**WRITING TO YOUR MP**

It seems like central government is making decisions daily about schools and early years during the pandemic. Something which all of us can do is to write to our MP outlining how the decisions made in Parliament have affected us, including pupils and parents.

If no-one raises concerns with their MPs, how will they know what’s really going on in your school and how you feel? They are elected as your representatives so they need to know what challenges their constituents are facing.

**TIPS**

**Make it personal! To make the most impact on your MP, take time to pen your own unique letter. Researching and writing a message of your own shows you’re passionate about the issue. A handwritten letter instead of an email helps you stand out even more. A pre-written template may take you seconds to send, but your own letter is always stronger**.

The best postal address for your MP is their Westminster address (House of Commons, London, SW1A 0AA). If your MP is not in Westminster, the post is automatically forwarded on to them.

You can find your local MP using the website [They Work For You](https://www.theyworkforyou.com/mps/). You can use the site to send an email.

Be clear and to the point – focus on one issue and don’t try to cover too many things.

Don’t forget to include your home address so the MP knows you’re one of their constituents and where to send their response.

**Suggestions for structuring your letter:**

* Introduction. If this is your first letter to your MP, you might want to start by introducing yourself and sharing why you care about the issue that you are raising. If you have a personal connection to the topic of your letter then this is a great way of engaging your MP and conveying your passion and commitment.
* Get your MP’s attention with a dramatic fact or short statement.
* State the problem. Present the causes of the problem you just introduced. How widespread or serious is the problem?
* Develop your solution (you could do this by giving examples)
* What you want them to do about it

Ask for a response. If you haven’t had an acknowledgement of your letter after a couple of weeks, give your MP’s office a ring to check they have received your letter.

Share your reply. When you receive a response from your MP, tell your UNISON branch.

Even if the response you received wasn’t great, don’t be down heartened. By writing to your MP, you are directly having some impact.

If you need some help, here is a template to start you off your letter – this is just suggested wording so please amend accordingly and make it into your own words.

**Early Years opening during the latest lockdown**

Date

Dear……….. (MP)

My name is ……………. and I live at…………………..(home address). I am writing to you as your constituent with concerns about the health, safety and wellbeing of my colleagues, as well as the children I look after at………………………. (workplace)

Following the government announcement that early years settings will remain open in England during the latest national lockdown, I have questions and concerns which I would like to draw to your attention.

Firstly, I would like to ask you why the government chose to keep early years settings open during this latest lockdown. What was the reasoning behind this? Why aren’t we having the same rights and protections as other education staff?

Secondly, maintaining social distancing is impossible when working with young children, and many of my colleagues fear for their safety, while coronavirus infections still remain high. I am also worried about how many children take home the virus which could spread to their parents/grandparents.

Finally, I am concerned about early years funding. Why hasn’t the government increased funding during this lockdown to ensure that we are fit for the future and not forced to close due to lack of funding?

Please can you reconsider closing early years establishments as you did in the first lockdown to keep everyone safe and to stop spreading the virus even further.

I look forward to your response.

Yours sincerely,