



**COUNCILLOR IAN WARD
LEADER OF THE COUNCIL**

THE COUNCIL HOUSE
VICTORIA SQUARE
BIRMINGHAM
B1 1BB

Tel: 0121 464 4000

Email: Ian.Ward@birmingham.gov.uk

Our Ref: IW/1134tr

19 May 2020

The Safe Reopening of Schools

Earlier this month the government set out plans for schools in England to start reopening to more pupils from the start of June. Birmingham City Council is committed to working with schools, parents and unions to ensure that any such move is done in a safe way that gives confidence and reassurance.

We are clear though that we only support Birmingham schools opening to more pupils when it is safe to do so.

It is important to recognise that schools staff have shown exceptional commitment and tireless dedication in recent months. Most Birmingham schools have remained open for vulnerable children and those of keyworkers throughout the coronavirus outbreak, including during school holidays and on bank holidays. Schools have also taken innovative approaches to support their pupils with learning at home and have made sure the most vulnerable families have been able to access food parcels, vouchers and other support.

We all know how valuable regular attendance at school is, particularly for the most vulnerable children, and we are committed to having due regard to the guidance that has been issued by the government.

However, we recognise that for some schools, opening to more pupils safely may not be possible on 1 June, while parents and guardians must also feel reassured.

The Current Situation

- The Department for Education has published support for parents and carers around the reopening of schools, providing information on key areas of concern.
- Birmingham schools are undertaking risk assessments to ensure that the relevant safety measures are in place to welcome more children back to school.

- We are supporting school leaders with this very important and complex process and are aware that some schools, particularly larger schools, may need additional time to put safety measures in place.
- Some schools are concerned about the implications on staff and pupils from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic communities who have been disproportionately affected by the coronavirus and many schools will be assessing the risk to pupils and staff with underlying medical conditions.

We trust that headteachers will make the right decisions for their school communities. No school leader wants their school to be closed for longer than is absolutely necessary but all will put the safety of their pupils and staff first when deciding when their school can start to admit more pupils.

[The Department for Education has published support for parents and carers](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/closure-of-educational-settings-information-for-parents-and-carers/reopening-schools-and-other-educational-settings-from-1-june) around the reopening of schools, providing information on key areas of concern.
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/closure-of-educational-settings-information-for-parents-and-carers/reopening-schools-and-other-educational-settings-from-1-june>

Families should check with their child's school for their planned reopening dates.

To reiterate, we will ensure that any reopening of schools in Birmingham is safe and protects school staff as well as children and young people.

Yours sincerely



Councillor Ian Ward
Leader of Birmingham City Council



Councillor Jayne Francis
Cabinet Member for Education, Skills & Culture



Councillor Kate Booth
Cabinet Member for Children's Wellbeing

