

PE1603/J

Renfrewshire Council Letter of 10 October 2016

Thank you for your letter of 19 September 2016 regarding the above which I have been passed for response. I note the issues raised in the petition of your letter and would make the following response.

Schools within Renfrewshire are efficiently led and managed by their head teachers and senior management teams. They are given devolved responsibility to make appropriate decisions which are relevant to their local context and sensitive to the needs of the children and young people in the school. As a major employer, representatives of the armed forces may be invited in to schools as part of a careers education programme. I would like to assure you that any such inclusion of the armed forces would be done in an appropriately planned and supportive manner.

In light of the local authority covenant and support in schools for a number of armed forces families it would seem very inconsistent to then exclude them from being part of a well planned programme.

As already noted decisions in relation to careers education are made by head teachers in the context of their school community. It is unclear what benefit would be gained from monitoring the number and location of such visits. At a time when local authorities are seeking to reduce bureaucracy this would appear to add an additional layer of workload on schools that did not have any impact on outcomes for our children and young people.

As part of normal communication with parents, head teachers regularly provide a range of information on the curriculum and learning for their young people. This provides an appropriate mechanism for engaging with parents on issues such as whether or not the armed forces are included as part of any careers education. It is our view that this is the most appropriate place for such decision making to take place.

As there will be a broad range of opinions among any parental group the head teacher is best placed in making a decision as to whether or not they include the armed forces.

I trust this provides appropriate detail in relation to the position Renfrewshire Council has taken and the professional trust we place in our head teachers.

Yours sincerely

Gordon McKinlay

Head of Schools