

The Rt Hon Gavin Williamson MP
Secretary of State for Education
Department for Education
Sanctuary Buildings
20 Great Smith St,
Westminster,
London SW1P 3BT

Philip Glanville, Mayor of Hackney
Cllr Anntoinette Bramble, Deputy
Mayor and Cabinet Member for
Education, Young People and
Children's Social Care
London Borough of Hackney
Town Hall
Mare Street
London E8 1EA

philip.glanville@hackney.gov.uk

30 December 2020

Dear Secretary of State

For those of us in Tier 4 areas of the country, where Covid cases are very high and still rising with alarming speed, there is a huge amount of concern amongst parents, children and teachers, about the safety of schools reopening at the beginning of January. These are points we also made in a letter to the Prime Minister just before Christmas. We welcomed your announcement in the Commons that school reopening, including primary schools, would be delayed in some of the most severely affected areas, but were very surprised to see that Hackney was not included on the list of areas published later in the day.

The case rate per 100,000 in Hackney is now 818.9. We are in the top 10 boroughs in London for cases, and 30th in the country. Your statement in the Commons today said that primary schools would be closed for an additional fortnight in some of the 'worst hit' Tier 4 areas, and yet we see boroughs such as Hackney, which sadly have some of the highest rates in the capital with schools still being told to reopen on January 4th, and others such as Westminster with lower case rates, keeping their schools closed.

On face value, there appears to be little logic to this, and our residents and teaching staff are already starting to express their concerns via social media and by contacting us directly. It is very difficult for us to reassure those parents, carers, children and staff, when you have not explained the methodology used to make the decisions behind the list that you published this afternoon.



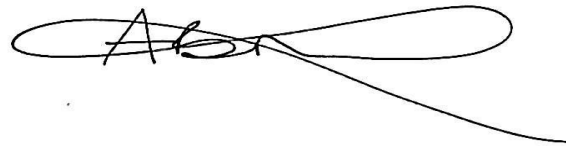
We would urge you to clearly explain that methodology at the earliest opportunity tomorrow. For us, for our schools, and for our residents to have faith in the decisions that the Government makes, it is vital that those decisions are transparent. Like you, we do not want our children to miss a day more of their precious school life than is absolutely necessary, but the situation in boroughs like Hackney is now very grave, and we are extremely concerned about the potential implications of today's decision and its impact on stopping the further spread of Coronavirus. We request that you either add Hackney to the list or explain exactly why it was right today to exclude us from Appendix A.

We look forward to hearing from you as a matter of urgency.

Yours sincerely,



Philip Glanville
Mayor of Hackney



Cllr Anntoinette Bramble
**Deputy Mayor and Cabinet Member
for Education, Young People and
Children's Social Care**

CC: Meg Hillier MP, Member of Parliament for Hackney South and Shoreditch
Rt Hon Diane Abbott MP, Member of Parliament for Hackney North and Stoke
Newington

