



Dr Chris Llewlyn
Chief Executive
WLGA

By Email

4th November 2021

Dear Chris,

We are writing as unions representing school leaders, teachers, and support staff, asking you to take urgent steps to help keep pupils safe in schools across Wales.

As you will be aware, Welsh Government data shows that Covid-19 cases among school-aged children surged this term, with attendance for those in Year 11 consistently the lowest.¹ The infection rate in Wales is currently the highest in the UK.²

We now have more pupils absent either with, or suspected of having, Covid than at any point in the pandemic. Staff absence is impacting on education with some children having to be sent home because there aren't enough staff to teach them, putting staff and leaders under enormous strain.

We welcome that the Welsh Government is now putting extra money into supporting ventilation in education settings, rolling out CO2 monitors, and encouraging isolation of household contacts. We would like you to share with us how this money will be accessed within all local authorities, so that we can share this information with

¹ <https://gov.wales/attendance-pupils-maintained-schools>

²

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/healthandsocialcare/conditionsanddiseases/bulletins/coronaviruscovid19infectionsurveys/pilot/22october2021#percentage-of-people-who-had-covid-19-in-england-wales-northern-ireland-and-scotland>

our members. Can you also confirm that each local authority has enough CO2 monitors for one in each classroom, as WG promised?

Many other countries in Europe that have kept in place proportionate mitigation measures in schools, whilst rolling out a vaccination programme, have not experienced the back-to-school surge in cases that we have seen in Wales.

We are therefore pleased to see that a growing number of local authorities are now implementing additional mitigations in schools. This reflects their responsibilities for public health, and under health and safety legislation.

We would now ask that every local authority moves to “Very High” on the Framework and implement every mitigation possible to keep people safe. To help keep pupils and staff safely in schools we would therefore urge you to issue advice which strongly encourages **all** local authorities to introduce such additional measures immediately, discuss that advice with our local representatives, and involve them in monitoring matters if you do not already do so.

Please do not hesitate to contact us if you require further information. We would also greatly appreciate it if you could let us know what measures you will be taking and urge local authorities to implement, so that we can support you by sharing this with our members.

Yours sincerely,

Laura Doel, Director, NAHT Cymru

Mary van den Heuvel, Senior Policy Officer, NEU Cymru

Rosie Lewis, Regional Organiser, UNISON Cymru

Neil Butler, National Official for Wales, NASUWT Cymru

Nicola Savage, Regional Organiser, GMB Education Lead, Wales

Dilwyn Roberts-Young, Ysgrifennydd Cyffredinol, UCAC

Dave Gunter, Regional Officer, UNITE

