



**Sarah Owen MP**  
Member of Parliament for Luton North

Rt Hon Gavin Williamson MP  
Secretary of State for Education  
Department for Education  
By email [MC.TRANSFERSIN@education.gov.uk](mailto:MC.TRANSFERSIN@education.gov.uk)

18<sup>th</sup> May 2020

Dear Gavin

**Reopening of schools**

I am writing to you as a large number of people in my constituency have contacted me over the last few days with their concerns about the proposed reopening of schools amid the ongoing coronavirus emergency.

This has been a testing time for the teaching profession. Teaching staff have gone above and beyond to adapt during this crisis to the needs of their pupils. Many schools, including in Luton, have even been using their design & tech facilities to produce crucial supplies of PPE for frontline workers. We also know that parents are worried about their children missing crucial time in school, with pupils missing important exams.

I agree with many of my constituents who have told me that they think ensuring that children can return to education must be a priority in order to support young people's development and wellbeing, but it is crucial that this happens when it is safe to do so. I share the deep concerns of the parents, support staff and teachers who have contacted me about the safety your government's plan to reopen schools. Parents and teachers are demanding more detail on plans for necessary PPE, enhanced school cleaning and risk assessments. The safety of both children and teaching staff should be paramount in any plans for reopening.

Parents in my constituency are worried about what the next few weeks might bring for them and their families. Teachers in Luton want to feel safe at work, so they can protect themselves, their pupils and their own families. On their behalf, I urge you to be as transparent as possible when it comes to planning for school reopenings. If your department was to publish the evidence and modelling that it is using to plan for the proposed reopening from SAGE, Public Health England, the government's senior scientific and medical advisors, or other related bodies, this would go a long way towards reassuring worried parents and teachers.

As I am sure you can agree, we cannot afford a second spike in infections. With reports over the weekend that the rate of infection (R) is creeping back up, I must join my constituents in urging caution and asking for more details of plans to ensure safety in schools as we approach your June 1<sup>st</sup> deadline for reopening of schools.

I look forward to your response.

Yours sincerely

**Sarah Owen MP**  
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