



The Rt Hon Gavin Williamson CBE  
Secretary of State for Education  
Department for Education  
20 Great Smith St  
Westminster  
London  
SW1P 3BT

2 St. James' Court  
Friar Gate  
Derby  
DE1 1BT

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Our Ref: DL.lag

Dear Secretary of State

Thank you for the opportunity to meet with senior medical and scientific advisers on 15 May. It was a useful and informative meeting which provided some answers; however, several remain unanswered.

It is obviously in the best interests of Voice members that we continue to work constructively with you and your officials and it is in that spirit that I share the following which clearly demonstrates the level of concern within the education workforce and that significant work is still necessary to assure Voice members that their safety and welfare, and that of their pupils and families, will not be compromised by the wider opening of schools.

Of the responses received so far to a live survey, nearly 80% do not believe it is feasible for primary schools to welcome more pupils from 1 June. The reasons for the response include practical and operational matters at school and nursery level, however, it is clear from the responses that there is still a high level of concern about the infection and transmission levels, that the testing and tracing process is not yet established and the conflicting advice about social distancing and use of PPE within and out with schools.

It is understood that the plethora of conflicting research and advice nationally and internationally, and the reporting of it, does not foster trust and confidence and that no action is without risk, however, Voice members deserve to have the information we have previously requested to reassure them.

I therefore again ask that the evidence on which decisions have been made is published in full, to inspire confidence in the education workforce to fulfil the Government's aspiration for wider opening of schools.

While I understand that one of the five tests which must be met is a decreasing and manageable rate of infection with an 'R' rate below 1, I seek from you an indication of the plan for schools and nurseries should the 'R' rate approach or exceed 1, given the obvious lag in the data.

Voice's current position is that until we have access to all the information requested, the risk level associated with the wider opening of schools remains unknown. We do however believe it is in members best interest to participate in planning and health and safety and risk assessments in preparation for an eventual wider opening of schools.

I trust that you wish to ensure the education workforce both trusts and has confidence that wider opening of schools and nurseries next month will not put them or their children at unnecessary risk and look forward to your response and publication of the necessary information as a matter of urgency.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Deborah Lawson". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Deborah Lawson  
General Secretary  
Email: [deborahlawson@voicetheunion.org.uk](mailto:deborahlawson@voicetheunion.org.uk)

Copies: Sarah Lewis  
Adrian Gough