

**PE1759/F**

Argyll & Bute Council submission of 7 October 2020

It is stated by the Scottish Government and COSLA that local authorities have the flexibility to make appropriate local decisions. This flexibility is essential to us in Argyll and Bute in order for us to coordinate the transport requirements in a rural area including remote and island communities. It is worth noting that COSLA state that there is no evidence to link between a longer school day and better educational attainment.

Given the current situation with COVID 19 we have unpredictable staffing situations arising with staff having to isolate as short notice. Having local flexibility allows councils to work on local solutions that can help to keep schools open in these difficult circumstances and only make a decision to close when all possibilities have been exhausted.

Another issue to be consider is the length of time very young children in P1 to P3 can concentrate when compared to older children. Children in this age group need time to learn and develop though exploration and play in informal settings out with the classroom environment. Due to shorter daylight hours in the winter this time could be further reduced if the school day for them was lengthened.