



Fair Education Alliance
6 Mitre Passage
London SE10 OER
info@faireducation.org.uk
faireducation.org.uk

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

Dear Mr Williamson,

We welcome the recent commitments from your Department to support disadvantaged young people during this unprecedented time and are grateful for the efforts of your officials to consider the impact this crisis is having on them.

Whilst the priority right now must be safety, we must acknowledge the extent to which this crisis has entrenched existing gaps in education, whilst introducing new inequalities. Research recently undertaken by the Sutton Trust states that parents from wealthier families are more likely to spend money on their children's learning since the lockdown.¹ Students in private schools are twice as likely to use online lessons every day than students in state schools. Parents with degrees and postgraduate qualifications say they feel more confident directing their children's learning during this time than those without. As challenging as quality home education is for all parents, it is undoubtedly even harder for some parents, particularly those working hard on the frontline to keep our country going.

We write to you as an alliance of organisations who are increasingly concerned that this crisis will leave a generation of young people behind. Every single day that children and young people in poorer families spend outside of school or college, they are at risk of falling behind their peers. Research by the Institute for Fiscal Studies shows that during the lockdown to date, students in the best-off families will have done more than 7 full days' worth of extra learning than those in the poorest families.² For those children and young people who do not go back until September, this gap will double.

For many, the gap in education means they will find it harder to secure key qualifications. This will have far-reaching consequences for their life chances, including the increased risk of being not in education, employment or training at 18. Regardless of whether they are invited to return to school or college before the autumn, each of these students will have lost between 200 and 400 hours of education by then. Not only could this have long-lasting consequences for these students individually, but it also presents a heavy cost to our country as a whole, which could lose out on the talents of so many young people, if this lost learning is never addressed.

There is a proven solution to this. We know that one-to-one or small-group tuition has been shown to help children make great educational gains in the shortest amount of time. The Education Endowment Foundation has found that 6 to 12 weeks of catch-up tuition can add up to six months' additional progress – and effects are particularly positive for students from poorer families.³ That's why we are

¹ The Sutton Trust (2020), ['COVID-19 IMPACTS: SCHOOL SHUTDOWN'](#)

² Institute for Fiscal Studies (2020), ['Learning during the lockdown: real-time data on children's experiences during home learning'](#)

³ The Education Endowment Foundation (2018), ['One to one tuition'](#) and ['Small group tuition'](#)



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calling on you to introduce a National Tutoring Service to make up these lost hours for students most at risk of falling behind. We are calling for every school and college in the country to receive additional funding to help them secure extra hours of tuition for students from disadvantaged backgrounds. A National Tutoring Service would enable schools and colleges to make up for lost learning, rapidly address gaps in education, and help get the most at-risk students back on track. Additional funding would also help education settings to secure much needed pastoral support for vulnerable students, who may be struggling with the social and emotional impact of lockdown on their lives.

We all believe in a society where our children and young people get the opportunity to fulfil their potential. Now, more than ever, those from poorer backgrounds have the odds stacked against them. We want to change this. Your Department has the power to make this possible.

Yours sincerely,

Dr Vanessa Ogden, Chair, Fair Education Alliance

Dame Julia Cleverdon, Vice-Chair, Fair Education Alliance

Sam Butters and Gina Cicerone, co-CEOs, Fair Education Alliance

Robert Halfon MP, Chair of the Education Select Committee

Lee Elliott Major, Professor of Social Mobility, University of Exeter

Sir Richard Lambert, Former Chair of the Fair Education Alliance

Russell Hobby, CEO, Teach First

Brett Wigdortz OBE, CEO, tiney.co

Henri Murison, Director, Northern Powerhouse Partnership

Nick Wright, Managing Director, UBS

Sarah Payne, Executive Director, UBS

Mark Mansell, Partner, Co-Head of Corporate Responsibility, Allen & Overy

Rachel Hopcroft CBE, Partner, Head of Corporate Affairs, KPMG

Sam Freedman, CEO, Education Partnerships Group

Sarah Atkinson, Chief Executive, The Social Mobility Foundation

Sonia Blandford, CEO, Achievement for All

Susannah Hardyman, CEO, Action Tutoring

Jude Williams, CEO, Literacy Pirates

Sarah Waite, CEO, Get Further

Adam Alagiah-Glomseth, CEO, TalentEd

Paul Singh, CEO, Equal Education



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Nick Bent and Abigail Shapiro, Co-Founders, The Tutor Trust

