



PRESS RELEASE

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Government Statement Regarding New Schools

The Government is disappointed by the comments reported by the Press made by representatives of the Gibraltar Teachers Association.

The Government is involved in a wide ranging consultation process with the teaching profession regarding the planned new schools. Teachers are actively involved in the preparing of the designs; designs for Notre Dame, Westside and Bayside have been signed off by the head teachers and the design for the comprehensives was in fact signed off by the head teachers only yesterday. The process now continues with the remainder of the schools. Furthermore, consultation has extended beyond teachers to include support staff. In the case of St Martin's, parents also visited the proposed site for the new school and expressed their excitement at what was planned.

Concerns expressed by the GTA were replied to in writing by the Minister for Education on 18th December 2017. In this letter the Minister explained the process so far and expressed the Government's commitment to continuing full consultation. To date, the Minister has not received a reply from the GTA.

The new schools will coincide with the introduction of co-education, the realignment of school years in order to benefit the educational programme, the widening of the school curriculum, and an increase in provision for our youngest pupils. The Government will continue to consult the teaching profession as the plans for the future have to be the best possible for our children for the next half century and we must all get it right. We must prioritise all matters relating to education and not limit ourselves to issues such as parking. Indeed, the Government is putting pupils first: on this the Government is convinced it is at one with the teachers.

Minister for Education, the Hon John Cortes, commented: "I have met many times with the GTA, both formally and informally, and they know how much we listen and take account of their views. Many of the points raised were answered in my extensive letter to the GTA and I look forward to discussing this with them when they reply. The feeling that I sense when I go round the schools and talk to teachers, the older pupils, and indeed parents, is that there is huge excitement and enthusiasm for what lies ahead."