



Eich cyf/Your ref: Petition P-05-999
Ein cyf/Our ref: KW/04316/20

Janet Finch-Saunders MS
Chair, Petitions Committee

3 August 2020

Dear Janet

Thank you for your letter of 27 July regarding the ongoing Petition submitted by Laura Denise Keighan.

The First Minister announced on Friday that the position on children under 11 having to maintain a 2m distance from each other or from adults would be relaxed from Monday 3 August. The scientific evidence shows the risk of transmission is lower among this age group. We know that the risk to children themselves of becoming severely ill from COVID-19 is very low. Current [evidence](#) points to "Infection with SARS-CoV-2 appears to take a milder course in children than in adults: most infected children present with mild symptoms or are asymptomatic, and very few develop severe or life threatening disease. There remains some on-going uncertainty in transmissibility of the disease by children, but real world observation of schools opening in England and other countries has shown little transmission by children."

These risks have to be carefully balanced with the negative health impacts of being out of school. School is also an important point of contact for public health and safeguarding services that are critical to the well-being of children and families. These changes will also mean that young children can meet their friends to play outdoors or give their grandparents a hug.

However children are still subject to the other restrictions on contacts from family groupings etc. This is, simply a realistic balance of risk for those who live with and care for these children, who routinely are likely to need physical contact as part of everyday care. They must still observe the social restrictions on meeting other family groups or wider gatherings, and it is still up to parents to assess and evaluate the risks of their children's family and

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Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

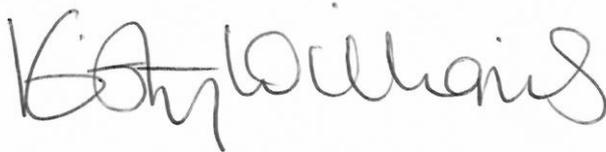
social contacts. Likewise in schools children will continue to work in groups to ensure and consider the health of adults, including teachers and the wider community.

From September schools will be open to all pupils and [Operational guidance](#) has been issued to support them in their preparations for the autumn term. We also recognise that in preparation for the new academic year and should there be a return to lockdown, some form of blended learning approach is necessary. The [Learning guidance](#) provides guidance on developing a blend of in and out of school learning moving forward. Both of these guidance documents have been produced with consideration for the latest advice set out in the [Technical Advisory Group](#) report published on 7 July.

The Welsh Government will continue to monitor the situation carefully and every school will also need to plan for the possibility of a local lockdown and how they will ensure continuity of education within a broader framework of local restrictions.

In the meantime, I hope that the decisions we have made, and more recently specifically in relation to children of primary school age, demonstrates our commitment to supporting all our learners during this challenging time.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Kirsty Williams', written in a cursive style.

Kirsty Williams AS/MS
Y Gweinidog Addysg
Minister for Education