

Date: 3 December 2020

Your Ref:

Our ref: 201203/WILLIAMSON G/PR/EJ

Rt Hon Gavin Williamson, MP  
Secretary of State  
Department for Education  
Sanctuary Buildings  
Great Smith Street  
London  
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# NASUWT

## The Teachers' Union

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General Secretary  
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Dear Gavin

The NASUWT is becoming increasingly concerned that pupils who are sent home from school due to displaying COVID-19 symptoms are being sent back to school prematurely, potentially putting staff and other pupils at risk of contracting the virus.

It is clear that some parents will struggle where their children are required to self-isolate, and indeed a lack of financial support for parents may well be a driver for pupils to be sent back to school inappropriately. However, this cannot trump the requirements to self-isolate and if infectious children are sent back to school, this risks a much larger outbreak.

The current government guidance states that '*Schools should not request evidence of negative test results or other medical evidence before admitting children or welcoming them back after a period of self-isolation.*' Whilst the NASUWT agrees that a negative test is not required after the requisite period of self-isolation, this is different to a child returning early from a suspected case.

Where a child is sent home with COVID-19 symptoms they should be tested and the school should be able to ask for this result in order to ensure the health and safety of others in the school. Thus, schools should be given the power to refuse to admit the child until the 10-day isolation period has elapsed or proof of a negative test result is provided. Taking it on trust that the child has tested negative is clearly insufficient.

The NASUWT would urge the Department to provide further guidance to schools that where they have concerns that a pupil has returned to school inappropriately and prematurely, they are able to insist that the pupil remains at home for the remainder of the self-isolation period or until a negative test result is provided.

Yours sincerely



Dr Patrick Roach  
**General Secretary**