

Chief Minister



19-21 Broad Street | St Helier
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Deborah McMillan
Children's Commissioner for Jersey

BY EMAIL

19 May 2021

Dear Deborah,

Re Minister for Children and Education

Thank you for your letter of 12 May. As always, your observations and advice are welcome.

First and foremost, I would like to reassure you that the Government's commitment to putting children first is undiminished and it is uppermost in my mind to ensure that, despite the changes in leadership of the portfolio, there is no diminution of focus on this priority.

As you will recall, Deputy Maçon appointed Deputy Wickenden as Assistant Minister for Children and Education, giving him a broad brief that largely mirrored the Minister's responsibilities. To be clear, he was not appointed specifically to assist with the Education portfolio, but was asked to work across the children's and education functions, with the exception of CAMHS (a brief held by Deputy Pointon).

Since Deputy Maçon's incapacitation, Deputy Wickenden continues with this brief and I am supporting him in my Ministerial role. As you would expect, I am keeping these arrangements under review and I will consider your advice, along with that of my fellow Minister and senior officials, on a regular basis.

Meanwhile, I have full confidence in Deputy Wickenden to give the portfolio the full attention it deserves and have no doubt that he will provide commitment and strong political leadership for the Ministry. It is possible that Ministers could be absent for an extended period, if they are unwell for example, and that is why we have delegations in place to ensure that political oversight and leadership is maintained until such time as the Minister returns, or other decisions are made.

On the matter of engagement, I understand you had regular meetings with the previous separate Ministers for Children and Education and had recently liaised with Deputy Maçon's office to set up a quarterly set of meetings to continue this valued relationship.

Deputy Wickenden has briefed me on the meeting you requested on 22 April following receipt of his letter sent to you on 16 April. I am also aware that Deputy Wickenden's absence from work due to a private family matter on 10 May was not communicated to your office as it should have been and that apologies have been sent for this oversight. Deputy Wickenden remains committed to the fortnightly meeting series you both have.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "John Le Fondré".

Senator John Le Fondré
Chief Minister

c.c. Deputy Scott Wickenden, Assistant Minister for Children and Education