

8 April 2020

Dear ,

ATISN 13879

Thank you for your request which I received on 18 March 2020 about information in relation to school closures and Coronavirus. The information you requested is enclosed. Information on how and when schools will close due to the risk posed by the coronavirus

As you will be aware, the Minister for Education announced at 1:30pm on the 18 March 2020 that schools would close, but that schools would continue to provide care for as small a number of children as possible – children who are vulnerable and children whose parents are critical to the COVID-19 response and cannot be safely cared for at home. The decision not to close schools earlier was based on clear scientific advice that closing schools prior to this time would do more harm than good.

Information on the schools that have expressed their concern of staff shortages in their school

A review of mailboxes across Education show that we have not received any correspondence directly from schools expressing concerns about staff shortages.

Information on how many/(a percentage) of staff members that should be absent before schools close due to a shortage of staff members

Headteachers are responsible for the management of the school day and for making decisions on whether a school should close, for example, where there are insufficient teachers. The (non-statutory) Foundation Phase ratios in schools are in place to support quality Foundation Phase provision. The statutory provision for infant class is 30 per teacher and there is no statutory provision for junior class sizes, although our target for junior class sizes is 30. There is also no statutory provisions for secondary school class sizes.

If you are dissatisfied with the Welsh Government's handling of your request, you can ask for an internal review within 40 working days of the date of this response. Requests for an internal review should be addressed to the Welsh Government's Freedom of Information Officer at:

Information Rights Unit,
Welsh Government,
Cathays Park,
Cardiff,
CF10 3NQ

Or Email: Freedom.ofinformation@gov.wales

Please remember to quote the ATISN reference number above.

You also have the right to complain to the Information Commissioner. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at:

Information Commissioner's Office,
Wycliffe House,
Water Lane,
Wilmslow,
Cheshire,
SK9 5AF.

However, please note that the Commissioner will not normally investigate a complaint until it has been through our own internal review process.

Yours sincerely