

Unions set out five tests government and colleges must meet before staff and students can return



Staff and student safety must be guaranteed before colleges can reopen, said trade unions today as they set out five tests* that must be met by government and colleges.



Unions representing staff working in further education colleges[^] called for stringent hygiene measures, protection for vulnerable people and isolation for all suspected cases to avoid colleges becoming Covid-19 hotspots.

The unions said that social distancing plans had to extend beyond the classroom to cover things like travelling to and from college and socialising. To help deal with those challenges, they said that staff and students who can work from home should continue to do so.

The unions were responding to [government guidance released last night setting out how some students may return to face-to-face teaching in colleges](#) from 1 June. The guidance stated that:

“We will ask secondary schools, sixth form and further education colleges to offer some face-to-face support to supplement the remote education of year 10 and year 12 students who are due to take key exams next year, alongside the full time provision they are offering to priority groups.”

Stuart Fegan, GMB National Officer, said:

‘The public expects the government to put in place all reasonable steps to ensure the safety of students and workers in further education institutions.

“What the joint trade unions are calling for in these five key tests is reasonable, proportionate and wholly necessary.’

Press office

079859 1525698

press.office@gmb.org.uk

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info@gmb.org.uk

