

UNISON believes pay offer is too little too late

UNISON, the largest local government union, said that “The Scottish Government and Cosla have let parents, pupils and school staff down badly”.

A dispute over pay means that three-quarters of Scotland’s primary and secondary schools will be affected by three days of strike action this week, starting on Tuesday.

Up to 21,000 of the union’s members working in more than 1,800 schools in 24 Scottish local authority areas are “reluctantly” walking out today, Wednesday and Thursday. The union confirmed that it would happen as Cosla “failed to come up with an offer realistic enough to pause the action” and that Cosla’s last-minute attempt to end the dispute on Thursday “fell well short of what school staff were hoping for”.

The union has urged its school members to reject the latest offer and hopes the strikes will persuade Cosla and the government that both need to sit down for talks to end the disruption.

UNISON claims that the latest proposal is not an improvement on the original offer made in the spring, and that overwhelmingly rejected at the time by school staff.

UNISON Scotland head of local government Johanna Baxter said: “Cosla finally woke up last week and made a revised offer. But, put simply, this was far too little, and

way too late.

“Both Cosla and the Scottish government had months to get their act together. Both have failed parents, pupils and staff miserably. Not a single school employee wants to walk out, but what’s been offered is substantially short of what’s needed.

“No one wishes to cause disruption for pupils and their parents, but school staff have left with no other option. The blame must be laid squarely at the door of Cosla and Scottish ministers.

“They should give school staff a decent pay rise, fund any increase properly and commit to a timetable for implementing a minimum rate of pay of £15 per hour for all local government workers. That would end the dispute.

“Anything less risks prolonging a dispute no one wants, cuts to already under pressure services and school staff continuing to quit for pastures new, where the jobs are significantly better-paid.”

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