



Teachers' Union of Ireland

15 April 2021

An Taoiseach, Micheál Martin, TD,
Department of the Taoiseach,
Government Buildings,
Merrion Street Upper,
Dublin 2,
D02 R583
micheal.martin@oireachtas.ie

Dear Taoiseach,

We attended a meeting with Department of Education officials, public health advisors and other education stakeholders this morning. While we found this meeting to be very helpful regarding a number of matters, we were unable to adequately address the issues we have regarding the Revised Vaccine Allocation Groups announced by government on March 30.

As the trade unions representing teachers in primary, special and post-primary schools, we are very anxious to engage with relevant officials from Roinn An Taoisigh and other relevant departments to get clarity on timeframes for the vaccination of our members. We would also wish to discuss several anomalies in the roll out of the Vaccination Programme that have arisen, and which have already impacted on educational settings.

In particular we are very concerned that while a large number of staff members in special schools have received at least one dose of vaccine, many more staff members within the total of approximately 4000 staff have not been offered vaccines. We understand that in at least 16 special schools every staff member has been offered a vaccine and in at least 33 other special schools some staff have received vaccines. The fact that other allied workers have received vaccinations who work in the same settings is also an issue. We have the situation now where one occupation dealing with students are deemed eligible for vaccination whereas Teachers and SNAs are not. This uneven approach is creating a lot of tension between those who have been offered vaccines and those who have not and it has caused much discontent within special schools.

We are keen to work with you to progress the roll out of vaccines so that all teachers can be given assurance that they will be fully vaccinated at the earliest possible opportunity and that pregnant teachers, those in higher risk categories and those who work in special schools, special classes and home school community liaison teachers get priority within the education workforce. We are pleased to read today that government believes that rollout targets of vaccines being administered to 80% of the population by June 30 are still on track and would welcome clarity as to when every teacher is likely to be fully vaccinated, bearing in mind that some of our youngest members are now included in the proposed final group 9. (v).

We wrote to the Department of Education seeking an urgent meeting about this matter one week ago. We now request that a meeting specifically with education unions be convened as soon as possible next week with a view to addressing our concerns.

Yours sincerely,



Kieran Christie
General Secretary
ASTI



Michael Gillespie
General Secretary
TUI



John Boyle,
General Secretary
INTO

CC: Minister Norma Foley, TD, minister@education.gov.ie
and
Minister Stephen Donnelly, T.D stephen.donnelly@oireachtas.ie