

# Conservatives launch new policy on dealing with poverty and schools

Scottish Conservative leader Douglas Ross MP launched a new policy today aiming to 'restore schools' in Scotland and also target resources at the poverty-related attainment gap.

Speaking to parents and teachers, Douglas unveiled the first Scottish Conservative schools policies for the 2021 Scottish Parliament election. He will stand in 2021 as a candidate for Holyrood, and, if successful, will then take up his position as opposition leader in The Scottish Parliament. Until then, Ruth Davidson MSP for Edinburgh Central fills in for him at First Minister's Questions.

The schools plan, launched just a few weeks after Douglas held a Roundtable Scotland event with teaching unions, includes:

- A £550 million proposal to deliver 3000 more teachers.
- Plans for free school meals at both breakfast and lunch for every primary pupil.
- A national tutoring programme, particularly for Maths and English.
- A commitment to a new way to measure and target the

poverty-related attainment gap.

· A new school and education inspection body to improve performance.

This is the new leader's second major policy announcement, following another plan which is aimed at protecting Scottish jobs and rebuilding a stronger economy in Scotland.

Mr Ross said: "Scotland's schools were once the envy of the world. Now, too many pupils see their ambitions dashed by a system stacked against them.

"Every year, thousands of Scottish children are unfairly judged by where they live and left behind, robbed of their chance to succeed because the government puts its own ambitions before theirs.

"The SNP will never choose schools over separation. Six years to the day from the independence referendum, despite polling today confirming Scottish people have more important priorities, the SNP still won't put their own goals to one side, even in the middle of a pandemic.

"But we won't close the attainment gap with a Referendum Bill. We'll close it with action. We'll close it with a laser focus on targeting poverty at school and a clear goal to restore teacher numbers.

"We owe it to the next generation to move on from the division of 2014 and finally make education our country's top priority."