

To whom it may concern,

First of all, on behalf of all parents at Gracemount High School, we would like to express our support and gratitude to Mr. Hunter and all his staff for their hard work in this unprecedented, challenging situation.

We would also like to express our thanks to the staff, pupils and parents of Liberton High School and Wester Hailes Education Centre for their welcome and messages of support and for accommodating our pupils.

Understandably, our parents are unsettled and have many concerns regarding the uncertainty caused by the current situation. This is heightened by lack of information due to the structural surveys not being received as yet, meaning we are all in the dark about the scale of the problem and the resulting timescale for our pupils returning to GHS.

The following summarises parental concerns raised at last week's parent council meeting.

Building Issues

- As GHS and Craigmount HS are completely closed, can we have assurances that any remedial work required at these schools will be prioritised?
- Other concerns raised were the lack of information on
 - What is wrong with the school building
 - What work is required
 - What is the timeframe

Timescale:

Concerns were raised about the uncertainty surrounding the lack of information on how long these temporary measures will be in place because the impact on:

- Curtailed curriculum on offer due to the shortened school day
- Specialised school activities (football, dance academies and drama)
- Childcare issues due to altered timetable
- Possible long term impact on the school, pupils, attainment levels and behaviour.

Junior Cohort:

- Due to shortened school day, the full curriculum is unable to be offered to the junior pupils.
- We are concerned that buses should be available to transport the junior pupils at a time more consistent with the normal school day.
- As GHS S1-S3 pupils are at a different location to the senior pupils, how are our teaching staff covering our pupils education?
- While appreciating alternative, suitable locations are at a premium, can we have an assurance that all suitable safeguards regarding travel and safety has been considered?

Senior Cohort:

- Pupils revision and preparation for exams has been adversely affected
- Where will pupils sit their exams?
- Will the pupils be offered a chance for orientation at exam venue?
- The senior cohort are not at the moment learning in a classroom environment but in halls, an open library and also having to share the space with up to 3 classes at one time. The environments are consistently disrupted, which is clearly causing major distractions to their learning.

Communication:

- Real concerns about lack of communication/updates regarding when survey results will be available, action required and timescales involved.

Pupil Welfare:

- Support for Learning priorities and issues.
- Medical support for pupils
- Arrangements should pupils fall ill/have accident during school day

Social Media:

- Lack of information has led to ill informed speculation on all social forums.

We hope that CEC will continually assess and reassess all viable options for GHS on an ongoing basis as we do not wish the current solution to be used long term.

We seek assurances that CEC will take on board our concerns and respond in a timely manner.

Ultimately, all parents want GHS and our children back within our community.

GHS Parent Council

Stephen

Many thanks for copying me into your e-mail below ... these are all perfectly reasonable points to seek clarification on, and I'll liaise with relevant Officers and ensure someone gets back to you with a full update as soon as feasible.

Can I also say that I really appreciate your thanks to both the Staff at Gracemount, and those at Liberton and WHEC ... I'm sure that all concerned will continue to do everything they can to ensure any period of decant-arrangements goes as smoothly as possible.

Finally, I too (and all the Officers concerned), want clarity over the length of time that any decant will last – and we want the final output from the survey/s to inform that, like you do ... and as soon as we have such, then we'll communicate that to Parents/Carers as rapidly as possible.

Thanks again for getting in touch, and raising these points with us ... someone will get back to you very soon with further detail.

Andrew

Andrew Burns | Council Leader

Stephen

We will provide a full answer to these questions asap. I appreciate the concerns of parents at this time.

Alistair

Alistair Gaw - Acting Executive Director of Communities and Families
