

## Leader and Cabinet Office

Cllr Zena Brabazon  
Deputy Leader of the Council



16 March 2020

Mr Gavin Williamson MP  
Secretary of State  
Department for Education  
20 Great Smith St  
Westminster  
London  
SW1P 3BT

Dear Mr Williamson,

### **Re: Corona Virus - Support for Schools**

I am writing to you in my capacity as Cabinet Member for Children and Families, Haringey Council with regard to the corona virus outbreak and its impact on schools. My fellow Children's Leads from local authorities across London have signed this letter.

We are very grateful for the guidance issued by Public Health England which is being provided by our local public health team to all schools, and which we are following.

In light of yesterday's advice that schools will remain open, you will appreciate though, that providing the soap, sanitising gel, tissues, hand towels etc. on a daily basis for hundreds of children, staff and school visitors is an additional call on their budgets. In addition to this, any further cleaning needed will also be an added cost. School budgets are already overstretched but they must, of course, do what is required to ensure health and safety in this time of crisis.

The budget announcement on Wednesday in relation to Covid 19 response, was very welcome. We would hope schools are considered in the treasury emergency response fund for additional resources, including emergency funding to enable schools to cope with staff shortages which will be the biggest cost. We note the announcement refers to the National Health Service (NHS) and other COVID public services including assisting local authorities to manage pressures on social care and support vulnerable people, and help deal with pressures on other public services. Although schools are not mentioned we would urge you and your colleagues to ensure they are provided with the funds they need. Should schools close there will also need to be emergency arrangements for families reliant on free school meals, and indeed those families who earn just above the eligibility criteria.

This is an unprecedented situation where we must all pull together. Our schools are at the frontline and doing their utmost. Can I urge you – in this time of great worry – to allocate each school an ex gratia payment to cover their additional health, safety, staffing and family support costs.

Schools who are finding it especially hard will be diverting funds from learning resources, enrichment activities or elsewhere in their budgets which is not fair. In the same way as the NHS is at the frontline, so are our schools.

I hope you will take this suggestion forward and make an early decision to provide them with the funds needed. I have copied in my colleagues as below.

I look forward to hearing from you

Yours sincerely,



**Cllr Zena Brabazon** Cabinet Member for Children and Families at Haringey Council

**Co-Signatories**

**Cllr Elaine Norman** Cabinet Member for Children and Young People at Redbridge Council

**Cllr Penelope Frost** Chair of Education and Children's Services Committee at Richmond Council

**Cllr Grace Williams** Cabinet Member for Children, young people and families at Waltham Forest Council

**Cllr Evelyn Carpenter** Cabinet Member for Educational Attainment and School Improvement at Barking and Dagenham Council

**Cllr John Fuller** Cabinet Member for Education at Bexley Council

**Cllr Angela Mason** Cabinet Member for Best Start for Children and Families at Camden Council

**Cllr Christine Robson** Cabinet Member for Children and Young people and Education at Harrow Council

**Cllr Jackie Smith** Cabinet Member for Children's Services and Community Safety at the Royal borough of Greenwich

**Cllr Tom Bruce** Cabinet Member for Education, Youth & Children's Services at Hounslow Council

**Cllr Antoinette Bramble** Cabinet Member for Education, Young People and Children's Social Care at Hackney Council

<b>Cllr Danny Hassell</b>	Cabinet Member for Children, Schools and Young People at Tower Hamlets Council
<b>Cllr Kaya Comer-Schwartz</b>	Executive Member for Children, Young People and Families at Islington Council
<b>Cllr Chris Barnham</b>	Cabinet Member for School Performance and Children's Services at Lewisham Council
<b>Cllr Rick Jewell</b>	Cabinet Member for Children's Services, Education and Protection at Enfield Council
<b>Cllr Diane White</b>	Cabinet Member for Children's Services including Education at Kingston Council
<b>Cllr Marian James</b>	Chair of People Committee at Sutton Council
c.c	David Lammy MP for Tottenham
	Catherine West MP for Hornsey and Wood Green
	Cllr Joseph Ejiofor Leader of Haringey Council
	Cllr Elaine Norman
	Cllr Penelope Frost
	Cllr Grace Williams
	Cllr Evelyn Carpenter
	Cllr John Fuller
	Cllr Angela Mason
	Cllr Christine Robson
	Cllr Jackie Smith
	Cllr Tom Bruce
	Cllr Anntoinette Bramble
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