

The Rt Hon Gavin Williamson MP
Secretary of State for Education
Sent via email

12 January 2021

Dear Secretary of State,

Re: Covid-19 Vaccinations for teachers and school staff

I write in support of teachers receiving a prioritised Covid-19 vaccination in the next phase of the vaccination rollout.

We are indebted to the incredible work that school leaders, teachers and staff have put in to ensure that education has been able to continue for young people, in all types of education settings up and down the country. I am sure that you will agree it has been a remarkable effort.

Education is at the cornerstone of our Jewish community. Jewish schools are central to our communal life, with two thirds of Jewish children in the UK attending one. I am so grateful to those who work in the Jewish education sector, now and always.

For nearly 12 months, the entire education system has faced significant disruption due to Covid-19. This has led to negative outcomes for many young people, as well as creating a very challenging work environment for teachers and school staff.

All school teachers and staff deserve to have a safe environment in which to work. In addition, there is a strong economic argument for prioritising reopening of schools when virus transmission levels allow. For many parents with young children, it also verges on impossible to work at home whilst ensuring their children are continuing with learning.

The Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI) note in their advice published on December 30th that after phase 1 of the vaccine programme, the next phase could prioritise 'those delivering key public services'. It is our position that teachers and school staff most definitely fall into this category. We therefore call on teachers and school staff in all school settings to be prioritised in the next phase of the vaccine rollout and would be grateful for your support on this issue. We note that the Chairman of the Education Select Committee shares this view, and the Health Secretary has said in the House of Commons that there is 'a very strong case' for teachers, school and nursery staff to be given priority after those who are clinically vulnerable.

Few tasks are as important in society as educating young people, and we are so thankful that we have committed school staff undertaking this work in the most challenging of circumstances across the education sector. I will be sharing this letter publicly to outline our position.

Yours sincerely,



Marie van der Zyl
President