

# 17 Edinburgh schools will remain closed on Monday

✘ The council leader Andrew Burns has hit out angrily about the 17 schools which will not open on Monday following the Easter break, to allow for inspections of the buildings.



Council Leader –  
Andrew Burns

Council Leader Cllr Andrew Burns said: “Edinburgh Schools Partnership have today been unable to give the Council sufficient guarantee that the schools and other premises are safe to open on Monday.

“Clearly we have every right to expect these schools to have been built to a good standard and in accordance with industry practice. We now know this isn’t the case. ESP have let the Council down but more importantly they have let children, parents and staff of this city down.

“We have today alerted the Scottish Government to our concerns.

“The safety of children and our staff is our top priority and we’re simply not willing to take any risks. As such we have no option but to close these schools and Goodtrees Neighbourhood Centre.

“We fully recognise the significant inconvenience to parents caused by these closures. However I am sure everyone will understand why we have taken these steps.

“We will keep parents and carers updated over the coming week as more information becomes available.”

The council has decided to close all PPP1 schools following advice from Edinburgh Schools Partnership which is the body charged with the responsibility for building, managing and operating the estate on the council's behalf.

Works taking place at Oxbgangs Primary School have revealed some issues about the construction of the school. Technical experts were unable to give council officers guarantees about the schools being safe to open on Monday, despite previous assurances that all schools would open after the Easter holidays. They have sent a letter to Andrew Burns to apologise.

Andy Wightman, Scottish Green MSP candidate for Lothian, said:  
"This is absolutely staggering. As of Monday thousands of children and young people are going to be thrown into confusion and their families into deep anxiety because the private consortium which built and runs those 'PPP' schools cannot guarantee pupil safety.

"It's well known that Edinburgh has a school repair problem, but it was believed to be in those schools which were decades old. It is an utter disgrace to discover that new schools are beset by the same problems, as a result of shoddy workmanship.

"A full scale inquiry is needed into this fiasco, first and foremost for the schools immediately affected, but also, more generally for this whole set of arrangements for building and maintaining public buildings."

Miles Briggs, Scottish Conservative MSP candidate for Lothian said:

"Parents across Edinburgh will be deeply concerned that the council, are unable to give assurances that school buildings are safe for pupils. Safety must always be paramount

"The total lack of transparency regarding the safety of these new school buildings is unacceptable and the list of question

increases each day.

“It is vital that we see the release of all the school reports and information, especially given that the council issued building warrants and completion certificates for each school.

“I believe it is time for the Cabinet Secretary for Education to step in to take control of the situation and provide parents with answers regarding how we have reached this unacceptable situation.

“Edinburgh City Council is now facing a schools building crisis.”