



By email to:

8 December 2020

Dear

Continuing Education and Keeping People Safe at Christmas

Discussions took place recently to introduce measures for schools to keep staff and pupils safe prior to Christmas and the return to school in the New Year. These measures were rejected by the Deputy First Minister with his priority to keep schools open and relax covid restrictions to allow family Christmas gatherings regardless of the impact this will have upon the school communities and their families.

The SSTA believes that you as the employer and with a responsibility for the health and safety of the school community need to ensure that measures are introduced to protect people prior to Christmas gatherings and protect schools in the New Year. It is widely believed that the number of infections will rise again as a consequence and schools would struggle to keep open.

The SSTA believes a common end of term date prior to the Christmas week for schools and a later return to physical schooling would be a sensible measure to protect people and control the virus. A move to 'remote learning' to continue education at an earlier stage to reduce the risk both before and after Christmas would seem to be a sensible measure. This would not mean a return to the 'lockdown' measures introduced in March but a planned continuation of learning at the times when schools would be expected to be open.

I look forward to the introduction of 'remote learning' as a positive step to keep our school communities safe and give an opportunity for a safer Christmas for all and a safe return to schooling in the New Year.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Seamus Searson'.

Seamus Searson
General Secretary