



Irish National Teachers' Organisation
Cumann Múinteoirí Éireann

25 August 2020

Leo Varadkar T.D,
Tánaiste and Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Employment,
Department of Business, Enterprise and Innovation,
23 Kildare Street,
Dublin 2.
D02 TD30

leo.varadkar@oir.ie

Dear Tánaiste,

You may be aware that when INTO, as representatives of 42,000 primary teachers, attended the hearing of the Special Covid-19 Response Committee in early July we called for employers to afford flexibility to employees who were parents or guardians of primary school children, in the event that their child had to leave school early or be absent from school due to displaying symptoms of COVID-19.

Our Central Executive Committee met earlier this week and instructed me to write to you to seek an assurance from you that government will encourage employers to give the required flexibility to parents, without penalisation for such necessary absence, in the coming months.

We simply cannot have a situation where parents resort to sending symptomatic children to school due to pressure from their employers. Equally, in the event of children developing symptoms while at school, we must avoid children in distress or who are unwell being left in school buildings for too long because an employer refuses a parent's request for release in order to collect their unwell child. As you know, isolation and appropriate care (which may involve testing) of suspect cases is a key part of public health advice around our efforts to contain this pandemic.

I would be most grateful if you and your Cabinet colleagues would give due consideration to this important issue prior to one million students and education staff returning to schools next week.

Yours sincerely,



John Boyle,
General Secretary

JB/RW