UsForThemCymru welcomes to school announcement

Thursday 9 July, 2020

The campaign group UsForThem Cymru, which was set up to call for full time school with no social distancing from September for all children in Wales, has welcomed today's news that all children will be returning to school full-time in September.

Martha Ogunremi, Spokesperson for UsForThem Cymru, said "We are delighted that Kirsty Williams, Welsh Government's Minister for Education, has listened to parents, teaching staff and experts and announced that all children will have their right to a full time education reinstated in September, however, we need reassurance that repeat closures will only occur as a last resort and children will now be prioritised in during this crisis. As the Minister has clarified, evidence has shown that children are at low risk from COVID-19 and are the least likely people to spread the disease."

"Most children will not have been in school since March except up to three short sessions and this cannot continue. We know that nearly three quarters of children have accessed an hour or less of learning each day and parents tell us that they are unable to give more time as they juggle the demands of work, school and home. Teachers tell us that they want to get back to teaching their classes and this news brings welcome clarity. This simply cannot continue."

"Following this morning's announcement of additional funding, we look forward to the detail of how the Welsh Government will ensure that children are not disadvantaged from their time away from the classroom. There will need to be will need comprehensive action to make sure that children's education level, wellbeing and physical health is returned to the level it would have been without this crisis. Sadly safeguarding service may need a similar level of investment."

"We particularly welcome the news that children will not need to social distance from peers. We know that children learn through play and it is vital for their wellbeing, as well as their social and emotional development. Over 120 leading experts agree that It is crucial to remove social distancing measures so that children can interact with each other and re-establish friendships to help them recover."

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