11th Dec 2020

Paul Clancy

Executive Director of Children and Families

Dundee City Council

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Dear Paul

We are writing in relation to the recent instruction from the Scottish Government to local government that Christmas holidays are not be extended across Scotland; and that blended learning models are not to be introduced in the days preceding or following the Christmas holidays. GMB Scotland believes that this instruction was not a competent conclusion as Dundee City Council is the employer and, alongside the statutory duty to protect the health and safety of employees, retains autonomy in using their judgement regarding initiating remote learning.

With Dundee currently at Tier 3 and transmission rates on the increase in Dundee rather than a decrease, we believe that decisive action must be taken to protect our members, their families and the wider community.

Therefore, GMB Scotland reps request that Dundee City Council move to a blended level from at least Friday 18th December to allow our members to enjoy a well-deserved break after what has been a very difficult year. With St Johns, rightly, taking the decision to apply blended learning for senior phase pupils due to staffing shortages we believe that this demonstrates that this is possible and is the right thing to do.

GMB Scotland have surveyed our education members and in Dundee our members voted overwhelmingly to take some form of action if blended learning and school closures are not introduced under tier 4 conditions – we believe a more blended model would help to mitigate the local community being placed into those most restrictive conditions.

Our members also wish to move to a more blended model after the festive holidays, but that is a discussion we would be prepared to have later. The most immediate issue is that Dundee City Council may be leaving our members vulnerable to transmission over the holidays and, with rules being slightly relaxed for Christmas the possibility for additional transmission is evident.

Indeed, both the Welsh and UK Governments have decided to take action to mitigate the spread with increased family interaction during the festive periods, with many local authorities also applying their autonomy beyond those decisions to protect the community and further spread.

We look forward to a swift decision and will copy this to our members across Dundee.

Yours sincerely

  
Helen Meldrum  
Regional Organiser