

Date: 11 February 2021

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Kirsty Williams MS  
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General Secretary/Ysgrifennydd Cyffredinol: **Dr Patrick Roach**

By email: [DSME@gov.wales](mailto:DSME@gov.wales)

Dear Kirsty,

### **School and college reopening during the pandemic**

Over the last 11 months, NASUWT members have worked tirelessly to provide education and support to children and young people during the Coronavirus pandemic. Nevertheless, we are acutely aware and concerned about the continuing impact of school closures and disruption to provision that has been caused as a result of efforts to control and minimise virus transmission in schools and in the wider community.

The NASUWT is committed to ensuring the reopening of schools and colleges at the earliest opportunity when it is safe to do so. We know that the best place for children and young people to be educated is in school/college. This is vital not only for educational progress but also for children's health and wellbeing. We are also aware of the impact of workload pressures on the education workforce and the vital need to move to a position in which teachers, headteachers, together with the wider workforce, parents and the public can be confident that further disruption to children's education is minimised and where the further widespread closure of education provision can be avoided. We trust that you will agree that the safety of the workforce and pupils must continue to remain paramount.

We recognise that from 22 February schools will begin opening for Foundation Phase learners but we would be grateful for the opportunity to meet with you and your officials to discuss our priorities for the wider safe reopening of schools and colleges. Whilst we welcome a number of commitments you have made to date, we also believe that securing the wider reopening of all provision will require a clear and shared understanding of what is expected, rigorous and consistent application of measures to ensure safe return to face to face teaching and learning, and a credible plan that garners the confidence of the workforce, parents and the general public. We believe that this can only be achieved where there is continued effort to work constructively with the NASUWT and other education workforce representatives and employers to ensure that the requisite conditions and assurances are established to effect the safe and sustainable reopening of schools and colleges as national restrictions are lifted.

The NASUWT has set out 5 key measures which we believe are essential to secure confidence for the wider reopening of schools and colleges and which we urge you to act upon. We invite you to work with us prior to wider reopening of provision in order to:

1. Demonstrate that decisions on the reopening of provision are clearly led by the scientific evidence and advice.
2. Ensure effective and consistent action is taken in all schools and colleges against the spread of the virus.
3. Ensure the same protections for teachers and support staff as for workers in other occupations.
4. Ensure effective controls are in place to minimise the spread and impact of Covid-19 and any new variants.
5. Ensure that appropriate and effective risk assessments and controls are in place.

Further detail on each of these proposals is attached.

I look forward to discussing our proposals with you in the interests of children and young people and the workforce who continue to support their education, wellbeing and progress.

Yours sincerely,



Dr Patrick Roach  
**General Secretary**

Dyddiad: 11 Chwefror 2021

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Annwyl Kirsty,

## **Ail agor ysgolion a cholegau yn ystod y pandemig COVID-19**

Dros yr 11 mis diwethaf, mae aelodau NASUWT wedi bod yn gweithio'n ddifflino i ddarparu addysg a chefnogaeth i blant a phobl ifanc yn ystod pandemig y Coronafeirws. Serch hynny, rydym yn hynod o ymwybodol a phryderus am effaith barhaus y cau ysgolion a'r tarfu ar y ddarpariaeth addysg sydd wedi digwydd oherwydd yr ymdrech i reoli a lleihau trosglwyddiad y firws mewn ysgolion ac yn y gymuned ehangach.

Mae NASUWT wedi ei ymrwymo i sicrhau bod ysgolion a cholegau'n gallu ail agor gynted ag y bo modd, pan fydd hi'n ddiogel iddynt wneud hynny. Gwyddom mai'r lle gorau i addysgu plant a phobl ifanc yw mewn ysgolion a cholegau. Mae hyn yn hanfodol, nid yn unig er mwyn datblygiad addysgiadol y plant ond hefyd er budd eu hiechyd a'u lles. Rydym yn ymwybodol hefyd o'r effaith a gaiff y pwysau gwaith ar y gweithlu addysg a'r angen hanfodol i symud i sefyllfa lle gall yr athrawon, y prifathrawon, ynghyd â'r gweithlu ehangach, y rhieni a'r cyhoedd deimlo'n hyderus bod unrhyw darfu pellach ar addysg y plant wedi ei gadw i lefel mor isel ag sy'n bosib a lle gellir osgoi unrhyw achosion pellach o gau'r ddarpariaeth addysg ar raddfa eang. Hyderwn y byddwch yn cytuno bod yn rhaid parhau i roi'r pwyslais mwyaf o hyd ar ddiogelwch y gweithlu a'r disgyblion.

Rydym yn cydnabod y bydd ysgolion yn dechrau agor i ddysgwyr yn y Cyfnod Sylfaen o 22 Chwefror, ond byddem yn ddiolchgar am gyfle i gwrdd â chi a'ch swyddogion i drafod ein blaenoriaethau ar gyfer ail agor ysgolion a cholegau'n ehangach ac yn ddiogel. Er ein bod yn croesawu nifer o'r ymrwymadau yr ydych wedi eu gwneud hyd yn hyn i sicrhau bod modd ail agor yr holl ddarpariaeth yn ehangach, credwn y bydd angen cyd-ddealltwriaeth glir o'r hyn a ddisgwylir, gweithrediad trwyadl a chadarn y trefnau i sicrhau dychweliad diogel i ddysgu ac addysgu wyneb yn wyneb, a chynllun credadwy sy'n ennyn hyder y gweithlu, y rhieni a'r cyhoedd. Yn ein barn ni, yr unig ffordd o gyflawni hynny yw drwy i bawb wneud ymdrech barhaus i weithio mewn ffordd adeiladol gyda NASUWT a chynrychiolwyr eraill y gweithlu addysg a'r cyflogwyr i sicrhau bod yr amodau a'r sicrwydd angenrheidiol yn eu lle i alluogi i ysgolion a cholegau ail agor yn ddiogel ac yn gynaliadwy pan ddaw'r cyfyngiadau clo lleol i ben.

Mae NASUWT wedi nodi 5 trefn allweddol sy'n hanfodol, yn ein barn ni, i sicrhau bod pobl yn hyderus ynglŷn ag ail agor ysgolion a cholegau'n ehangach, a phwyswn arnoch i weithredu ar y rhain. Rydym yn eich gwahodd i weithio gyda ni cyn i'r ddarpariaeth gael ei hail agor yn ehangach er mwyn:

1. Dangos bod penderfyniadau am ail agor y ddarpariaeth addysg wedi eu tywys yn glir gan y dystiolaeth wyddonol a'r cyngor gwyddonol.
2. Sicrhau bod camau effeithiol a chyson yn cael eu cymryd ymhob ysgol a choleg yn erbyn lledaeniad y firws.
3. Sicrhau yr un diogelwch i athrawon a staff cymorth ag y mae gweithwyr yn ei gael mewn galwedigaethau eraill.
4. Sicrhau bod trefnau rheoli effeithiol ar waith i leihau'r risg o ledaenu'r coronafeirws a'i effaith, gan gynnwys unrhyw amrywiolion newydd o'r firws.
5. Sicrhau bod trefnau priodol ac effeithiol ar waith ar gyfer asesu a rheoli risgiau.

Yn atodol mae rhagor o fanylion am bob un o'r cynigion hyn.

Edrychaf ymlaen at drafod ein cynigion gyda chi er budd y plant a'r bobl ifanc, a'r gweithlu sy'n parhau i gefnogi eu haddysg, eu lles a'u datblygiad.

Yr eiddoch yn gywir,



Dr Patrick Roach  
**Ysgrifennydd Cyffredinol**