

Senedd Cymru
Y Pwyllgor Plant, Pobl Ifanc ac Addysg

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

COV 180
Ymateb gan: Unigolyn

Welsh Parliament
Children, Young People and Education Committee

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

COV 180
Response from: Individual

I hope you don't mind me contacting you but I am writing in relation to schooling in Wales from September vis-a-vis COVID-19 and issues of social distancing etc.

I am extremely concerned about the short, medium and long term implications for children if the current plan for so-called "blended learning" goes ahead from September. My understanding is that this would see children attending school for as little as a day a week, with the burden of teaching for the rest of the time falling on parents and care givers. How are parents supposed to juggle working and educating their children? It is simply impossible.

My son has just turned 4. He has had some difficulties in developing his speech and language and had started attending clinic through the local speech and language team. He only started school in September last year but the progress he made pre-lockdown was incredible, I am so proud of him. During lockdown I have noticed that he has unfortunately regressed dramatically due to not receiving the intervention that he needs and the opportunities to practice within social situations with his peers. We are immensely lucky that he is now back at his fantastic private nursery, but many parents are not in this position.

I am not a 'replacement teacher'. Parents cannot and should not be expected to teach their children for long periods of time. Welsh families are really struggling. And what about vulnerable children? Those for whom school is a sanctuary? If schools in England and Scotland are planning on opening as 'normal' in September, why can't we do the same in Wales? Surely the evidence is the same? I know schools are in a very difficult position, and no one knows exactly what is in store in the coming months. But "blended learning" as a fait accompli is doing the children of Ceredigion and of Wales a huge disservice.

I implore you to consider the increasing evidence regarding children and COVID-19 suggesting that attending full time, non socially distanced schooling is relatively low risk, and is crucial to children's education, physical

and mental health. As I am sure you know, new studies are coming out daily, but please see, for example:

Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health

<https://www.rcpch.ac.uk/resources/covid-19-research-evidence-summaries>

COVID-19 in 7780 pediatric patients: A systematic review

[https://www.thelancet.com/journals/eclinm/article/PIIS2589-5370\(20\)30177-2/fulltext](https://www.thelancet.com/journals/eclinm/article/PIIS2589-5370(20)30177-2/fulltext)

Moreover, there is also considerable evidence showing that children are at a high risk of negative outcomes due to not being in school full-time. For example: <https://www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/publication/we-dont-need-no-education/>

Thank you in advance for your attention and consideration.