



Rt Hon Gavin Williamson CBE MP
Secretary of State

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Dear Colleagues,

Over recent days, the Government has taken steps that are simply unprecedented in the history of this country. The decision to close all schools, except to a minority of pupils, is an essential part of our fight against the spread of Covid-19. I have enormous appreciation for the work you do every single day and recognise that, with these extraordinary measures, I am asking you to go to exceptional lengths to rise to the challenge we face.

The weeks and months ahead will undoubtedly be testing for everyone. As we move further into uncharted waters, I wanted to express my deepest gratitude for the absolutely vital service that you are providing for our children, young people and communities. By maintaining school provision for those who need it most, leaders of our schools and colleges – and your staff - rightly take their place next to our NHS staff and other critical workers as central to our country's efforts in battling this virus.

Thank you for stepping up to this challenge with such dedication and determination. I know that you have moved quickly to implement last week's announcement. Over the last few days, I have heard extraordinary examples of school leaders and teachers responding with flexibility, pragmatism and creativity – demonstrating true civic spirit in unparalleled circumstances. Thanks to you, and particularly those of you working in our special schools, our most vulnerable children and young people will still have the support, care and constancy of school environments if they need it. You are also the reason critical workers across the country can continue to deliver the crucial frontline services that are central to our national effort to tackle Covid-19.

I know this will be a difficult time. I'm aware that the challenge of delivering these measures sits alongside considerations about your own health and that of your families. I recognise that you will also be anxious about the wellbeing of your staff and about the longer-term impact of this crisis on the children and young people you care for and educate every single day. We have published initial guidance on how best to keep your staff and students safe, and will continue to work with the sector to answer your concerns. I will do everything in my power to support you.

On behalf of the Prime Minister and the entire Government, thank you once again for all your work.

Rt Hon Gavin Williamson CBE MP
Secretary of State for Education