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Nicola Sturgeon's "desperate" attempt to wrestle back control of how schools respond to coronavirus has caused even more confusion for parents and teachers, the Scottish Conservatives have said.

The First Minister used her daily briefing to contradict much of what her education secretary, John Swinney, has spent the last three days saying.

She denied his suggestion that "blended" learning could be in place for a year and rolled back on his warnings on next year's exams.

She also claimed her SNP government may look at a "minimum" level of provision for councils, contradicting the current policy of a maximum of face-to-face contact.

Ms Sturgeon also appeared to distance herself from suggestions made by her deputy that it was the responsibility of councils to sort out education provision while maintaining the Scottish Government's two-metre social distancing stipulation.

That's led to calls that councils are being "left in the dark and left in the lurch" to deliver central government diktats with no resource or support.

**Scottish Conservative shadow education secretary Jamie Greene said:**

"We are now several months into this crisis and that's more than enough time for the SNP to have come up with a nationwide plan to maximise in-class schooling.

"Instead, all we're seeing is more confusion, mixed messaging, and a chronic lack of leadership.

"Parents and teachers won't know who to listen to – the First Minister or the education secretary – as their stories are increasingly different.

"Councils are being left in the dark and left in the lurch.

"This was a desperate attempt by Nicola Sturgeon to wrestle back control of this issue from John Swinney, who she clearly thinks has made a mess of

things in recent days.

“As a result of this shambolic incompetence, right across Scotland children will miss out on huge swathes of education, and parents will simply be unable to return to work under current SNP plans.

“This is much than attainment, this is going to hamper Scotland’s economic recovery in the short, medium and long-term.”