

Date: 24<sup>th</sup> March 2020

Our Ref: 200324/WILLIAMSON G/CK/DLTF

# NASUWT

## The Teachers' Union

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Dear Gavin

Patrick and I every much appreciated the time you gave on Monday to discussing with us some key issues relating to COVID-19. It was very helpful and we look forward to our weekly discussions to ensure that we are working together constructively on the Government's agenda to safeguard public health.

Since we talked on Monday two issues we raised with you are continuing to be problematic and two other issues have been raised which are causing distress in schools to teachers who are trying their best to play their part in supporting other key workers.

Firstly, and as mentioned at our meeting with you, despite the Government's advice on social distancing we are receiving more and more reports from schools where there are fewer than 10 pupils on site and yet the whole staff is required to report for work. We are speaking to each of the schools but headteachers are refusing to change their arrangements and put in rotas of staff.

Secondly, again as we raised with you, we are still getting a number of cases where teachers with underlying health conditions as defined by Government are being forced to come into school. We have cases of teachers being told that their condition is 'mild' and does not qualify when quite clearly this is wrong and other saying its business as usual and there is no reason that they should not be in work. A number have been threatened with pay deductions and dismissal.

The two issues we did not previously raise with you but are very problematic are as follows.

Some schools are pressing ahead with plans to make teachers redundant despite the fact that they are unable to consult appropriately with staff or unions.

In some, but not all cases, these are academies who seem to feel that because they cannot have a deficit budget that they have to press ahead regardless of the current circumstances. Surely at the current time this does not have to be a consideration.

Schools cannot be in a position to know what their staffing needs will be when we emerge from the current crisis and it is unacceptable that they are prepared to dismiss staff through redundancy at a time when education in schools has ceased and jobs are not being advertised.

A number of independent schools are continuing with plans to withdraw from the TPS despite the fact that not all staff are in a position to engage in this process or indeed seek the independent financial advice they are entitled to take.

I regret to say that it appears that these schools are quite callously taking advantage of the national crisis and seeking to press through these life changing decisions for their staff, adding to the anxiety and stress they are already feeling about their future given the unprecedented situation the country is facing.

It would be very much appreciated if you could issue as a matter of urgency a strong and definitive statement to employers on all of these issues urging them to halt the redundancies and withdrawal from the TPS and also reiterating clearly the Government's guidance on staff in schools and workers with underlying health conditions. The Government has consistently urged businesses to stand by their staff and its now time that those who employ teachers were given the same message.

I very much look forward to your urgent assistance and positive support in these important matters.

Best wishes

Yours sincerely



Chris Keates (Ms)  
**General Secretary (Acting)**

