

## Coronavirus Update – 29 May 2020

On 28 May 2020, the Prime Minister announced the next phase of measures in adjusting the Coronavirus lockdown in England. These measures include:

- **From 1 June 2020:** reopening nurseries and other early years settings and reception, Year One and Year Six in primary schools.
- **From 15 June 2020:** secondary schools to begin to provide some face-to-face contact time for Years 10 and 12.

Please refer to the NASUWT's Coronavirus Hub ([www.nasuwat.org.uk/coronavirus](http://www.nasuwat.org.uk/coronavirus)) for further advice on the wider reopening of primary and secondary schools.

Following the Prime Minister's announcement, the NASUWT is clear that:

- The Government's announcements on wider reopening of schools are permissive only.
- There is no requirement for primary schools to reopen to more children (other than vulnerable children and children of key workers) on 1 June.
- Secondary schools may not reopen prior to 15 June as part of the Government's measures to protect public health. There is no requirement for secondary schools to reopen to more children (other than vulnerable children and children of key workers) on 15 June.
- Schools will not be failing in their statutory responsibilities if they are unable to extend their provision at this time in line with the Prime Minister's announcement.
- Local decisions on the wider reopening of schools are a matter for the governing body and for the employer (e.g. local authority, multi-academy trust or diocesan authority). Schools must follow the guidance issued by the employer in relation to wider reopening, as it is the employer who is legally responsible should anything go wrong.
- Many employers have confirmed that they will not require schools to reopen to more children from 1 June. Schools should check the advice of the employer prior to confirming decisions on wider reopening.
- There remains considerable concern about the extent to which children transmit COVID-19, the implications of schools reopening for disabled, black and minority ethnic (BAME) and other vulnerable groups, the benefits of personal protective equipment (PPE) and whether social distancing can be maintained within schools and in the wider community. Schools should bear in mind that any decisions about wider reopening must also be considered in the context of protecting public health.
- Schools must undertake a new risk assessment to ensure that they are COVID-secure for staff and pupils.
- NASUWT members must be consulted on the school's risk assessment. The risk assessments are the responsibility of the employer and members should not sign to say they agree a risk assessment in any circumstances, as they could be compromising their legal rights and entitlements. The NASUWT is also not in a position to agree or sign off risk assessments for the same reason.

- Where no risk assessment has been carried out, or where there are concerns about the risk assessment, members should notify the NASUWT immediately.
- The Department for Education has recognised that, ultimately, senior leaders of childcare and education settings should decide whether they have the staff available to cater for all, or indeed any, of the children and young people they have been asked to invite back.
- Where schools are in any doubt about whether it is safe to reopen to more children, they should notify the employing authority and/or governing body.
- Members should use the self-audit checklist ([www.nasuwt.org.uk/reopeningschools](http://www.nasuwt.org.uk/reopeningschools)) provided by the NASUWT, and the follow-up guidance in the email to members on 26 May ([www.nasuwt.org.uk/reopeningschools](http://www.nasuwt.org.uk/reopeningschools)) to assess their position in relation to the wider opening of their school and use the relevant template letters to obtain information from their employer about how their needs will be met in the event of wider reopening of the school.
- Members who remain concerned about their employer's plans for reopening schools more widely should contact the NASUWT immediately.

The NASUWT is continuing to make representations to the Government to ensure that the health and safety of members remains a paramount concern.