

Sir Keir Starmer
Prime Minister,
10 Downing Street,
London,
SW1A 2AA

15/07/2024

Dear Prime Minister,

The first and most important duty of any Government, is to keep citizens safe and to take reasonable steps to do so. By any measure, on evidence that has been sent to you and every Labour MP on numerous occasions, as a consequence of our Safer Schools campaign, the previous Government and Prime Minister failed in that duty. Subsequently as the then Leader of the Opposition, you failed in your duty to hold them to account.

Being made aware on a number of occasions since 2018, first as an MP and then as Leader of the opposition, of alleged failings within the Department for Education (DfE), that on the evidence, had led to the harm, deaths and suicides of children, due to bullying and violence in UK schools, you failed to act to ensure any investigation of the issues. Even after being informed that a separate High Court hearing had found, that previous alleged failures to act on the part of ministers, demonstrated “tremendous incompetence” and left unanswered questions regarding a deliberate cover up of the issues by the DfE, you failed to take any steps to ensure any investigation took place. Your failure to act, occurred after being informed that up to 4 children were potentially losing their lives to suicide weekly and others likely to suffer the same fate and many more likely to be harmed, as a result of any further failure.

As Leader of the Opposition, you were made aware in 2023 by way of letter, that your failure to respond on numerous occasions to the information sent to you in relation to these issues, had in and of itself potentially resulted in more loss of life. This should have led at the very least to an apology. You should have then taken steps to ensure there was an appropriate investigation, to ensure no further failures and unnecessary deaths would occur. You should have also taken immediate steps to ensure children could be better protected by way of any possible immediate interventions that might be needed, while the process of investigation was set in motion but failed to do so, even after you were explicitly asked on the basis of previous allegations, to take steps to ensure that the issues could not be covered up.

As Leader of the Opposition, this meant you had failed to ensure that anyone would even consider the concerns of more than 150 families from across the UK, many of whom had suffered the tragedy of having lost a child, and simply agree to do what you could to help save lives.

Importantly, having received those allegations of serious criminal misconduct related to the deaths of children, you did nothing whatsoever to investigate matters further. Ultimately, since 2018 no adequate steps have been taken to investigate whatsoever. All these points leave the question of a deliberate cover up, of potentially an extremely serious crime by the then Leader of the Opposition and now current Prime Minister, unanswered.

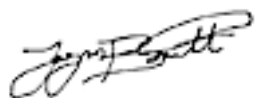
In all of this, not once have you directly expressed any message of condolence, sadness or compassion for the children and their families, or expressed any concern whatsoever in relation to the tragic cases that have been brought to your attention. In contrast, the case has now been raised with leaders of more than 100 countries across the world, a number of whom have sent messages of support for the campaign and the children.

Significantly, the issues and alleged failures to take action have been identified by Ingrid Bellander Todino, the European Commission's Head of Human rights, as potential human rights violations by the UK Government. Ms Todino herself has taken the time to offer her condolences and support, as well as to express her sadness at what she describes in her own words as "the terrible circumstances of this case".

In light of all of the above and the fact that as international awareness of this story increases, so inevitably will the harm to the UK's reputation, when it comes to the importance of child protection and children's rights issues, I am writing to ask you for an explanation for the failings outlined above or indeed your resignation as Prime Minister.

I will seek to take further steps to ensure you are held fully accountable for your failures, should an explanation or response or indeed a decision to resign, not be forthcoming within the next 7 days. This timeframe being appropriate in my view, given that you are yet to respond to the previous letter calling for your resignation, based on entirely the same reasoning but sent to you in your capacity as Leader of the Opposition on 13/06/2024, and given the urgency of the situation, due to the ongoing risks to children of serious harm, that any further unnecessary delays would involve.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jason Barnett', with a stylized, cursive script.

Jason Barnett
Safer Schools Campaign Lead