Dear Nicky Morgan,

Open Letter from Let Our Kids Be Kids – the voice of tens of thousands of parents who want an end to SAT testing NOW.

We are aware that you’ve been flooded with open letters recently but this one is a bit different. We’re writing from everybody. We represent the voice of parents across the country. Parents are everybody. They are teachers, they are junior doctors, they are steel workers, they are speech therapists, neuro scientists, academics, small business owners, stay at home mums. Parents aren’t people you can dismiss into a single box; parents are everybody that you were voted in to serve.

- Children as young as 6 are labelling themselves failures and crying about going to school. We know this because we are parents.
- The capacity for children of this age to actually learn the concepts you have asked them to learn is questionable. We know this because parents are also neuro scientists.
- Children’s mental health is at risk because of the increased pressure they face through primary school testing. We know this because parents are also mental health nurses.
- By the time these children reach secondary school they are turned off education. We know this because parents are also secondary teachers
- Children who have been taught in a system obsessed with passing tests rather than learning for learning’s sake enter the world of work unprepared. We know this because parents are also business owners.
- By the time children who have been through this exam factory end up at university they have to be re taught how to learn in a curious way. We know this because parents are also academics.

The other interesting thing about parents is that they aren’t employed or paid by you. You can’t dismiss our concerns as being about pay or holidays or pension plans... our priority is the happiness and wellbeing of our children.

You’ve said some interesting things about parents but rest assured that we are parents who would most definitely discuss the issue of education with you if you were to turn up on our doorstep. We are parents who do feel that elections can be won or lost on education matters. There are tens of thousands of us and we have reached the point when it is time for us to speak. We need you to listen.

We’re not convinced, based on your track record, that you’ll listen to just words so, to make it very clear how strongly we feel, we are also planning a day of action with a Kids’ Strike on 3rd May which will see thousands of primary school children staying off school IN SUPPORT of teachers and schools and in protest at the DfE’s testing policies. We want an end to SATs NOW. Not in 2017, not in the future. NOW.

Perhaps the government hoped that this mass parental revolt would be extinguished following the shambolic cancellation of KS1 SPaG test? This has simply added fuel to the fire. It merely demonstrates how little thought goes into your decisions and shows that you do think teacher assessment is a good enough tool to use.

You have dismissed the concerns of pupil stress and anxiety caused by the SATs by blaming our wonderful teachers for not administering tests in an appropriate manner. We say to you that this is utter nonsense. Teachers would be insane to allow our children to face these tests unprepared. The new curriculum related to these tests demands that teachers teach a dulled down, test driven curriculum to our children for months in advance. Since you and your inspectors put so much emphasis on test scores for your league tables can you blame schools for trying to get the best out of our children? We don’t blame them. We blame you and your government’s ridiculous testing regime.
A marvellous quote was posted to our campaign page: “Learning can only happen when a child is interested. If he is not interested, it is like throwing marshmallows at his head and calling it eating”. Your government has effectively spent millions of pounds of tax payers’ money chucking marshmallows at our children’s heads. You’ve had some wonderful teachers trying their hardest to chuck these marshmallows about but no matter how hard they try they are still missing... because these children are in the vast majority of cases simply not mentally ready to learn the material you have placed in front of them. It’s a bit like teaching an 8 year old to drive a sports car or a 6 month old to walk... it’s not going to happen.

You have got it wrong. We give you a score of zero for this. You have failed. Please resit your submission for devising an appropriate testing system. Or you could just leave it to the experts in the field, the trained teachers, next time.

Conspiracies abound that this is all part of the enforced academies plan. Making SATs so hard that schools inevitably fail means that your academy business leaders can come in and rescue ‘failing’ schools... leaving them completely unaccountable to parents. You will never have to listen to us again! It’s good to have a plan... just not a plan which leaves millions of children as assets and the education of our children as a commodity... that would in fact be a truly awful plan.

Please take a long, hard look at this. Do you want your legacy to be the confident cancellation of unneeded and unnecessary SATS, showing you are listening to your electorate and the teachers you claim to support... or the overseeing of a shambolic testing regime desperately unwanted by millions of people to the point that this country saw it’s first open parent revolt?

You have the power to stop these tests. NOW. Our children, our teachers and our schools deserve better than this.

With sincere hope that you are listening, on behalf of the tens of thousands of supporters of ‘Let Our Kids Be Kids’.