



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

Eich Cyf/Your Ref:  
Ein Cyf/Our Ref: ATISN 14870

9 March 2021

Dear

### **ATISN 14870 – Use of masks in schools**

Thank you for your request which I received on 9 February 2021. You asked for the following.

1. “What scientific, peer reviewed, RCT evidence, showing the efficacy of masks in significantly reducing infections in a real world setting is being used to inform policy on mask wearing?”

Which I have interpreted as:

**Evidence on the efficacy of face coverings in reducing infections of Covid-19 that has been used by Welsh Government to inform policy on use of face coverings in schools/settings.**

2. “What research has been done on the long term physical, emotional and psychological effects of widespread wearing of masks has on children?”

Which I have interpreted as:

**Research that has been undertaken on the physical, emotional and psychological impact on children as a result of use of face coverings.**

3. “What scientific, peer reviewed evidence is the WG using to show how bad the asymptomatic spread of SARS CoV2 is?”

Which I have interpreted as:

**Evidence used by Welsh Government on asymptomatic transmission of Covid-19.**

### **Our response**

The information you requested is enclosed.

The Technical Advisory Cell provides coordination of scientific and technical advice to support Welsh Government decision makers during emergencies. This includes the following.

*Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.*

*We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.*

[Face coverings for children and young people in education settings](#) (26 August 2020)

[Advice from Children and Education subgroup \(7 July 2020\)](#)

[Evidence review on children and young people under 18 in preschool, school or college following the firebreak](#) (13 November 2020)

[Variant of Concern \(VOC 202012/01\) and Education in Wales \(7 January 2021\)](#)

[Considerations for changing the operation of schools to allow more face-to-face learning \(5 February 2021\)](#)

These in turn draw on a wide range of evidence and information on issues relating to the use of face coverings – including their efficacy as well as their potential harms - as well as transmission of Covid-19.

Regarding asymptomatic transmission of Covid-19, estimates of viral load and duration of viral shedding appeared to be similar for asymptomatic and symptomatic cases based on available data, though detailed reporting of viral load and natural history of viral shedding by symptom status was limited. Evidence of the relationship between age and symptom status was inconclusive. A paper on the [Rapid review of asymptomatic proportion of SARS-CoV-2 infections in community settings](#) was published in September 2020.

### **Next steps**

If you are dissatisfied with the Welsh Government's handling of your request, you can ask for an internal review within 40 working days of the date of this response. Requests for an internal review should be addressed to the Welsh Government's Freedom of Information Officer at:

Information Rights Unit,  
Welsh Government,  
Cathays Park,  
Cardiff,  
CF10 3NQ

or Email: [Freedom.ofinformation@gov.wales](mailto:Freedom.ofinformation@gov.wales)

Please remember to quote the ATISN reference number above.

You also have the right to complain to the Information Commissioner. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at: Information Commissioner's Office,  
Wycliffe House,  
Water Lane,  
Wilmslow,  
Cheshire,  
SK9 5AF.

However, please note that the Commissioner will not normally investigate a complaint until it has been through our own internal review process.

Yours sincerely