One in five kindergarten classes over the limit

The State School Teachers' Union of WA has questioned the State Government's commitment to early childhood education, after new figures showed one in five kindergarten classes is over the maximum agreed limit of students.

The Education Department figures also showed 10% of years 1-3 classes were over maximum limits this year.

SSTUWA Senior Vice President Lincoln Rose said the figures also revealed bigger class sizes across the board, putting a strain on both teachers and students.

"Class sizes are set out in the Enterprise Bargaining Agreement, with agreed limits on the number of students that can legally be in a classroom, which are different for each year group," he said.

"These figures show that 7.2% of classes in WA public schools are now over maximum limits, and therefore breaching the Agreement.

"Obviously the more students there are in a class, the less individual attention they get, which has the potential to affect their learning outcomes.

"Teachers have also expressed concerns that greater numbers of students make it more difficult to move around the classroom safely.

"I think parents would expect the government to keep classes below the agreed levels so that their children can get the best education possible."

Mr Rose said it was particularly worrying that one in five kindergarten classes was above the maximum limit of 20 students.

"Not only is this a breach of the Agreement, but it also contradicts the national quality standards for early childhood education, to which this government has made a commitment," he said.

"It is especially important in the early years that class sizes are kept below the limits, as young children need more one on one attention to ensure they have positive experiences at school and are helped on the path to a successful education."

Mr Rose said the figures proved class sizes were increasing, with more classes above the maximum limit this year, compared to last year.

Kindergarten teachers and union reps are asked to complete the **Kindergarten Class-Size Survey** by 5pm Friday 26 June.

Authorised by Sally Dennis, General Secretary, The State School Teachers' Union of W.A.
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