



Media Release

For immediate release

Date: 14th December 2021

Term to end early for States-run schools

The term will end for States-run primary and secondary schools on Friday afternoon (17th December 2021).

However, all schools will remain open on Monday 20th, Tuesday 21st and the morning of Wednesday 22nd December for the children of any parent who must continue going to work on those days and those invited to attend by headteachers. No formal learning will take place during these days but staff will continue to be working.

In ending term early but keeping schools open, the Committee for Education, Sport & Culture is seeking to provide as much flexibility as possible, while supporting families concerned about the Christmas holidays and staff who have managed an incredibly challenging period during the last 10 weeks.

Deputy Andrea Dudley-Owen, President of the Committee for Education, Sport & Culture, said:

‘Having considered the current challenges in keeping schools fully operational due to staff and student absences, the impact the last 10 weeks of term have had on school staff and young people, and importantly the upcoming Christmas holidays where we of course want to limit the risk of families having their special time severely impacted by Covid-19, we have taken what we believe is a sensible decision at this point. We certainly did not take this decision lightly and importantly schools will remain open on Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday morning next week so that, the children of any parent who simply cannot find alternative arrangement and those invited by the school, can continue to attend. We expect student numbers in settings will drop significantly and this will reduce the serious pressure that our workforce has experienced in recent weeks, where they have really been on the frontline. I would like to extend, my deep and heartfelt gratitude to all staff across education for their efforts in helping to keep our children safe and in school during this really challenging time.’

Nick Hynes, Director of Education, said:

'I think it is fair to say that over the last few weeks education has quite rightly been described as being on the frontline with regards to the challenges associated with tackling covid across our community. Whilst teachers and school-based staff are by no means the only sector in our island who have been working in difficult circumstances, having spent a lot of time in our schools in recent weeks, I would say that they have been one of the most affected staff groups where we have seen high rates of absence not just because of covid but because of symptoms associated with covid. These absences have caused challenges in planning the day to day delivery of education. Likewise the attendance of young people across all settings has been significantly affected which has consequently had an impact upon many parents and carers across the community.

'I don't want to understate how difficult it has been in all schools and settings since September and would again thank all staff across all areas of education for their commitment to ensuring we have continued to deliver high-quality education for our young people. Hopefully the Committee's decision will both help to support our workforce for whom we have a duty of care while also ensuring appropriate support is in place for any young person or working parent for the two-and-a-half days next week that will no longer be teaching days.'