



Prime Minister Boris Johnson  
10 Downing Street  
London

6 January 2021

Dear Prime Minister

Please prioritise children's wellbeing during this third lockdown in England. Children's mental and physical health has suffered enormously already and the potential impact of a further extended period without school or normal social interaction is unthinkable.

For children, playing outside (e.g. riding a bike, scooting, kicking a ball around) is an important way to be active, let off steam and interact with the world around them. It is essential for their mental and emotional wellbeing – and for their physical health. This is especially crucial now that children do not have access to either school playtime or after-school sports.

The Welsh government has recognised the significant benefits of outdoor play for children in [their Covid guidance](#), clearly stating that children are allowed to play outside near home. In Scotland, [the restrictions](#) around meeting outdoors do not apply to children under 12.

In England however, whilst we welcome the fact that playgrounds remain open, there is currently no clarity for parents on whether informal outdoor play in public space is permitted under lockdown. For children, play is an important form of exercise but this needs to be made explicit by the government so parents can feel confident about letting their children play out without being fined or criminalised.

[Along with the Children's Commissioner for England](#), we therefore call on the UK government to provide clear, unambiguous guidance that outdoor play is allowed during lockdown, for children's health and wellbeing. We further support the Children's Commissioner's call for children under 12 to be considered differently in the rules about meeting outdoors.

Signed

Alice Ferguson and Ingrid Skeels, Playing Out  
Paul Hocker, London Play  
Anita Grant, Play England  
Dr Wendy Russell, University of Gloucestershire  
Adrian Voce OBE, Playful Planet  
Professor Alison Stenning, Newcastle University  
Dr Helen Dodd, Playfirst UK / University of Reading  
Dr Jenny Wood, A Place in Childhood  
Ben Tawil and Mike Barclay, Ludicology  
Tim Gill, Independent researcher and writer on childhood  
Meynell Walter, International Play Association England  
Michael Follett, Outdoor Play and Learning  
Carley Sefton, Learning through Landscapes  
Helen Griffiths, Fields in Trust  
Mark E Hardy, Association of Play Industries

David Yearley, Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents  
Rob Whewey, Children's Play Advisory Service  
Professor David Ball, Middlesex University  
Stevie Edge-McKee, Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust  
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Further signatories to be added