



9 March 2022

Rt Hon Nadhim Zahawi MP
Secretary of State for Education
Department for Education
Sanctuary Buildings
20 Great Smith Street
London
SW1P 3BT

Dear Secretary of State

We are writing to you to express our collective concern about the Prime Minister's recent announcement that free symptomatic Covid testing for the general public will no longer be available after the end of March.

We share the government's ambition for all children and young people to be in school or college, and for an end to the disruption to their education as a result of the pandemic. We are concerned, however, that this proposal will have the opposite effect.

For people to be able to exercise personal responsibility in the way the government hopes, they need the tools to do so. Removing the ability for pupils and staff to access free tests if they have potential Covid symptoms is likely to lead to people either attending school or college when they have Covid, and so transmitting it to others, or to them staying off school with symptoms which may not be Covid at all.

Either of these scenarios is likely to prolong disruption to education. We urge the government to continue to make PCR testing available to all those attending or working in education settings with potential Covid symptoms after the end of March.

Yours sincerely

Richard Harman
Chief Executive | AGBIS

Geoff Barton
General Secretary | ASCL

Leora Cruddas CBE
Chief Executive | CST

Avril Chambers
National Officer | GMB Union

Dr Simon Hyde
General Secretary | HMC

Rudi Elliott Lockhart
Chief Executive | ISA

Paul Whiteman
General Secretary | NAHT

Mary Boustead & Kevin Courtney
Joint General Secretaries | NEU

Clive Rickart
Chief Executive | SoH

Mike Short
National Secretary | Unison

Helen Osgood
National Officer | Voice Community