

Kirsty Williams AC/AM
Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet dros Addysg
Cabinet Secretary for Education



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Eich cyf/Your ref P-04-576
Ein cyf/Our ref KW/00548/17

Mike Hedges AM
Chair - Petitions Committee
National Assembly for Wales
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4 April 2017

Dear Mike

Thank you for your letter of 28 March about holidays in term time. I am grateful for the Committee's continued interest in this matter.

I believe it is important that attendance remains a priority for schools and that all absence from schools is taken seriously. My focus is on ensuring children attend school at every possible opportunity to reduce any adverse impact on their education, so they are able to reach their full potential.

In terms of allowing children in Wales' holidays during term time, as you will know, the *Education (Pupil Registration) (Wales) Regulations 2010* provide headteachers with a discretionary powers to authorise leave for a family holiday during term time where parents seek permission. In determining whether to authorise a parent's request to take their child out of school, headteachers should assess the merits of each request on a case by case basis.

I do of course recognise that this is a very important area for parents and education services alike and it is critical that there is a consistent understanding right across Wales to ensure that there is public confidence in the arrangements we have in place. Since taking up post as Cabinet Secretary for Education, I have established arrangements to review and, where appropriate, revise the current attendance policy in Wales. I have asked my officials to work closely with education practitioners, children, young people and their parents to make certain the policy remains fit for purpose and supports continued improvement in pupil attendance. As part of this review, I have specifically commissioned an independent evaluation of fixed penalty notice arrangements in Wales to ensure it provides a robust, objective base for future arrangements across Wales.

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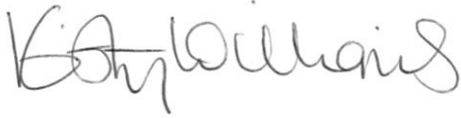
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Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

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.

I have noted that the parental holiday notification form for Ysgol Iau Ton Pentre Junior School does not appear to allow for applications for holidays in term times to be considered on an individual basis as required by our Regulations. My officials have contacted Rhondda Cynon Taff about this matter and have received assurances that the issue will be taken up directly with the school.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Kirsty Williams'.

Kirsty Williams AC/AM

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Cabinet Secretary for Education