



PRESS RELEASE

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A Revolution in Educational Establishments in Gibraltar

- In keeping with its manifesto commitments, the Government is announcing the building of new schools
- In excess of its electoral commitment, both Comprehensive Schools will be rebuilt
- Also in excess of its electoral commitment, St Anne's School will also be rebuilt
- Additionally, refurbishments are announced of the schools not being refurbished

The Government has today presented details of its plans to renovate Gibraltar's schools for children from nursery to A level years.

At today's press conference hosted by Chief Minister Fabian Picardo, Deputy Chief Minister Dr Joseph Garcia and Minister for Education, John Cortes, the Government revealed extensive plans that will see a total of eight new school locations and refurbishment of those schools that are not moving site.

Five programmes are planned:

Programme 1 will see a new Notre Dame School and a new St Anne's School at Laguna

The Laguna Youth Club will be relocated to the south after a temporary period at St Theresa's Hall. The Adventure Playground will be reprovided near its current site, with a further open area next to the new youth club. Sports facilities will be incorporated and available after hours for community use.

Programme 2 will see a total refurbishment of the current Westside School site

This will accommodate Governor's Meadow and Bishop Fitzgerald Schools. St Martin's School will

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also move to this location, which will provide seamless outreach opportunities for the students at the special school. The schools will benefit from a large sports hall and playing field.

Programme 3 will see totally new co-educational Comprehensive Schools at Waterport

They will be located side by side but will continue to function as two entirely distinct and totally separate schools but with a common library which will enhance the resources available to all the students.

Programme 4 sees the Gibraltar College move from the current location

A new purpose-built facility will be provided in the area of Devil's Tower Road. The facility is planned to be behind at the Cross of Sacrifice.

Programme 5 will see the upgrades and refurbishment of St Paul's, St Mary's and St Joseph's First and Middle Schools and the Hebrew schools.

There will now be a process of assessing and identifying what improvements are needed. This programme will see the inclusion of kitchen facilities at St Mary's Middle School, St Joseph's first and Middle Schools and at St Bernard's First and Middle Schools.

The plans for the new schools are designed with sustainability and energy efficiency in mind and will include green areas, solar panels and other environmental measures.

Teachers have been, and will continue to be, fully involved in assessing needs and discussing designs at all stages.

The Gibraltar Teachers' Association/NASUWT has engaged in discussion on the plans and will continue to be fully consulted and involved in developing the ideas presented and in bringing forward their members' views as the plans come to fruition.

The programmes are being planned to allow all the new educational establishments to open for the start of term on Monday the 2nd of September 2019.

This will coincide with the start of improved meal provision, co-education and expanded vocational pathways at secondary school level, the realignment of key stages, and the making available of nursery education for all children.

Work will start first on the new site for Notre Dame School. This and all the school designs will now go through the town planning process.

The Chief Minister, the Hon Fabian Picardo QC MP, said: "This is a huge step forward for education in Gibraltar. It is a transformational programme of school building that will ensure that our schools' infrastructure is updated and modernised as our children deserve. And we are going to go further than we set out in our manifesto. We are going to provide two new comprehensive schools, instead of one. We are going to reprovide an additional middle school. We are going to refurbish the schools that do not need to be rebuilt. And we are going to provide the schools with kitchen



facilities so that hot lunches in school become the norm. This is worth doing, worth suffering some element of inconvenience for and worth spending money on. We are proud of our teachers. It is time we provided them with the best tools possible to educate our children in the schools Gibraltar and the facilities that our children deserve. This is an exciting project for our nation and I am genuinely happy to be able to lead the Government that will deliver this change for the good of our youngest citizens. I therefore want to thank all members of the administration and public service who are making this ambitious programme a reality. It is a truly worthy project on which our community should be entirely united.”

The Deputy Chief Minister, the Hon Dr Joseph Garcia MP, said: “Working with the department of education and Land Property Services, we have ensured that the release of lands from existing school footprints will go a long way to assisting in the financing of the programme to rebuild our schools. As a parent, I understand how important it is for our schools to be of the best possible standard for our children and I welcome the opportunity to be involved in this project.”

Minister for Education John Cortes said, “We need a massive catch-up in education facilities. This Government has already provided two new schools after none had been built for decades. Now is the time to ensure that the educational needs of our young people of all ages are well provided for. The next few years will be challenging for all working in Education, but we have the calibre and commitment in the teaching profession to carry this through successfully. The real benefits of all this are educational merits of what we are doing. It will help shape the Gibraltar of the future”.