

# Concern grows over the future of Castlebrae High

✘ Politicians from across the political spectrum have called on [Edinburgh City Council](#) to reconsider plans to close [Castlebrae High School](#).

Councillors on the education committee had been expected to approve plans to start a formal consultation process on closing the school in the Craigmillar area of the city when they meet tomorrow morning.

However, [Green](#) councillors have tabled a motion to abandon the plan. They claim that, despite the school having some of the worst exam results in the county, there is little evidence that pupils will fare any better at other schools. The Greens also cite doubts over the building of new schools in both Craigmillar and nearby Portobello as areas of concern.



Councillor Melanie  
Main

Commenting on the situation Green councillor, Melanie Main, said she feared that by starting formal discussions on closure the council would find it hard to change course. Main said: "As soon as the Council pulls the trigger to start consultation on closure, it becomes very difficult to turn back the tide. So, when the Labour-SNP administration makes a decision, it needs to be absolutely certain that it is the right path to follow and that it is in the best interests of the children and community.

"There can be no such certainty here. It seems that the Council has jumped the gun, telling parents of its intention to close the school the day before a shock court judgement

on land for a new Portobello High School. Since Portobello is one of the main alternatives to Castlebrae, it would be irresponsible to close and bulldoze Castlebrae while the future of Portobello hangs in the air.”

Meanwhile senior Labour figures in the capital have also come to the threatened school’s defence. Sheila Gilmore MP and [Kezia Dugdale MSP](#) have issued a joint statement rejecting the proposed closure. The statement calls into question the contents of the council report which recommends the implementation of a formal consultation.

On the report Gilmore and Dugdale said:- “The Children & Families Committee will be discussing a report on 9 October 2012 which recommends the start of a consultation on the closure of Castlebrae High School. Having read this report we are concerned that it does not provide a fully rounded view of the role of this Community High School in its community, or fully reflect its strengths.

“We also think that the report does not explain sufficiently the capacity of other schools in the area to cope with the changes required. Capacity is largely looked at in terms of raw numbers, whereas we believe a wider range of issues need to be considered.”

The school is currently two thirds empty, with just 21 pupils enrolled in S1. Exam results have also been disappointing with only 23% of pupils passing five or more standard grades last year while the national average is 79% . Parents and pupils staged a demonstration outside the school last week claiming that the council’s failure to invest in Castlebrae had contributed to these figures.