

# Balfour calls for clarity on after-school clubs

**Lothians MSP Jeremy Balfour has urged SNP Education Secretary John Swinney to outline when breakfast and after school clubs will be up and running again as pupils prepare to return to school full-time.**

The Scottish Conservative and Unionist MSP questioned Mr Swinney on the matter after he said that a final decision on returning to school full-time won't be taken until the end of the month.

Mr Balfour wanted to know whether any return for breakfast clubs and after school clubs would coincide with pupils returning in August.

Mr Swinney failed to give a full guarantee whether this would be the case. He said: "Ideally, yes—but we will have to take specific risk assessment steps to ensure that we come to the right decisions on those activities. I see essential breakfast clubs as a priority, as they ensure that young people's wellbeing is supported.

"Some after-school clubs may involve a degree of connection and contact that runs contrary to the general advice that we are putting in place about minimising circulation within individual schools. Those clubs may have to wait longer before they can be restarted.

"The priority is to commence mainstream education and to ensure that it is available for young people. We will do our

level best within the education system to open up broad opportunities for young people at the earliest possible opportunity.”

With the return to schools fast approaching and parents needing clarification over whether further care will be available before or after work, Mr Balfour says the SNP Education Secretary needs to clarify this as soon as possible.

Mr Balfour said: “Breakfast and after school clubs play an absolutely vital in providing extra childcare for working parents right across Edinburgh and the Lothians.

“That is why the SNP’s Education Secretary needs to urgently clarify whether they will re-open at the same time as our pupils are expected to return to schools full time.

“While I understand the need for safety measures to be in place, we are fast approaching our schools returning and parents need to make arrangements for their children in terms of before and after school.

“As we gear up for the return of schools, the SNP and John Swinney need to clarify this situation as soon as possible and I will be continuing to call on the Education Secretary to deliver this guidance.”