



Birmingham City Council

Councillor Jayne Francis
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2 July 2021

Rt Hon Gavin Williamson MP
Secretary of State for Education
House of Commons
London
SW1A 0AA

by email: sec-of-state.ps@education.gov.uk

Dear Secretary of State

In recent days you have indicated that the government plans to change its guidance for schools ahead of the new academic year in September. I am writing to urge you to publish this as soon as possible.

Over the past year schools have repeatedly had to deal with last-minute changes to guidance from your Department, causing significant stress to school leaders and inconvenience to families.

Throughout the pandemic schools have been exemplary in their support for children, young people and their families. As we come to the end of a long school year, schools in Birmingham and elsewhere in the country are currently dealing with growing numbers of isolating pupils. Schools are following your Department's guidance and working closely with the council and Public Health to minimise the disruption to pupils' education while keeping schools and communities safe. Changes to the guidance that would mean that more pupils could remain safely in schools would be welcomed by schools, local authorities and families.

It is important that the pending advice is clear about out of school provision for the summer holiday period and also for higher education settings which may well not break for the summer holiday. However, school leaders should not be spending their well-deserved holidays waiting for guidance to land from your Department. School staff have been at the frontline of this country's response to the pandemic – they deserve a break over the summer.

I look forward to your response and clarity on the new guidance for schools.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Jayne Francis'.

Councillor Jayne Francis
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