

Kids Not Suits welcome government moves on class sizes

The campaign group [Kids not Suits](#) welcomes The Scottish Government announcement that it will legislate for P1 class sizes of 25 for August 2011, a reduction from the current 30. However, they say they remain concerned for the children who started in August this year, many of whom are in classes of 25-plus.

According to Kids Not Suits they made an FOI request to The City of Edinburgh Council which revealed that 3,868 children started school in August 2010 in Primary 1. Kids not Suits has calculated that 57% of them will be in classes larger than 25 (ie 2,223 pupils). This backs up the claim from the Convener of the Education Committee in March 2010 that "50 of Edinburgh's 87 schools will have P1 classes of more than 25". (Evening News 4 March 2010);

According to the campaign group these children – and many more around Scotland, have been forgotten by The Scottish Government.

In August 2009 primary class intake was set at a maximum of 25 by Edinburgh Council, matching the government guidelines set in 2007. Therefore last year's P1 had a maximum class size of 25. But in March this year, the Council decided to change its policy so that it could put up to 30 in a P1 class. This was covered in the paper to Council Committee of 18th March Strategic Management of School Places: P1 and S1 intakes for August 2010. According to Kids not suits The City of Edinburgh Council said this would bring it in line with Scottish Government legislation (rather than guidance).

As a result, the Kids not Suits campaign was born- and was

supported by all those parents unhappy that their child was going into a class size bigger than 25.

These children are now in classes of 25-30. From August next year, they will be in P2. But the new legislation only applies to new Primary 1 classes, so the group fear that these pupils will remain in class sizes larger than 25 and perhaps stay in them through P3, P4 all the way up to P7. They say that whilst large class sizes beyond the age of 8 is not such a big concern, many studies show that in early years smaller classes matter most. (See 2002 study by the University of Glasgow/SCRE at Does Small Really Make a Difference?)

On account of studies such as this, the SNP promised in their election manifesto that they would promote class sizes of 18 for P1, P2 and P3.

What they are offering now appears to the campaigners far short of that. And what they appear to have failed to do is consider the children who started school this year. They chose to make the announcement of the P1 max class size of 25 on Tuesday 14th Sept, just 3 weeks too late to make a difference to this year's intake.

The Kids not Suits campaign continues to call on the Government for a maximum class size of 25 for all children in P1,P2 and P3. If this could be agreed, the children who missed out on this year's legislation would be brought into smaller class sizes next year.

Kids not Suits has written to Michael Russell, Education Minister, to demand that Primary 2 and 3 classes are included in the ambit of the proposed legislation.