

COGNITA

An inspiring world of education



Rt Hon Boris Johnson MP
Prime Minister
10 Downing Street
LONDON SW1A 2AA

10th January 2021

Dear Prime Minister,

As the Government works hard to bring Covid under control, we believe it is vital that alongside the current vaccination programme for the most at risk, the other greatest urgency is to get schools open again. Vital for the future of our children and young people.

This Lockdown is regarded as the most challenging so far for millions of families as they juggle home schooling and working from home, combined with the enormous mental strain on parents and children alike in trying to stay safe from the highly transmissible strain of the virus. We share your concerns that this does not turn into a mental epidemic as well as a physical one.

The single initiative that could help families cope better with the Lockdown, preserve our children's learning and mental health and help to encourage the economy to restart would be to ensure that schools can open safely after the February half term.

Since the joint letter to the Secretary of State for Education from Cognita and the Independent Schools Council on 7 January, leaders from across the state and independent education sector have been working together to create an implementation plan that would enable the Government to vaccinate all teachers and childcare workers before mid-February. We believe that this would meet the Government's objectives and be widely popular in the country – warmly welcomed by people of all ages and political persuasions, as reflected in the petition that will be debated in Parliament Monday evening. We also think this initiative would be welcomed by the teaching unions and the teaching establishment.

Our plan is to establish local "hub" schools dedicated to administering the vaccine to teachers, childcare workers and school support staff, starting with workers in nurseries and special schools so that these establishments can remain open over the coming weeks. We have many schools that would be ideal "hubs" for managing the vaccination process. Such schools have refrigeration, facilities and space to enable the safe flow of people and safe storage of vaccines. Moreover, we have a large force of medically trained members of staff with the ability to administer the plan in line with Government compliance – a highly effective parallel implementation force that may have been overlooked, but is highly capable, expert and available for mobilisation at very short notice.

We are confident that our plan would achieve national reach within a very short timescale. In addition, it would draw upon the inherent goodwill that exists within the parent communities in our schools, with parent volunteering efforts unleashing a wave of popular enthusiasm for the delivery of this programme.

We are committed to helping the country beat Covid and return to as close to a normal society as possible in the shortest space of time. This would not incur cost to Government – our only requirement would be access to the vaccine in sufficient quantities.

We recognise that there are details that would need to be worked through, but we would welcome the opportunity to start a discussion with you on how we can turn this initiative into an actionable plan and play our part in re-opening the country's schools safely – for the benefit of our children and wider communities.

Yours sincerely,



Chris Jansen
Group CEO
Cognita



Julian Drinkall
Group CEO
Academies Enterprise Trust



Sally-Anne Huang
Chair
The Headmasters' and Headmistresses' Conference



Nick Hudson
CEO
Ormiston Academies Trust

CC: Rt Hon Matt Hancock MP
Rt Hon Gavin Williamson CBE
Rt Hon Nadhim Zahawi MP