



Coronavirus: Open schools 'won't be educational'

Gavin Williamson says schools remaining open for key workers' children will not follow the national curriculum

By Catherine Lough 19 March 2020 - 09:42



Gavin Williamson has said that schools remaining open after Friday's mass closure will not be "an educational setting" but a "safe place" for critical workers to leave their children.

Following the announcement of the [closure of England's schools from Friday](#), the education secretary this morning revealed more details of the minority that will remain open with a skeleton staff.

Coronavirus: [All schools in England closing from Friday](#)

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"The reason we had to make the difficult decision to close them [the schools], the reason we had to make the difficult decision to say we're not going to be able to continue with exams, is the level of support that would be offered in those schools for children of those key workers and those vulnerable children is going to be a safe place for those children to be," he said.

"It's not going to be an educational setting, they're not going to be teaching the national curriculum, but it's going to be a safe place for people who are key to combating this virus and keeping the country moving forward."

Mr Williamson also told the BBC Today programme that a definition of who qualified as a key worker was forthcoming from the Cabinet Office, but that it would apply to NHS staff and food distribution drivers.

He suggested that schools where 10 per cent of their roll qualified as either children of key workers or vulnerable pupils would be able to remain open.

"In terms of the number of key workers' [children] but also vulnerable children, some of those children who are most at risk, we'd be looking at up to 10 per cent of a roll of a school being eligible in order to do this [stay open] and the best scientific advice has been that that has a good effect in terms of reducing a pandemic and these are safe environments for children to be there."



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