

SCHOOL SUPPORT STAFF FAQs	January 2021
QUERY	RESPONSE
We've been told that support staff should do the face to face work while teachers work from home. Is this fair?	No. Welsh Government guidance is clear that children attending school should be receiving education not just provided childcare. No staff should be working outside grade and job description so normal rules around teaching will apply and the usual staff mix should be in place
Does the risk assessment from last term/lockdown still apply to my school?	No. UNISON has made it clear there should be new risk assessments specific to the new variant of Covid, which is now the main variant in North Wales.
I've been asked to come in and do some catching up/maintenance. Do I have to do this?	Staff should only be attending schools to provide support and learning for children of keyworkers and vulnerable children. The Welsh Government rules state that people should stay at home unless unavoidable. Maintenance is non-essential.
Support staff have been told we need to come in for a team meeting. Do we have to?	No. Meetings should be held online unless there are specific and unavoidable reasons for them being face to face.
I'm a TA2 and have been given TA3 tasks. Do I have to do them?	You are employed as a TA2 and should be working to your grade and job description. If you have had TA3 training and your school is prepared to pay you the additional grade you can make an agreement to do this, but it is voluntary.
My head teacher is allowing children whose parents work but aren't key workers to have places.	Welsh Government guidance is clear – places are for children of key workers only. The school should not be open for other children.
Some of the key workers who are sending their children in have partners/family members/members of their bubble who can provide childcare. Should they still be sending their children in?	WG guidance is clear that children of key workers should only be sent in to school if there are no other childcare options available. We are getting reports that uptake for key worker places is much higher this time and are working to try and ensure this is enforced.

<p>Which children are classed as 'vulnerable'?</p>	<p>Welsh Government guidance uses a wide definition of vulnerable and disadvantaged learners. It includes, but is not limited to, <i>'learners with special educational needs (SEN); learners from minority ethnic groups who have English or Welsh as an additional language (EAL/WAL); care-experienced children, including looked after children; learners educated other than at school (EOTAS); children of refugees and asylum seekers; Gypsy, Roma and Traveller children; learners eligible for free school meals (eFSM); young carers children at risk of harm, abuse or neglect.'</i> The guidance states – <i>'Not all learners from these groups will face barriers to learning or be vulnerable to underachieving. Learners from these groups may. ... require different solutions and support targeted towards meeting each of their individual needs'</i></p>
<p>What do I do if my head teacher won't update the guidance/is allowing children who shouldn't have places to attend school/is insisting support staff attend school but not teachers/I don't feel safe</p>	<p>Schools members were sent a model letter for their head teacher if they don't feel safe. This can be used if guidance is not being followed and you are being placed at unacceptable or avoidable risk. Consult with your union branch if you intend to send the letter in so we can arrange a representative to assist you and other UNISON members in your school.</p>
<p>I have been told by my head teacher I can mix bubbles. Can they do this?</p>	<p>There should be adequate staffing in place to reduce the need for staff to move between bubbles. In exceptional circumstances if this becomes necessary there must be a risk assessment based on the new variant to minimise risk.</p>
<p>I've been told to come into school to do 1:1s but I can do them from home online.</p>	<p>Any work that can be completed from home should be done do regardless of whether you are teaching or support staff. The aim is to minimise attendance at school for staff and learners.</p>