**Model covering letter for the joint unions updated risk assessment**

Dear

Faced with the deteriorating COVID situation my union UNISON wants to support schools in remaining safely open, but we do not have confidence that the measures set out in the government guidance are sufficient to achieve this purpose.

Developments since schools fully re-opened in September include:

* Hugely increased case rates nationally with additional restrictions;
* Evidence that case rates are much higher among young people of mandatory school age than was previously realised;
* Continuing failures with the government’s test and trace system;
* Official acceptance by government and Public Health England of the role of airborne transmission, particularly in poorly ventilated places where groups of people spend long periods of time together (this crucial new information is particularly important for schools);
* Significant workload problems in many schools; and
* Publication of Office for National Statistics (ONS) data showing that [support staff are at the highest risk](https://schoolsweek.co.uk/ons-data-on-covid-infection-in-schools-what-you-need-to-know/) from COVID in schools.

Attached are a set of enhanced measureswhich UNISON is calling upon schools to implement and maintain, to keep schools safely open for both staff and pupils. We are seeking your commitment to implement these measures in partnership with staff.

It is important that we continue to work together as always in these difficult times

Yours sincerely