

# Parents anger as Mayfield school campus faces more delays

Parents have warned something “catastrophic” could happen after plans to replace their dilapidated primary school building with a new multi-million pound campus were put on hold by Midlothian Council.

Families with children attending Mayfield and St Luke’s Primary Schools, in Dalkeith, had expected the building to be demolished and work on the new campus to get under way this autumn.

However a letter from education chiefs this week revealed the construction contract had fallen through and the work would be delayed.

Masonry from the building fell onto the playground last year sparking surveys of the building and work to make it secure as they awaited the new facility.



Mayfield and St Lukes Primary Schools campus, Dalkeith pic Google Maps

Now parents say they are concerned their children are being sent into classrooms which are 'verging on dangerous' after months of 'patching up' problems.

One mum said: "Mayfield is the most deprived area in Midlothian. Nevertheless, our children deserve to have a learning environment that is both safe and will encourage them to reach their full potential.

"I fear something catastrophic will happen before there is any action."

Last June Councillor Ellen Scott brought a 'brick of shame' from fallen masonry at the school into the council chamber as elected members agreed to give £60,000 towards repairs and maintenance at the school.

They were told that following the incident in the playground £36,000 had been spent on putting up scaffolding and protective measures which will need to remain in place for the rest of the schools' lives.

Funding for the new campus was secured four years ago as part of an £800million Scottish Government education investment.

However parents have claimed that since then problems at the school have been 'patched up' in anticipation of the new facility.

One said: "There have been numerous stories from people within the school about problems with plumbing, sewage, water leaking through the ceiling, and other maintenance issues which are "patched up" or "bodged" by the council due to the school being replaced "soon."

And a worried dad added: "How can we trust our children into the school's care when the building is being held together with little more than sticky tape?"

Midlothian Council wrote to parents and carers this week to break the news that the campus construction faced further delays and sought to reassure them by promising the facilities management team would carry out 'daily' monitoring of the building.

But it did little to allay fears with one parent saying: "It just drives home how serious the situation is in there. How are we supposed to feel our children are safe."

A Midlothian Council spokesman said: "We sent a letter to parents and carers last week to update them on what's happening with the new Mayfield community learning campus.

"We explained because of commercial and pricing considerations, it's not yet been possible to agree the final contract to build the campus.

"We understand parents and the wider community will be frustrated about this delay, as are we, but we need to be mindful of the public purse and getting best value.

"We remain committed to delivering an outstanding learning

environment for the community and we'll provide further updates on our progress just as soon as we can.

"Meanwhile, the current building continues to be monitored on a daily basis by our facilities management team, with our maintenance surveyor meeting with the headteacher on a fortnightly basis."

By Marie Sharp Local Democracy Reporter