

3rd January 2020

STATEMENT FROM LEADER OF THE COUNCIL ON SCHOOLS REOPENING

Parents, teachers and Headteachers are all rightly concerned about the Government's insistence that schools reopen tomorrow when the virus's spread is at an all-time high.

The Government has not shown clear leadership and refuses to engage with Headteachers' and trade unions' legitimate concerns. It's becoming apparent that there will not be enough teachers in all schools to reopen safely.

In Southampton, we have been working constructively with our Headteachers, to ensure that schools are as safe as possible. Southampton City Council has advised schools that they should prioritise opening for vulnerable children or for families who are critical keyworkers, if they do not have enough staff to reopen safely to all children.

Each school is deciding what it plans to do, so parents should check their child's school website to see the latest updates. At this time, there will be no fines for parents who keep their children at home if they have concerns about COVID-19.

Going forwards, we believe that teachers and support workers should be prioritised in the vaccine rollouts to enable children to return to classrooms safely.



Cllr Christopher Hammond
Leader of the Council