

Letter coordinated by: SafeEdForAll and LongCovidKids

Email for correspondence: [SafeEdForAll\\_UK@Outlook.com](mailto:SafeEdForAll_UK@Outlook.com)

12<sup>th</sup> April 2021

To: The Rt Hon Matt Hancock, Secretary of State for Health & Social Care

Dear Mr Hancock,

SafeEdForAll and LongCovidKids are independent parent groups following the science and campaigning for safe schools to reduce the impact of Covid and Long Covid in the community (children, teaching staff, families, CEV and members of the wider community) and awareness, recognition and funding to support the ongoing research and treatment for Long Covid in children.

As you are aware, it is now recognised globally that schools play a huge role in the spread of COVID-19. As the Prime Minister mentioned, children are vectors of transmission and schools are a place where multiple households come together and mix, thus spreading the virus more quickly.

The mixing issue in crowded classrooms is reinforced with the Department of Education recent comments, *"Classrooms are one of the most densely occupied spaces found in buildings"* (Richard Daniels – DfE at TAPAS (23 Oct 2020))

Sir Patrick Vallance in his televised address on the 21<sup>st</sup> September 2020 stated *"The way we reduce spread is by limiting our number of contacts, by reducing contact in environments where spread is more likely. Those are crowded environments, indoor environments, poor ventilation...reminding you that this disease spreads by droplets, by surface contact and by aerosols."*

The risk of the emerging variants of concerns (UK, Brazil and SA) is a game changer for the global community and the impact on health services. SAGE has recommended a "step change in rigour of application of mitigation measures due to the increased in transmission risk"

- Long Covid across the UK (1.1 Million) with Children 43,000 (10 to 15% of Children who get COVID)
- Teaching Staff the second highest at risk of catching COVID after NHS staff
- CEV - Parents, Teaching Staff and Children at higher risk with the new VOC
- Children are as likely to catch and transmit the virus as adults (M.Hancock – Radio4 Interview – 08 April)

We are appealing to you Mr Hancock personally, as we feel that YOU DO appreciate how important in-person education is and YOU KNOW that it must be made safe and sustainable throughout this global pandemic in order to ensure it does not negatively impact the positive efforts the Department of Health and Social Care have made to reduce transmission and infection rates.

**We urge you to please communicate to your colleagues involved in the Department for Education that, without the outlined safety improvements in schools, there is a significant risk that YOUR Department will be negatively impacted as more school age children, school staff and their families will continue to be put at increased risk of exposure to infection unnecessarily.**

To avoid negatively impacting on the health services, it is important that the following actions are addressed as a matter of urgency, which will reduce the transmission risk and impact of COVID in the community.

Schools - Mitigation Measures Required URGENTLY

- Improved ventilation and monitoring in all classrooms to reduce the risk of SARS-CoV-2 airborne transmission
- Masks (multi-layer) mandated in secondary, encouraged in primary
- Social distancing in primary and secondary
- Remote learning / rotas to reduce the numbers in school classrooms
- Suspension of fines during the pandemic (as per Scotland & Wales)

**Please do whatever you can to help the Department for Education understand that safety improvements are necessary.**

We would welcome an opportunity to discuss this further with you and provide you with case studies that highlight our concerns.

Yours sincerely,

**Personal Data**

Sarah L.H. Saul

Contact on Behalf of SafeEdForAll and Long Covid Kids campaign groups

**I&S**