

Media release: Coronavirus advice conflicting, contradictory and impossible

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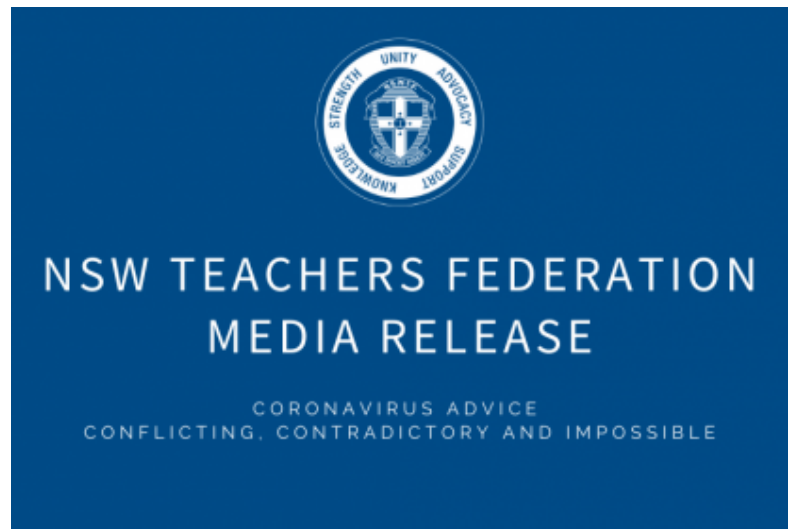
Schools must be given clear advice on action to be taken in the event that health protocols necessary to control the spread of COVID-19 cannot be implemented.

Teachers and principals, like all members of the public, are impacted by developments associated with COVID-19.

Beyond their concern for their immediate and extended families, teachers and principals are also required to shoulder considerable responsibility with respect to the health of students and the broader community.

Whilst the government has announced the banning of public gatherings of 500 or more people it has deemed that schools should remain open.

NSW Teachers Federation President Angelo Gavrielatos said approximately 30 per cent of schools had more than 500 students with the largest public school having a population in excess of 2000 students.



“Schools have been told to implement a range of social distancing measures which include keeping a distance of 1.5m between persons and minimising physical contact where possible,” Mr Gavrielatos said.

“However, the design of many of our schools and the size of our classrooms make this impossible.”

“The overcrowding of some schools also makes this impossible beyond the classroom. This is further amplified on wet days when children and their teachers have to remain in-doors.”

Mr Gavrielatos said beyond social distancing measures, teachers have raised serious concerns about a lack of resources necessary to ensure satisfactory levels of cleaning and sanitation to maintain good hygiene.

“The lack of clarity, consistency and, at times, conflicting advice and opinions expressed by the medical community and elected leaders is creating considerable stress for teachers and principals.”

“The government must ensure that its Work Health & Safety obligations to all staff and students are met.”

The Teachers Federation will continue to work constructively with the Department of Education to ensure the health and safety of all public school communities.