SSTUWA wants pupil free days for WA schools brought forward



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The State School Teachers' Union of WA said while it welcomed the State Government's decision to introduce pupil free days in WA schools, they should be implemented earlier.

As a response to COVID-19, pupil free days will be introduced from April 6, but the government has urged parents to keep their children home from next week (March 30) if possible.

The Education Minister has directed schools to provide lessons next week, but supervision only in the following week for students who cannot be kept at home.

SSTUWA President Pat Byrne said the measures were unworkable.

"We understand the government is facing unprecedented challenges at the moment, but these measures will be extremely difficult to implement," she said.

"It is not possible for schools to make plans to accommodate students when they have no idea how many are actually going to turn up.

"They will not know how many classrooms they'll need or what lesson plans will be required until they arrive at school each day.

"In addition, they have no clarification on how social distancing measures can be implemented in classrooms if they don't know how many students will be there.

"The government's announcement will only create more anxiety among educators, who are already struggling with the issues created by COVID-19.

"What schools need is certainty. That's why we're calling on the government to follow Victoria and Queensland and implement pupil free days across the system from Monday March 30, with the exception of at-risk students and the children of essential workers.

"Providing that certainty will allow educators to get on with the enormously complex task of preparing online and other learning materials for Term 2.

"At this point, no-one knows what schooling is going to look like in Term 2, and they need as much time to prepare as possible."

Ms Byrne said the union was also seeking clarification on whether the measures announced today applied to TAFE colleges.

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