Nathan Sansom, CEO, The Access Project

Dominic Baker, CEO, Future Frontiers

Kitty Higgins, CEO, Bookmark Reading Charity

David Walker, CEO, Team Up

Freya Rowland, Head of Programmes, Team Up

Robin Chu, CEO, CoachBright

Jennifer Love, Head of West Midlands, CoachBright

Joel Davis, CEO, Tutors United

Alina Monaghan-Gibson, Head of Programmes, Tutors United

Greer Mulcahey Banks, Senior Programme Officer, Tutors United

Olivia Meade, Programme Officer, Tutors United

Alex Talbott, Programme Manager, The Orwell Youth Prize

Georgia Brown, Head of Programmes, Franklin Scholars

Anthony Harmer, Chief Executive, ELATT

Oran Blackwood, ELATT

Amelia Foster, CEO, SAPERE

Sarah Faber, Head of Ventures, The Young Foundation

Justin Smith, Chief Executive Officer, Future First

Julie Randles, CEO, Power2

Jasper Kain, Co-Founder, Football Beyond Borders

Jack Reynolds, Co-Founder and Director, Football Beyond Borders

Jaine Stannard, Chief Executive, School Home Support (SHS)

Clare Summers, Development Lead, Teach First

Shar Stead, Development Lead, Training Programme, Teach First

Jessica Schouela, Prospect Research & Insight Officer - Fundraising, Teach First

Emily Evans, Chief Executive, The Economist Educational Foundation

Olivia Platman, Senior School relationships Manager, The Economist Educational Foundation

Rachael Saunders, Education Director, Business in the Community



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Emma Bell, Executive Director - International, Innovations for Learning

Helen O'Donnell, CEO, Children's University

Emma Sullivan, Co-Founder & CEO, Prospela

Dr Sam Holmes, CEO, Causeway Education

Naomi Kellmam, Senior Manager - Schools and Universities, Rare

Dr Dwain A. Neil OBE, FRSA, Chairman, Reach Society

Bertina Ho, Program Manager, Universify Education

Alex Whitton, Charity Manager, Universify Education

Dr Rachel Carr, OBE, Chief Executive and Co-Founder, IntoUniversity

Sarah Sewell, CEO, Yes Futures

Juliana Mohamad Noor, Vice President Further Education, NUS

Cornelia Lucey, Co-founder, LIVEWISE

Joel Balkwill, CEO, Spiral Skills

Mike Ellicock, CEO, National Numeracy

Stella Thebridge, Chair, The Association of Senior Children's and Education Librarians (ASCEL)

Margaret McCabe, CEO, Debate Mate

Natalie Moore, Chief Operating Officer, Apps for Good

Jason Elsom, Chief Executive Officer, Speakers for Schools

Jack Carter, Education Network Developer, Transforming Lives for Good

Chris Allbut, Director of Programmes, The Greenhouse Centre

Tokunbo Ajasa-Oluwa, CEO, Career Ready

Chris White, Co-Founder, Zing

Sarah Darton, Chief Executive, Family Links the Centre for Emotional Health

Murray Morrison, Founder and CEO, Tassomai

John Craven, CEO, upReach

Brian Mair, Co-founder/ Director of Operations, Nudge Education

Fay Lant, Senior Programme Manager, National Literacy Trust

Stephen Batchelor, KaMCOP Project Manager, Kent and Medway Progression Federation

Ali Henderson, Chief Executive, Royal National Children's SpringBoard Foundation



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Stephanie Lee, Head of Widening Participation & Outreach, The University of Manchester

David Duke MBE, CEO, Street Soccer Scotland

Ed Hicks, Managing Director, PAM Insights

Kendra Walsh, Director, Expert Impact

Jason Ashley, Headteacher, Redbridge Community School

Emil Bender Lassen, Co-founder & CEO, Project Access International

Evie Keough, CEO & Founder, Boromi

Paulina Olsson, Co-Founder & CEO, Peppy Pals

Katie Booth, Director of Programmes, AccessED

Layton Tamberlin, Partner, Sullivan Street

Ginny Lunn, Managing Director, Coram Beanstalk

Louisa Mitchell, Chief Executive Officer, West London Zone