

Education ministers must prioritise school COVID-19 recovery planning: AEU



The AEU is calling on education ministers to urgently develop a national plan for school COVID-19 recovery as a priority agenda item for the education ministers meeting today.

“There are a number of matters that must be urgently addressed by governments to ensure the safe return to on-site learning in states and territories currently locked down, and to prepare schools in other states and territories for any future COVID-19 outbreaks,” AEU Federal President Correna Haythorpe said.

“These include the need to prioritise the vaccination of teachers, principals, education support staff and currently eligible students, the safe re-opening of schools and identifying and funding the school infrastructure required to meet public health requirements.”

The AEU is calling on the education ministers meeting to develop and implement a national plan to:

1. Prioritise teachers, principals, education support staff and students currently eligible for COVID-19 vaccination as a matter of urgency.
2. Guide the reopening of schools, accommodating the needs of states and territories currently in lockdown and those that need to prepare for any future COVID-19 outbreaks.
3. Identify and fund the infrastructure needs to allow schools to accommodate for social distancing, hygiene, ventilation and any other public health measures to prevent the spread of COVID-19.
4. Consult with the teaching profession, through the AEU, to ensure the voices of teachers, principals and education support staff are heard throughout the process.

“School COVID-19 recovery is one of the biggest concerns for parents and school communities,” Ms Haythorpe said.

“Developing a national plan will require strong national leadership. We call on Minister Tudge, as chair of the meeting and as federal education minister, to step up and make school COVID-19 recovery his number one priority.

“He must work with his federal health counterparts to ensure there is enough supply of the COVID-19 vaccinations and that there is a clear, fair and transparent roll out plan.

“Teachers, principals and education support staff in locked down states and territories are eager to return to on-site learning as soon as it is safe to do so.

“Their colleagues in other states and territories want to ensure they can appropriately prepare in order to minimise the disruptions that naturally occur during outbreaks of COVID-19.

“The urgent development of a school COVID-19 recovery plan would be the best way for all education ministers to ensure that the education workforce and students are protected and supported during this extraordinary time.

Authorised by Mary Franklyn, General Secretary, The State School Teachers' Union of W.A.

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