

**MINISTERIAL ENGAGEMENT BRIEFING: JOHN SWINNEY**

Copied to: Cabinet Secretary for Health and Sport; Minister for Public Health and Sport

**Document 11 – d) DFM briefing for visit to STEP programme at St. David's Primary School - 23 November 2017**

|   |  |
|---|--|
| <i>Engagement Title</i>   | Visit to view STEP programme in action at St David's RC Primary School, Dalkeith.  |
| <i>Timing</i>   | <b>Normal</b>  |
| <i>Organisation/Venue and full address including postcode</i>                                 | St David's RC Primary School, Kippielaw, Lauder Road, Dalkeith. EH22 2PU.  |
| <i>Date and Time of Engagement</i>  | Date(s): Thursday 23 November 2017<br>Time(s): 09:30 am  |
| <i>Background/Purpose</i>   | Purpose/Invitation History: The Deputy First Minister has been invited to view the STEP programme in action. Invites have come from both representatives of STEP and from a letter issued to DFM by [Redacted – s.38(b)(1)] MSP on 26 October.   |
| <i>Relevance to Core Script</i>   | We want all children and young people to get the support that they need to reach their full potential.   |
| <i>Greeting Party and specific meeting point on arrival (if event is at a non SE Building</i> | DFM will be met on arrival, at the school entrance, by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• [Redacted – s.38(b)(1)], Head Teacher, St David's RC Primary School;</li> <li>• [Redacted – s.38(b)(1)], [Redacted – s.38(b)(1)].</li> </ul>  |
| <i>Specific entrance for Ministerial Car/parking arrangements</i>                             | A parking space will be available for DFM's car in the school car park.  |
| <i>Venue contact Number</i>   | [Redacted – s.38(b)(1)]  |
| <i>Special Dress Requirements</i>   | No special requirements  |
| <i>Event Programme</i>  | 09:30: Arrival and demonstration of STEP in action by Learning Assistants, [Redacted – s.38(b)(1)] and [Redacted – s.38(b)(1)].<br><br>10:00: Head teacher feedback including head and depute head teachers from other primary schools. [Redacted – s.38(b)(1)] from the Wood Group may also attend. |

PRO FORMA – MINISTERIAL ENGAGEMENTS

|  |   |
|--|---|
| <p><i>Summary Page (key issues, lines to take and issues to avoid)</i></p> <p><i>STEP Programme</i></p> <p><i>Education Scotland opinion</i></p> <p><i>Better Movers and Thinkers</i></p> <p><i>Active School and PE</i></p> <p><i>Directions including map(s)</i></p> | <p>10:30: Photocall. (Note: media handling below, that no media is expected.)</p> <p><b>Annex: A</b></p> <p><b>Annex: B</b></p> <p><b>Annex: C</b></p> <p><b>Annex: D</b></p> <p><b>Annex: E</b></p> <p><b>Directions:</b></p> <p>Follow A7 to Sheriffhall Roundabout and, at roundabout, take 3<sup>rd</sup> exit on left, A6106 to Dalkeith;</p> <p>Continue along Old Dalkeith Road (A6106) until Dalkeith High Street, then turn right.</p> <p>Once on Dalkeith High Street, take 1<sup>st</sup> left onto South Street (A6106).</p> <p>Continue along A6106 - South Street, then Newmills Road and onto Lauder Road.</p> <p>After crossing the River Esk, on Newmills Road, take the 2<sup>nd</sup> turning on the right (Wester Kippielaw Drive) and you have arrived at St David's Primary School.</p> <p>Please see below link on Midlothian Council website containing a map with exact location:</p> <p><a href="https://www.midlothian.gov.uk/directory_record/104/st_davids_rc_primary_school/category/14/primary_schools">https://www.midlothian.gov.uk/directory_record/104/st_davids_rc_primary_school/category/14/primary_schools</a></p> |
| <p><i>Media Handling</i></p> <p><i>Official Support</i></p>  | <p>Non Media Event.</p> <p><b>Names:</b> [Redacted – s.38(b)(1)]<br/>[Redacted – s.38(b)(1)]</p>  |

## **SUMMARY PAGE**

### **Purpose of meeting:**

- The Deputy First Minister has been invited to view the STEP programme in action following meetings with [Redacted – s.38(b)(1)] [Redacted – s.38(b)(1)] and other representatives from STEP. DFM has previously attended meetings to discuss STEP in January, March and August of this year.

### **Key Issues:**

- [Redacted – Out of scope].

### **Lines to Take:**

- [Redacted – Out of scope].

