

School support staff must get Covid-19 vaccine alongside teachers



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GMB has called on Ministers to prioritise school support staff for vaccine access on the same basis as teachers.



The current official advice to Government says that teachers could be identified for early roll-out of the vaccine, with no reference to school support staff.

Teaching assistants, caretakers, lunch-time supervisors and other school support staff make up the majority of workers in schools, GMB said in a letter to Education Secretary [Gavin Williamson](#) and [Matt Hancock](#), Health Secretary.



School support staff regularly perform tasks that inherently involve risk of exposure, such as administering food, medication, and restraints.

As well as working closely with children they are more likely to live in the communities that they serve.

In the letter, GMB drew attention to the latest ONS occupational exposure data in schools, which indicate that infection rates were higher among support staff than primary or secondary school teachers between early September and mid-October.

It is essential the immunization programme gives equal weight to all those who work in schools if the community transmission associated with schools is to be ended, the letter says.



Karen Leonard, GMB National Officer, said:

“This is about common sense, and common decency.

“First, it would be self-defeating to not make the vaccine available to the majority of those who work in schools – it just won’t work.



“Second, school staff have made heroic sacrifices during the pandemic and some of them have lost their lives due to occupational exposure, and they are more likely to be on low incomes.

“They’ve rightly been recognised as key workers who helped keep schools going.

“Surely they deserve the same protections as their teacher colleagues.

“We urge Ministers to urgently review the evidence and give equal weighting to all those who work in schools as part of any wider occupational vaccination programme.”

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