



Kirsty Williams MS
Minister for Education
Welsh Government
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17 June 2020

Our Ref: DL.lag

Dear Cabinet Minister

Increase of Operations of Schools in Wales

Further to our letter dated 4 June 2020, we consider that we must write again, specifically with regard to the legalities and funding of the extension of the summer term.

In the briefing held by your officials with the unions on 9 June, officials confirmed that the provisions of the Coronavirus Act 2020 do not extend to matters relating to the terms and conditions of employment, and that the Welsh Government would not be relying on any other existing legislation, in order to require teachers to work 199 days rather than 195 days this school year. Further, officials recognised that support staff on term-time only contracts could not be legally required to work those additional days and that it would be a matter of personal choice for those individuals.

Although further meetings with the Welsh Local Government Association have clarified this matter in relation to support staff, we seek the same for teaching staff, especially because it now appears that the majority of unions are opposed to the extension of the summer term.

In this context our concerns, to which we would be grateful for a response are as follows:

- Given that the Welsh Government will not be relying on, or making further, legislation to extend the contracts of teachers from 195 to 199 days, will teachers be required to work the additional 4 days?
- If so, what would be the legal basis of this requirement?
- If not, given that a proportion of staff are unable to work for Covid19 related reasons and it also cannot be assumed that all support staff will wish to work those additional days, how are schools expected to plan when it will be unclear how many members of staff will be present for the additional four days?
- If not, how can schools be confident that all health & safety legislation is being complied with in terms of the numbers of staff present in school for the additional four days?
- What reassurance will be given by the Welsh Government that teachers and support staff will not be coerced into attending schools for the additional four days when they are not legally required to attend?

- No information has been given regarding the funding of the additional four days; in particular, the costs incurred by local authorities related to paying support staff for the additional days worked. Given the severe financial strictures currently suffered by local authorities, exacerbated by unexpected and significant Covid19 costs, would the Welsh Government be allocating specific funds to cover the costs?

I look forward to hearing from you with regard both to our letter of 4 June and to the concerns raised in this letter as a matter of urgency in order to inform and support Voice members as they prepare for the wider opening of schools.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Deborah Lawson". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Deborah Lawson
General Secretary
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