

Senedd Cymru
Y Pwyllgor Plant, Pobl Ifanc ac Addysg

Welsh Parliament
Children, Young People and Education Committee

Ymchwiliad i effaith argyfwng Covid-19 ar blant
a phobl ifanc yng Nghymru

Inquiry into the impact of the Covid-19 outbreak on
children and young people in Wales

COV 157
Ymateb gan: Unigolyn

COV 157
Response from: Individual

I have been in touch with many people about this issue and Jayne Bryant our senedd representative has suggested I write here also. I include an email I sent to many people regarding key worker segregation.

We are now in our first week of this and my children, especially my little boy who is 7 is very upset about being kept apart from his friends, and was crying after school today. It is really affecting his confidence and he doesn't understand it.

As I outline below I am a nurse and need to know what the plan is for next year. As it stands, if key worker children are kept segregated or school is part time I will resign my post in Aneurin Bevan Health Board as a District nurse so that my children can have an education. We (myself and other ABUHB nurses) are in consultation with our nursing union as we do not consider it is far for us to be asked to choose between our children's education and our professional duty.

Here is my original email which I sent to Kirsty Williams and Newport City Council among others....

Dear Sarah (Newport Council) and Kirsty (Welsh Government),

I am writing to express my deep frustration and concern at the decision to segregate key worker children away from their peers and class teachers during the remainder of the school term. I am a key worker, and I am also a single parent. I am a mum to two young children, XXX my daughter is 4 years old (Reception) and XXXXXXXX my son is 7 years old (year 2) and they attend XXXXXXXXX primary in Newport.

XXXXXXXXXX is a fantastic school and has been a massive support to me as a lone parent these last few years and my children are very happy there. Unfortunately I do not think this will be the case once their classmates return and they are entirely separated from them; instead of being a vital part of their wellbeing it will become somewhere that saddens them. It will

make both my children feel inadequate and left out, and worse they will not understand why.

I do not understand it. The Welsh government cannot have it both ways; if you insist on strict social distancing in schools and keep capacity at only 33%, why then can key worker children not be integrated into their own year groups at least once a week if such strict measures are in place?

There is no evidence of child to child transmission or indeed any asymptomatic child transmission. Schools were full until March 20th, and the peak of the disease was early April in South East Wales, meaning schools were operating without any measures in place right at the peak of infection. We saw no subsequent peak in child or teacher covid 19 cases, which illustrates how low the risk is. Now the risk is even lower due to the rapidly plummeting infection rates and general public awareness of safety measures.

My understanding was that child welfare should be front and centre of decisions around education. Key worker children will feel left out, and are being discriminated against solely because their parents are vitally important to everybody's safety and well-being. For single parents like me we are basically being asked to choose between our professional duty and our children's education. I have no other childcare options available to me except school, but do expect that to be a proper education not just a glorified play scheme.

I am a district nurse and work school hours 9am-3pm for Aneurin Bevan Health Board so I can work and look after my children. I have worked throughout this entire pandemic, not had one day furloughed, sick or working from home. The decision by the Welsh government to then segregate my children away from their classmates seems disrespectful and unkind given the sacrifices that we as a family have made. Ultimately if it continues into September I will probably have to serve my notice and work as and when I can on the nursing bank, unable to serve my community in the way I do now, which would really sadden me.

I really do hope you reconsider this decision; it is scientifically and morally unsound.

I have copied Wales online into this e-mail because I think this is a national issue which affects many people, often the most vulnerable given the high ratio of single parents using the key worker scheme. I am also a member of Single Parent Wales a support group which is also very concerned about this new discrimination we are facing.

Regards
Ellie Kilsby

