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GUIDANCE

Temporary disapplication to The Changing of School Session Times Regulations 2009

Advice for schools and local authorities on changing school session times for the autumn term 2020.

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Description

The Coronavirus Act 2020 gives the Welsh Ministers powers relating to containing, preventing and managing the spread of coronavirus in schools, other education institutions and childcare settings in Wales. This includes powers to make notices temporarily removing or relaxing statutory provisions.

Schools will reopen and begin to welcome back learners from 1 September. