



JOINT EDUCATION UNIONS STATEMENT – 13/05/20

On Behalf of: GMB, AEP, NAHT, NASUWT, NEU, NSEAD, Prospect, UNISON and Unite.

Full text of today's statement:

“We all want schools to re-open, but that should only happen when it is safe to do so. The government is showing a lack of understanding about the dangers of the spread of coronavirus within schools, and outwards from schools to parents, sibling and relatives, and to the wider community.

“Uniquely, it appears, school staff will not be protected by social distancing rules. 15 children in a class, combined with their very young age, means that classrooms of 4 and 5-year olds could become sources of Covid-19 transmission and spread. While we know that children generally have mild symptoms, we do not know enough about whether they can transmit the disease to adults. We do not think that the government should be posing this level of risk to our society.

“We call on the government to step back from the 1st June and work with us to create the conditions for a safe return to schools based on the principles and tests we have set out.”

The principles and tests include (see full statement from Friday 8 May, linked to below):

- Safety and welfare of pupils and staff as the paramount principle
- No increase in pupil numbers until full rollout of a national test and trace scheme
- A national Covid-19 education taskforce with government, unions and education stakeholders to agree statutory guidance for safe reopening of schools
- Consideration of the specific needs of vulnerable students and families facing economic disadvantage
- Additional resources for enhanced school cleaning, PPE and risk assessments
- Local autonomy to close schools where testing indicates clusters of new covid-19 cases

Editors note – **Statement to the Secretary of State for Education on 8 May:** The full statement setting out the principles and tests can be found here:



<https://www.gmb.org.uk/sites/default/files/TUC%20joint%20unions%20Safe%20schools%20letter.pdf>