



7 July 2020

By email [private.office@education-ni.gov.uk](mailto:private.office@education-ni.gov.uk)

Mr Peter Weir MLA  
Minister for Education  
Department of Education  
Rathgael House  
Bangor  
BT19 7PR

Dear Minister Weir

### **COVID-19 and Education: Equality Considerations**

Thank you for your reply of 8 June to my letter of 21 May, regarding ensuring equality of opportunity and good relations in responses to COVID 19 in education, providing information on a range of activities undertaken by the Department to address these issues.

I write now to draw your attention to our COVID-19 and Education: Equality Considerations which we published recently. The publication acknowledges the work that has been done to date by Government and across the education sector to mitigate the risks of any loss of learning in response to COVID-19. We are keen to ensure that, in tackling the virus, there is a focus on avoiding the emergence or widening of educational inequalities and the publication details 12 recommendations for consideration in this regard.

The recommendations cover a range of issues, such as the collection of comprehensive equality data, maximising the use of collaborative approaches, mitigating potential negative impacts of home-schooling and any move to 'blended' learning. We also make recommendations about considering the equality impacts of decisions regarding assessment, about ensuring the benefits of sharing in education are maintained and about leadership to promote an anti-bullying culture within education.

I enclose a Summary version of the publication with this letter; the full version has been sent to various contacts within the Department. I trust that the recommendations will be of assistance in the planning for the return to formally taught education provision in the new school year.

Yours sincerely

Personal Data

**Geraldine McGahey OBE**  
**Chief Commissioner**

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