

**DRAFT WITNESS STATEMENT OF
NICCY MODULE 2C UK COVID
INQUIRY**

Certificate of Exhibit KY/22 – INQ

Peter Weir
Minister for Education
Room 207
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Stormont
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20/CJS/KY/045

22 April 2020

Dear Peter

I hope you are well. I firstly want to thank you for your response to our 'Too Little, Too Late Report' and we look forward to seeing progress on the implementation of all the recommendations.

I would also like to express my gratitude to the team at DE for continuing to engage with my office on various issues during the Covid-19 crisis.

You will have seen that many national leaders across the world have had press conferences with children. These have been important events as it reminds children that even though they are the group least likely to be directly affected by the virus, other aspects of their lives have been deeply impacted on and that their government is aware of these affects and is addressing them. As the government Champion for Children, I would like to recommend that you and your executive colleagues consider such an event or preferably a series of events (addressing different aspects) during the Covid crisis. Naturally, my office would be very happy to offer any advice that you might require to make these press conferences a success.

We had a meeting scheduled, last month, which understandably had to be cancelled but I am writing to ask that it is rescheduled (probably virtually). I would welcome the opportunity to discuss a range of issues with you. There are, as you would expect, a range of Covid-related issues particularly concerning the education of vulnerable children and those attending special schools as well as exam results. But consideration must also be given to educational issues immediately after the pandemic ends and schools and services are reinstated. Also alongside SEN, there are a number of areas that need to be addressed in the longer term which we would welcome an initial conversation about.

I hope that you are agreeable and I will ask my PA, NR to contact your office to arrange a suitable time.

Best wishes

Personal Data

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