



17 December 2020

Dear Head

It has been a long term – we have faced situations we could never have imagined this time in 2019.

However, what has been constant is my respect and admiration for you as an education profession and a teaching community, which has grown by countless tales of kindness, dedication and concern for our young people. I mean this sincerely. I appreciate the tremendous pressure you have been under.

The increased transmission of COVID-19 is almost likely to mean that we will face a difficult start to 2021. But there is light at the end of the tunnel with our roll out of the vaccination already underway.

We will continue to work to make schools safe spaces. From January, we will offer testing for contact groups where COVID-19 is identified in secondary schools and colleges. We have learnt from the experience of schools and colleges in Merthyr and the lower Cynon Valley, and schools will be receiving more information and details of training in the New Year. We will also continue to review our guidance based on advice from Public Health Wales and scientific advisors.

On Monday we published our [updated COVID control plan](#), which gave clarity on what will be open and closed under the different 4 levels. We will do all we can to keep schools open because of the harm caused by closing them. I know that many of you are concerned about returning to school in January and we continue to have discussions with local authorities and Unions about the arrangements.

As you will appreciate things can change quickly in response to the virus but we will make sure that you are kept informed of any developments as quickly as possible via your local authorities.

I hope you are able to relax during the holiday break and have a safe Christmas.

Yours sincerely

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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.

Kirsty Williams AS/MS

Y Gweinidog Addysg

Minister for Education