



**Vicky Ford MP**

Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Children and Families

Sanctuary Buildings 20 Great Smith Street Westminster London SW1P 3BT  
tel: 0370 000 2288 [www.education.gov.uk/help/contactus](http://www.education.gov.uk/help/contactus)

Catherine McKinnell MP  
Chair of Petitions Committee  
House of Commons

14<sup>th</sup> April 2021

Dear Catherine McKinnell MP

**Parent and child group singing**

Thank you for your correspondence about singing in parent and child groups.

May I begin by wishing you well in these challenging times.

I do acknowledge how difficult the COVID-19 pandemic is for everyone and understand that it has been a worrying time for parents who rely on organised activities for their young children to play and meet other children. I recognise that parent and child groups are important. They provide enriching activities for children and promote their wellbeing.

In recognition of the support needed by parents with young children, from 29 March 2021 and 12 April 2021 respectively all parent and child groups, for the benefit of children aged under 5 years, can meet outdoors and can resume indoors (except for in private homes and gardens).

I am delighted to hear that parents are telling you they are extremely pleased that parent and child groups are now able to meet in person. These are really important steps forward to parent and child groups reopening and to help provide social interaction and development opportunities for young children.

You refer in your correspondence to a recent update to the DfE guidance [Actions for early years and childcare providers during the coronavirus \(COVID-19\) outbreak](#)

I note the concerns parents have raised with you about the guidance that restrict parents singing in parent and child groups. I have listened carefully to these concerns and I can reassure you that my department has been working closely with Cabinet Office and Public Health England to review the guidance in line with step 2 of [the roadmap out of lockdown](#).

Group singing in parent and child groups can take place, where it is necessary for the group to meet.

From 12 April 2021, where the singing is to take place outdoors and organised as 1 group - no more than 6 adults, including the group leader, should sing at any one time along with the children aged under 5.

If the group is broken up into smaller groups outdoors of no more than 6 adults - the adults can sing together in each group along with the children aged under 5 and the same groups should be maintained for the duration of the session

Where singing is to take place indoors, no more than 6 adults in the room, including the group leader, should sing and singing should be limited to the same 6 adults for the duration of the group session. Good ventilation with fresh air should be maintained throughout the session.

Singing is important to children's mental and emotional wellbeing. It builds their confidence and supports their communication and language development. Any easing of restrictions, however, must also take account of the evidence we have that singing increases the risk of coronavirus (COVID) transmission through small droplets and aerosols (a summary of evidence can be found in [suggested principles of safer singing](#)). Singing is considered safer when steps are taken to reduce the risk of transmission, including limiting the number of people participating and increasing ventilation.

We need to minimise any potential risk, particularly related to the adults present. The cumulative effect of aerosol transmission means the more people involved, the higher the risk of transmission.

In addition to these measures, it is important for groups to also follow the [principles of safer singing](#) and [performing arts - working safely during coronavirus \(COVID-19\)](#) and COVID-secure guidance, including the need for social distancing, and good ventilation with fresh air. This is consistent with the guidance provided to places of worship.

We will continue to work with our colleagues in Public Health to review the position in line with the next steps set out in [the roadmap out of lockdown](#).

Thank you for writing to me about this important matter.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Vicky Ford". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

**Vicky Ford MP**  
**Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Children and Families**

