

Schools should not reopen until coronavirus tests have been clearly met, says Green Party



29 May 2020

The Green Party has urged local authorities not to fall in line with the Government's timetable for reopening schools until the conditions for easing lockdown have been clearly met.

Green Party education spokesperson Vix Lowthion, who is also a teacher on the Isle of Wight, has said the health and wellbeing of staff and pupils is being put at risk by reopening schools before it is safe to do so.

Lowthion said:

"Reopening schools on Monday will have an enormous impact on the health and wellbeing of thousands of families across the country, and so it is vital that any decision to do so is based on clear scientific guidance.

"Unfortunately, while the Prime Minister claims that the five tests for easing lockdown have been met, the Government's Chief Scientific Adviser has said that the 'R rate' is still near 1. This simply does not make sense and it is not right that we are putting the lives of children and staff at risk based on such conflicting advice.

"The Independent SAGE group has also set out clearly why it is too soon to be opening schools. [1]

"The government's own five tests have a glaring omission of ensuring there is an adequate test, trace and isolate operation as recommended by the World Health Organisation [2]. We are simply nowhere near that yet and until that is in place it is not safe to reopen schools.

"We know there are real issues with inequality and some young people falling behind, but this is about weighing up the risks and putting people's health

first, while doing everything we can to ensure those pupils who need more support can receive it in other ways.

“We are working with local Green parties and councillors across the country to put pressure on their local authorities not to fall in line with the Government’s timetable on schools reopening. Local decision making is vitally important, particularly if authorities need to be able to respond to local lockdowns in the future.”

ENDS

Notes

1

<https://schoolsworld.co.uk/independent-sage-6-key-findings-on-why-schools-shouldnt-reopen-on-june-1/>

2

<https://www.who.int/dg/speeches/detail/who-director-general-s-opening-remarks-at-the-media-briefing-on-covid-19-13-april-2020>

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