

Demand 'safety first' in schools

The Tories are determined to press ahead with a full opening of schools – but without taking the steps necessary to avoid a further acceleration of infection within our communities, nor to protect the safety of students, staff, and their families.

There is growing evidence that schools can help spread the coronavirus. That's why we must call on Local Authorities and schools to make sure safety comes first at the start of term and demand the following:

- **SMALLER CLASS SIZES TO ALLOW ADEQUATE PHYSICAL DISTANCING**

Schools should reopen at the start of term with no classes larger than 15 school students.

Wider opening should only be considered when the evidence of the effects of school opening on infection rates confirms that it is safe to do so.

- **FULL CONSULTATION WITH PARENTS AND UNIONS OVER ROTAS - NO FINES, PROTECT THOSE MOST AT RISK**

Arrangements for rotas and home learning to be produced in consultation with parents and carers to meet priority needs as much as possible.

Books and IT resources must be made available to those who need them. There must be no fines on those who opt for their children to learn at home.

Agreement with unions must guarantee that those staff who are, or who live with others at greater risk, can fulfil their duties by working from home.

- **FACE COVERINGS**

Schools can't be treated differently from other indoor

environments. Staff and school students over the age of 11 should wear face coverings while indoors. Staff should be given transparent coverings if needed for facial expression.

- **SAFETY FIRST WHEN THERE ARE LOCAL OUTBREAKS**

Where a case is identified within a school, staff and students within that 'bubble' must be closed to allow self-isolation; where there are two or more cases within 14 days, then the whole school will close.

Where local infection rates exceed the internationally recognised threshold of 50 new cases per 100,000 over seven days, schools should close to all but priority children.

- **COMMUNITY TEST & TRACE SYSTEMS THAT WORK, FULL PAY IF YOU NEED TO ISOLATE**

We need a reliable community-based testing and tracing system, run through local Council, NHS and GP services, not private profiteers.

All who have to isolate should be supported on full pay.

Weekly onsite testing of staff to be provided, and for children whose parents request it too.

But this Government will not listen unless forced to do so. That's why parents and staff must demand they support and fund schools to open safely.

We call on school unions to use their collective strength and:

- Prepare for a national strike ballot to allow action to be taken if safety remains at risk.
- Support members acting together to assert their legal rights not to work in an unsafe workplace under 'Section 44'.



Exams U-turn shows protest works - but class divide in education remains

Response by Young Socialists - read more on www.youngsocialists.org.uk

The Tories have been forced into a complete U-turn over the issue of A-Level and GCSE grade moderation.

This victory can only be chalked up to the efforts of students and young people who mobilised in the streets following the revelations that working class students were far more harshly moderated compared to students from elite and private schools.

This victory demonstrates that when young people fight, we can win. But now is the time to escalate our struggle to demand that not only are we given the grades we worked hard for but also:

- Fully fund an expansion of courses. Give every student their choice. Invest in a high quality education for all - scrap tuition fees, cancel student debt, and reverse the marketisation of the universities.
- Fully fund real jobs and training for school leavers and students. Take the wealth off the 1% to fund a mass programme of socially useful job creation for young people.

