

## **St Helens Borough Council statement regarding schools**

An open letter to all pupils, parents and carers, teachers, school staff, and Governors in St Helens borough:

“Every school in our borough has worked tirelessly to keep children and young people safe in education throughout the period of the Covid pandemic. Schools remained open during the first national lockdown for vulnerable children and those of keyworkers, and since September they have worked tirelessly to open fully, as safely as possible, for the benefit of all pupils, staff and the wider community.

This has not been easy and has required a huge commitment from all those involved, and they must be commended for their commitment and loyalty to maintaining ongoing learning for children.

Headteachers, school staff and the council have worked together to ensure our schools continue to deliver high quality learning experiences in these unprecedented times. Where a positive case has been identified in a pupil or member of school staff, swift action has been taken to identify close contacts and ask them to self-isolate.

All of the national and local evidence, including the strong and clear advice of our Director of Public Health, tells us that it is better for children to remain in schools and there is a much greater risk to their long term welfare if they are unable to do so.

Our children and young people have already lost so much learning and social contact this year, and for their sake it is vitally important that wherever possible we continue to keep our schools open. We support calls for additional Covid funding for schools in areas with high rates of infection to support them with the additional costs of PPE, cleaning and supply staff, and to provide effective remote and catch-up learning.

The Council will continue to support Headteachers, Governors and our colleagues in the trade unions to help make school environments as safe as possible, ensuring that our children can continue to access quality education.”

**Councillor Kate Groucutt**  
**Cabinet Member for Education, Skills and Business**

**Councillor Nova Charlton**  
**Cabinet Member for Children and Young People**

**Jim Leivers**  
**Director of Young People and Children’s Services**

**3<sup>rd</sup> November 2020**