

January 2021

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**To Directors of Education/Children's Services, Chief Executives of Multi-Academy Trusts,
Sixth-form Colleges and Independent Schools**

Dear Colleague

COVID-19 – Attendance at schools and colleges

We are at a critical situation for the country. The percentage of people testing positive for coronavirus (COVID-19) is continuing to increase, and during the most recent week, the Office for National Statistics estimates that 1,122,000 people had coronavirus, equating to around one in 50 people. More than 80,000 people in the UK have now sadly died from COVID-19.

The country has entered a third lockdown and schools should have been asked to close to everyone except for the children of critical workers and vulnerable children. The clear purpose of this lockdown is to substantially reduce contact between people and therefore reduce the infection rate of COVID-19, which is up to 70% more transmissible. We trust that you will agree that all children, wherever possible, should stay at home.

Government guidance is clear that *'parents and carers who are critical workers should keep their children at home if they can.'* Whilst the Government has widened the definition of 'vulnerable children', it also remains the case that, wherever possible, all children should remain at home and be supported through a programme of remote education. This will help schools to reduce potential transmission of COVID-19 by minimising the numbers of pupils and staff on site.

The NASUWT also expects that every school should have undertaken a health and safety risk assessment to support both the provision of onsite education and for the provision of remote education. The conduct of risk assessments is the responsibility of each employer and we ask that you confirm the steps you have taken, as required, to ensure that such assessments have been conducted, in light of the new risks presented by the new strain of coronavirus.

The NASUWT asks that you immediately act to communicate with the parents and staff in your schools and colleges to encourage them to keep children at home and to stay at home.

I look forward to your full support in this matter and I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely



Dr Patrick Roach
General Secretary