real terms funding cut for colleges since 2021/22, it is still significant and has had a significant impact in college. Equally worrying is that international student fee income is greater than public investment in Scottish universities.

For these reasons, and many more, in standing up for Further and Higher Education, the EIS calls for:

- Improved public funding of universities and colleges
- Resoration of and growth in Further and Higher student places
- The maintaining of a network of FE colleges throughout Scotland
- Preserving the principle that colleges are bodies that provide training and teaching based on student and local community needs as opposed to the needs of business
- Protection of the professional status of lecturing staff and prevention of the deskilling of lecturers
- Opposition to any further privatisation of Further Education or Higher Education
- Opposition to any further outsourcing and a policy of bringing outsourced staff back into colleges
- Improvement of democratic accountability and scrutiny for college governing bodies
- Expansion of national collective bargaining in Higher Education to include a Scotland-specific context
- An end to the casualisation of the Higher Education workforce.

A photograph of three students in a chemistry laboratory. A male student in the center, wearing safety goggles and a lab coat, is adjusting a vertical glass tube held by a clamp. To his left, a female student with blonde hair, also in a lab coat and safety goggles, is looking down at a notebook and writing. To his right, another female student with dark hair, wearing safety goggles and a lab coat, is looking towards the central student. The background shows laboratory equipment, including a microscope and various glassware. A large red banner is overlaid on the bottom right of the image, containing white text.

Despite the importance of the Higher and Further Education Sectors, these sectors have been subject to significant and sustained cuts in funding, leading to fewer Further Education qualifications delivered and a cap on Higher Education places for Scottish domiciled students.

STAND UP FOR EQUALITY

- **The** EIS has a commitment to high standards of education rooted in equality and inclusivity. The EIS's overarching position is the principle that children and young people have the right to learn, and teachers and lecturers have the right to work, in an educational environment that is free from discrimination, where the rights of all are equally upheld.

In Standing Up for Equality, the EIS calls for:

- Prioritisation of equality in terms of creating safe, inclusive and non-discriminatory cultures, environments and practices for all staff and students regardless of any protected characteristics or of socio-economic disadvantage
- Redoubling of efforts towards racial and ethnic diversification of the teaching profession
- Practical support for teachers to deliver fully inclusive education, with equality, equity and diversity at its core
- Practical support for teachers in the form of time, resources and opportunities for professional learning, towards ensuring that all children and young people develop a broad range of knowledge, understanding, skills and capacities to enable them to thrive and to shape the world in the interests of democracy, peace, and social and climate justice
- Increased support for the health and well-being of all those working in education, including specific support for mental health
- Recognition of Long Covid as a disability.

...children and young people have the right to learn, and teachers and lecturers have the right to work, in an educational environment that is free from discrimination...



STAND UP FOR

BETTER CONDITIONS FOR WORKERS AND A FAIRER SOCIETY

- **An** effective education system contributes to a fair and inclusive society that allows all citizens to thrive and those who can, to be employed in work that is safe, fair, secure and fulfilling. Schools and other educational establishments prepare young people to participate in and contribute to civic life in a positive and informed way.

Schools need to be able to facilitate young people to be able to understand and critically think about political issues and news sources so that they can form their own views on an informed basis. Furthermore, young people require the skills to appreciate others' perspectives and how complex many issues are, thereby helping to avoid extreme positions. Such political education strengthens democracy and reduces political polarisation.

The principles of Fair Work must also be meaningfully facilitated by the Scottish Government across all sectors of employment – especially within

public bodies. The programme needs to be expanded and fully embedded across the workforce, including teachers and lecturers.

In standing up for teachers and lecturers, and all other workers in Scotland, the EIS calls for the expansion of Fair Work and devolution of further legislative powers to the Scottish Parliament in:

- Employment Law
- Industrial Relations Legislation
- Health and Safety at Work.

Crucially, we call upon political parties to commit to facilitating sector-wide collective bargaining in all areas, including the Scottish HE sector. Furthermore, all employers in the public, private and charitable sectors should be required to quickly recognise trade unions for negotiating all terms and conditions of employment and consultation on other matters.

