

Date: 26 May 2020

Your Ref:

Our ref: 200526/Williamson G/PR/FC

Rt Hon Gavin Williamson MP  
Secretary of State  
Department for Education  
Sanctuary Buildings  
Great Smith Street  
London  
SW1P 3BT

# NASUWT

## The Teachers' Union

Hillscourt Education Centre  
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General Secretary  
**Dr Patrick Roach**

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Dear Gavin,

The NASUWT has received a number of reports from schools of pupils who have tested positive for COVID-19, but where the protective measures as set out in the Government's guidance for schools and other education settings have not been followed due to conflicting advice received from local health protection agencies.

You will be aware that the UK Government's guidance clearly states that where pupils or staff who have been in the same class or group as a pupil who has tested positive for COVID-19, they should immediately be advised to self-isolate for a period of 14 days, and obtain a test should they become symptomatic:

***What happens if there is a confirmed case of coronavirus in a setting?***

*"Where the child, young person or staff member tests positive, the rest of their class or group within their childcare or education setting should be sent home and advised to self-isolate for 14 days."*

You will also be aware that the Health and Safety Executive is also clear that where an employer fails to comply with the Government guidance, it may be in breach of the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974.

Despite representations made by the NASUWT in a number of these cases, some employers are continuing to not comply with the letter of the Government's guidance in this regard. Furthermore, in some of these cases, the NASUWT has been especially concerned to learn of advice given to some headteachers to withhold information from pupils, parents and staff where there is a confirmed COVID-19 case of a pupil who has been attending the school. We believe such local advice not only to be contrary to the Government's guidance, but also puts at risk the health and safety of the school and wider community.

Notwithstanding the potential for these incidents to increase in number with the wider reopening of schools from 1 June, we believe that it is necessary to clarify the situation and ensure the trust and confidence of teachers who, now and going forwards, will rightly be concerned that appropriate measures are in place and are being followed to protect their health and safety at work.

I am, therefore, seeking urgent clarification from you in this matter so that we can continue to advise and support our members in keeping schools COVID-secure.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Patrick Roach', written in a cursive style.

Dr Patrick Roach  
**General Secretary**

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<sup>i</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-implementing-protective-measures-in-education-and-childcare-settings/coronavirus-covid-19-implementing-protective-measures-in-education-and-childcare-settings>