

21.06.29

9 Deputy R.J. Ward of the Minister for Children and Education regarding transition days (OQ.147/2021):

What work, if any, has the Minister undertaken to confirm whether or not transition days in primary, secondary and tertiary settings acted as “super-spreader” events for COVID-19 infection; and if such work has been undertaken, what assurances can he provide to the Assembly that this was not the case?

Deputy S.M. Wickenden (The Minister for Children and Education):

Transition has already been carried out for some students moving from year 11 to year 12. These transition events, which include additional mitigations have passed off successfully with no evidence of any superspreading. C.Y.P.E.S. officers work closely with the Environmental Health contact tracing team, Public Health officers and S.T.A.C. Each positive case in schools is analysed to identify any patterns of transmission and none have been identified in relation to transition days.

5.9.1 Deputy R.J. Ward:

Can I ask the Minister to detail what work has been done to look for possible spread of the virus seeing as some of the transition days only finished at the end of last week and whether he believes that bringing children together in those circumstances could have been a risk that was one step too far?

Deputy S.M. Wickenden:

The work that is done to identify where the transmission is and where patterns are is done by the Environmental Health contact tracing team and the medical officers that are much more qualified to look into that than I. We have put in lots of mitigations to make sure that these extremely important days for children can take place and that means about not mixing in bubbles, making sure that masks are worn in communal areas, good record-keeping to ensure that movements can be tracked of children. The issue of transition days is so important to the children’s education in moving forward. My team has been working for a long time now to make sure that, whatever happened within COVID, we had the right mitigation in place to have the safest possible outcome to continue these educational days.