### **Issues to Avoid:**

- [Redacted s.30(b)(i) and s.30 (b)(ii)].

**STEP Programme**

1. The first Scottish Primary schools to take part in the STEP Programme were all in Midlothian. St David's Primary, Lawfield Primary and St Luke's Primary all enrolled in March 2017 in a pilot initiated by Midlothian Council. By the autumn term of 2017, a further 10 schools had trained and begun using the STEP Programme, funding it from their Pupil Equity Funding allocations. A further 13 schools in Midlothian have expressed interest in beginning the Programme during the session and representatives from the STEP programme will be working with them and the local authority to facilitate it.
2. Representatives from the STEP programme say there are a further 300 schools across Scotland who have expressed a desire to enrol pupils on STEP. They also tell us that many of these schools cannot progress without the approval of their local authority.
3. The STEP website cites the following Scottish schools as STEP schools:
  - St Luke's Primary School Midlothian
  - St David's Primary School Midlothian
  - Lawfield Primary School Midlothian
  - Gorebridge Primary School Midlothian
  - Balbardie Primary School Westlothian
  - Dalmilling Primary School, South Ayrshire
  - Sacred Heart Primary School, South Ayrshire
  - St Cuthbert's Primary School, South Ayrshire
  - Wester Overton Primary School, South Lanarkshire
  - Fettes College Prep, Edinburgh
  - Gracemount Primary School, Edinburgh
  - Irvine Royal Academy, Irvine
  - Riverside Primary School, Stirling
  - Wellington Prep, Ayr

The website also lists a further five English schools and two Welsh schools.

4. The STEP Programme is a programme of exercises performed twice a day for 10 minutes. The STEP view is children who take part learn more efficiently, socialise more easily and participate more positively both inside and outside the classroom. This programme is used as an additional support needs intervention in over 150 schools across the UK and US.
5. The STEP programme was also raised at the Parliamentary Cross Party Dyslexia working group by the chair who attended the STEP launch event. It did not receive an overly positive response from the group members, predominately due to concerns highlighted with the associated costs and reflections from the Dore programme in the 2000's, which Step has a connection. Although it was highlighted, the programme delivery method for STEP was not the same.

6. [Redacted – s.38(b)(1)] lodged the following motion which was debated in Parliament on 11 January 2017. The motion read: *“That the Parliament is impressed by the STEP physical literacy programme; understands that its results have demonstrated that the children who take part in it have been proven to learn more efficiently, socialise more easily and participate more positively both inside and outside the classroom; is encouraged that local authorities and schools throughout Scotland are showing an interest in the programme; considers that introducing it would be of benefit to all state primary schools in Mid Scotland and Fife and across the country, and notes the view that the Scottish Government, local authorities, teachers and parents should consider the merits of the programme for primary school children as a valuable contribution to pupils' education and self-esteem and to help close the attainment gap”*.
7. The Scottish Conservatives also led a debate in the Scottish Parliament, on 18 January 2017, focusing on their new healthy lifestyle strategy which they launched on 11 January 2017. [Redacted – Out of scope].
8. Officials understand that the Wood Group and Aberdeen Standard have agreed to fund a pilot study of the STEP programme in the Aberdeen City area and [Redacted – s.38(b)(1)] will attend the visit to St David's.

**Education Scotland view on the STEP programme**

1. DFM will recall that [Redacted – s.38(b)(1)] MSP wrote to him on 26 October asking if he had any plans to see the STEP programme in action. [Redacted – s.38(b)(1)] also referenced an official at Education Scotland who had reportedly been contacting schools and councils to dissuade them from using STEP and promoting an alternative model instead. Education Scotland said they do not endorse or reject any commercial exercise programme and the official referenced in [Redacted – s.38(b)(1)] letter said that his claims about them promoting alternative programmes were inaccurate.
2. An email from Education Scotland to SG dated 5 July does set out some concerns, including the costs of the STEP programme, which are significant, with no reimbursement if a pupil drops out. Education Scotland therefore advise they would not endorse this programme due to its costs. The resource costs £360 per child, per year, with a minimum of six children required to be signed up (a total of £2,160). [Redacted s.30(b)(i) and s.30(b)(ii)].
3. In addition, Learning Assistants need to be trained at a cost of about £600+ and the programme requires delivery of two, 10 minute sessions daily which will be a key barrier for a variety of reasons. Learning Assistants get two and a half hours workshop training. They have limited back up support, which is currently based in England anyway. Education Scotland have concerns about Learning Assistants ensuring adoption of correct posture and execution of exercises.
4. [Redacted s.30(b)(i) and s.30(b)(ii)].