

ORGANISE TO RESIST
JOHNSON'S
RECKLESS
'BACK TO SCHOOL'
PLANS
THREATEN
EVERYONE'S SAFETY

A GUIDE FOR PARENTS

Produced by parents and education trade unionists
in the Socialist Party



1. WHO DOES THE GOVERNMENT WANT BACK IN SCHOOL ON 1 JUNE?

Most schools have stayed open to safely care for small numbers of children.

But now the government want primary schools to open on June 1st for all nursery, reception, Year 1 and Year 6 children, as well as all existing priority children.

That's over half the school back together.



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2. BUT WON'T SCHOOLS MAKE SURE THEY TEACH MY CHILD SAFELY?

Schools simply can't open safely yet to more children.

Young children sneeze and cough, they want to run and play together.

It will be impossible to keep them safely apart.

Shared surfaces and equipment will be infected.

The virus will inevitably spread between children and staff.



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3. WHY ARE THE GOVERNMENT'S PLANS SO DANGEROUS FOR ALL OF US?

Infection levels in our communities are still too high. There is still no proper testing and tracing system in place.

Nobody will know who is carrying the virus into school, especially as most children don't show symptoms.

Nobody will know which children and adults are then taking the virus back to their families and their vulnerable relatives. A 'second wave' of the virus will spread – that means more danger and more deaths.

4. WILL THIS MAKE MY CHILD UNWELL?

The Government is trying to trick parents into thinking this can all be done safely.

It can't.

They say most children can't get seriously unwell with Covid-19.

That's true – but some can. For example, while rare, there's a growing concern about an inflammatory syndrome in children linked to the virus.

But children also won't be happy.

They will be told to keep apart from friends and teachers.

Schools will be strange and confusing places. Emotional and wellbeing support also needs to be securely in place before schools open safely.

5. WHY DOES THE GOVERNMENT WANT SCHOOLS TO OPEN WHEN IT'S NOT SAFE?

Their plans are not based on safety. If they were, you wouldn't start with the youngest kids who will find it hardest to keep apart.

For them, it's all about childminding – so employers can tell us we should all be back in our workplaces, whether we think it's safe or not.

Of course, parents need pay and help with childcare. But safety comes first, not employers' profit margins.



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6. WHEN WILL IT BE SAFE FOR SCHOOLS TO OPEN?

We can't trust Ministers to know what's safe for our children.

It's their failure to get infection rates down, and to make sure testing and tracing systems are in place, that are to blame for schools not yet being safe to open further.

Doctors understand health, not politicians. Their professional association, the BMA, say "until we have got case numbers much lower, we should not consider reopening schools" and that Government plans are "too fast, too confusing and too risky".

They agree with staff trade unions that schools must have testing and isolation protocols securely in place first so that any outbreak can be controlled.

Parents and unions should make the decision together about what's safe for children and staff, not the politicians who have failed us.

7. IT'S HARD FOR ME TO LOOK AFTER MY CHILD AT HOME. WHAT CAN I DO?

It's been hard to have children off school for this long.

But schools are doing what they can to support families with online learning and teaching small numbers of children in school itself.

Contact your school if you need more help or if your child is struggling with work they have set.

But, again, it's the Government that needs to act.

They haven't delivered on their promise to provide laptops and broadband to families who can't afford them.

They should be making sure every parent who has to look after children is fully supported financially and telling employers that they can't force parents back to work before schools can reopen safely.

8. I AGREE IT'S UNSAFE. WHAT DO I DO NOW TO MAKE SURE WE ALL REFUSE?

- Tell everyone you know
- our children must not go back until schools are safe
- Contact other parents at your school and get organised together. Reassure them that the government has confirmed there will be NO fines if you keep children off school.
- Join a trade union and get support if your employer is putting you under unfair pressure to return to work.
- Write to your school and tell them parents think it's unsafe to open up on 1 June.
- Most Headteachers have exactly the same concerns as parents. Your support can help them stand firm against reopening. But some will be under pressure to open anyway.

- Where academy trusts, local councils or individual schools are planning to open as the Government wants, parents should organise a mass refusal to send their children in.
- Call a public 'online' meeting to explain and organise your action. Write to the press. Write to local councillors and MPs and demand they stop schools opening unsafely.
- School staff unions are also organising to refuse to work in unsafe schools – contact your staff – or their local unions - and give them confidence that they have your support.

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