



**Department
for Education**

**Department for Education
Sanctuary Buildings
Great Smith Street
London SW1P 3BT**

1 December 2025

Paul Candler

**Director – Sentencing, Youth Justice & Offender Policy
Ministry of Justice**

Dear Paul

I recently gave evidence to phase one of the Southport Inquiry and one of the issues that came up in the case of the perpetrator was that bail conditions had restricted his attendance at school. It is our strong view that attendance at school is important for children and young people. Previous engagement on this issue has been reflected in the *Youth Remands Prosecution Guidance*, produced by the CPS which makes clear that the best interests of the child must be a primary consideration in all actions concerning children, in line with Article 3 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (“UNCRC”).

I wanted to write to you to make sure that we had properly communicated the importance of this issue.

Absence is a key barrier to opportunity that this Government is seeking to break. The best place for children to achieve and thrive is in school. This is true of all pupils, and is one of the reasons why the law protects a pupil’s right to a full-time education.

It is even more relevant for pupils who are vulnerable. For these children and young people, school provides a safe and stable environment where they can build trusted relationships, develop important life skills, and get the support they need, with engagement in education protective in and of itself. Through being supported to stay in school, children and young people can be guided away from harm.

We fully respect the court’s authority and responsibility in setting bail conditions and understand they are sometimes necessary to manage risk and ensure compliance. However, wherever possible taking account of these considerations, we ask that bail conditions are framed so they do not prevent or unduly restrict a child from attending school.

Either I or other officials in my team would be very happy to discuss this further to explore any issues, and pursue any opportunities to consolidate good practice that already exists in this area. Do let me know if that would be helpful.

Kind regards,

Signature

**Kate Dixon
Director of Strategy, Analysis and Safer Streets
Department for Education**