

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 177
Ymateb gan: Unigolyn

COV 177
Response from: Individual

I am writing with regards your statement of the 3rd June, regarding the return of pupils to school in Wales.

In that statement, you said that ALL children would have the opportunity to “Check in, Catch up, and Prepare”, for school in September. You also said that “We will use the last weeks of the summer term to make sure pupils, staff and parents are prepared – mentally, emotionally and practically – for the new normal in September”.

Most importantly, you gave the justification for a return for all pupils in June because, “Waiting until September would mean almost half a year without schooling. That would be to the detriment to the wellbeing, learning progress and mental health of our young people.”

As a parent of children who attend Meithrin and Derbyn classes, I welcomed the news that they would be getting some face to face contact with their teachers and classmates before the summer holidays, and in advance of one of them progressing to a new class in September, As you correctly said, waiting until September for them to have any return to school would be unfair and damaging.

However, I was disappointed to receive the news during June that Ceredigion County Council (the Local Authority of the school which my children attend), were not planning of having any children from Meithrin and Derbyn classes back into school for the first 2 weeks of the 3 week remainder of term. We were told to await further news on what would happen in week 3.

Yesterday, we received the news that the council had decided that there would be no return whatsoever for these year groups before September. The only reasoning we have received for this is that there are challenges maintaining a safe distance for the youngest pupils. There has been no comment regarding your statement, and how their decision does not reflect or support the sentiments you presented back in early June.

More concerning as a parent, there has been no comment on the potential negative affects that their decision will have on the children of these year groups in Ceredigion.

So, as Minister for Education, I would like to ask you directly why Ceredigion Council have been allowed to deviate so far from the statement you gave on June 3rd, and what your thoughts are on how their decision will impact on the education, wellbeing and mental health of our children?

These children will not see their current teachers and support staff again, will not have a chance to say goodbye and thank you, will not get a chance to see their school in its new form before September. Their teachers will not get a chance to see how these children are progressing academically, but most importantly, to see how their mental health has been affected by the lockdown. Above all, some children will not be seen by anyone in an official capacity for 6 months. Surely, there is a safeguarding and deprivation crisis just waiting to unfold in Wales.

If neighbouring councils can manage to have the same age children attend school for 14 hours before the end of term, then surely Ceredigion could have managed to implement the same safety measures that these schools have in order to keep children and staff safe?

I look forward to receiving your reply, and hearing your thoughts on the decisions that have been made that impact my children directly.