

Lack of certainty over school return 'completely unacceptable'

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The refusal of the SNP government to give a guarantee that schools will reopen in full on August 11 has been criticised by the Scottish Conservatives.

Earlier today, education secretary John Swinney said infection rates were down, further progress had been made on coronavirus, and that children were largely unaffected by the disease.

But he still wants another week before formally giving the green light for a full return.

That means parents would have less than a fortnight to organise their own working and personal lives to accommodate the SNP decision.

Shadow education secretary Jamie Greene said it was time for Mr Swinney to show leadership on the issue and provide a "cast iron" guarantee for parents immediately.

He also questioned remarks by the education secretary suggesting some local authorities may revert to a blended learning plan, meaning some children could be in the classroom just once or twice a week.

Scottish Conservative shadow education secretary Jamie Greene said:

"It's completely unacceptable that, just a few weeks from the supposed reopening, parents still have no certainty over plans.

"Parents are furious and bewildered as to why pubs, restaurants and shops are all open, yet there's still no final decision on schools.

"John Swinney could easily have provided that much-needed certainty by taking a stand and making a decision on schools already.

"Instead he's keeping parents, pupils and teachers on tenterhooks by refusing to give the green light until July 30, leaving no time at all to deal with whatever decision is made.

"We also need a cast-iron guarantee from this SNP government that there will

be no postcode lottery when it comes to the re-opening of schools in Scotland. "It is beyond reprehension that children in one part of the country could miss out while others resume their school terms in full."