STAND UP FOR

PROPER FUNDING OF PUBLIC SERVICES

- **The** EIS has consistently supported progressive taxation policies to support increased public funding. The COVID-19 pandemic highlighted just how vital public services, including Education, are to our children and young people, and the role that our education establishments play in supporting their communities. Furthermore, Education often allows parents and carers to access work.

Our public services are essential for the overall health, prosperity and cohesion of our society. Education is vital to this mission. Our independently commissioned research evidences that Scotland can afford to adopt a strategy of stronger investment

in Education for the purpose of preventative spend in the longer-run, bringing a raft of benefits for the young people who are in our education system today, who will be the future adult contributors to our society tomorrow.

In Standing Up for public services, the EIS therefore calls for:

- More progressive taxation with selectively higher tax rates in order to reflect a priority commitment to fund and deliver quality public services
- Greater use of Scotland's devolved powers to raise funds for public services.

STAND UP FOR

PEACE, DEMOCRACY, SOCIAL JUSTICE AND THE PLANET

- **The** EIS stands shoulder to shoulder with our sister trade unions across the globe in pursuit of peace, democracy, equality and social justice, and is committed to helping tackle the climate change that threatens the very existence of our planet in the future, and which right now makes life and education extremely challenging for children, young people and their families, and adult learners in the global south.

In standing up for peace, social and climate justice, the EIS calls for a future Scottish Government to promote the rule of international law:

In the Middle East:

- A just, comprehensive and lasting peace that is consistent with international law and is based on a two-state solution, and security for both Palestine and Israel, which promotes democracy, equality and respect for human and labour rights
- An end to the illegal occupation of Palestinian territory and the blockade of Gaza
- Respect for all Palestinian rights, including the right to self-determination and the right to return
- An end to the supply of UK arms to Israel
- At home, we call for support for teachers in Scotland to deliver lessons related to the conflict in Israel and Palestine, using the EIS teaching resource as a starting point.

Relative to the War in Ukraine:

- The Heads of State and government officials of Ukraine, and Russia to do everything in their power to de-escalate the conflict and to seek a lasting, peaceful solution to this crisis
- International bodies and European institutions to expend all effort in facilitating a peaceful settlement of the conflict
- Restoration and protection of worker and trade union rights in Ukraine.

In support of our international campaigning and tackling climate change, the EIS calls for:

- A halt to biodiversity loss and reduction of greenhouse gas emissions to net zero by 2030
- Education of the public on the science behind the climate and ecological emergency
- The creation of a Citizens' Assembly to steer decisions on tackling the climate emergency
- For the UK Government to honour its commitments under the United Nations Framework for Climate Change.



The EIS stands shoulder to shoulder with our sister trade unions across the globe in pursuit of peace, democracy, equality and social justice, and is committed to helping tackle the climate change that threatens the very existence of our planet.

THE EIS IS STANDING UP FOR:

- ✓ **QUALITY EDUCATION ACROSS ALL SECTORS**
- ✓ **LONG-TERM INVESTMENT IN PUPILS' EDUCATION**
- ✓ **PUBLICLY FUNDED, PUBLICLY DELIVERED FE AND HE,
WITH STRONGER GOVERNANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY**
- ✓ **EQUALITY IN OUR EDUCATION SETTINGS**
- ✓ **BETTER, FAIRER CONDITIONS FOR ALL WORKERS
IN SCOTLAND**
- ✓ **PROPER FUNDING OF PUBLIC SERVICES**
- ✓ **PEACE, DEMOCRACY, SOCIAL JUSTICE AND THE PLANET**

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Ahead of the Scottish Parliament Election in May 2026, we urge all parties and candidates, to stand up with us in their own manifestos.

And we encourage all voters - teachers, school staff, and associated education professionals, parents, carers and families, and all who have an interest in quality education that's rooted in social and economic justice, to stand up with us as they cast their valuable votes.

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For more information regarding the EIS Manifesto, contact enquiries@eis.org.uk



STAND UP

FOR QUALITY EDUCATION

PUPIL BEHAVIOUR

ASN

WORKLOAD



STAND UP

FOR QUALITY EDUCATION

eis

The Educational
Institute of Scotland