

Our Ref: 211214 Dudley-Owen, A/PR/LB

14 December 2021

Deputy Andrea Dudley-Owen
President of the Committee for Education, Sport and Culture
States of Guernsey
L'Ecurie
Route du Coudre
St Pierre du Bois
Guernsey
GY7 9HZ

Dear Deputy Dudley-Owen,

January 2022 Reopening

The NASUWT notes with the utmost concern the statement by the UK Prime Minister on 12 December that "no one should be in any doubt, there is a tidal wave of Omicron coming", especially as the Omicron variant has been detected and appears to be spreading in Guernsey.

In light of the evidence emerging daily regarding the impact of the Omicron variant, the latest modelling which suggests that case numbers, hospitalisations and deaths will continue to increase throughout January, and the raising of the Covid threat level to Level 4 in the United Kingdom, I must urge you now to consider the immediate introduction of additional education measures to help slow the spread of Covid-19 and to minimise further disruption to education.

In addition to wider community-level measures, we believe that additional measures will be required within schools and colleges now and as they return after the Christmas break.

I wrote to you previously on 26 November to request the strengthening of control measures within schools and colleges. Since I wrote to you on this matter, the forecast scientific trajectory for the Omicron variant has worsened significantly and with it, the potential impact on Guernsey. Available evidence strongly points to the need for additional control measures to be in place now and through the start of next term.

The NASUWT supports the Committee's decision to end the Autumn term early, however further steps are required, and the Union also urges the Committee to act immediately and to not delay critical decisions until the commencement of the school

and college holiday period regarding the approach in January.. An immediate announcement from the Committee on additional measures for schools and colleges is, we believe, essential before schools and colleges close for the Christmas break.

Such additional measures we would ask you to consider would include:

- Staggering the return of pupils to all schools and colleges at the start of January 2022;
- Providing onsite testing facilities and resources for pupils throughout the period between January and the February half-term 2022;
- Publishing further guidance advising schools and colleges to update risk assessments in light of Omicron, in consultation with staff and trade unions, ready for wider reopening in January;
- Publishing further guidance advising schools and colleges to cancel or postpone non-essential activities or events, to move to online staff and parental meetings, and to mandate staff working from home where appropriate, during this period.

The NASUWT believes that these measures, together with wider States measures including on vaccinations, are proportionate and responsible, and will contribute to our shared aim of minimising further disruption to children's education.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,



Dr Patrick Roach
General Secretary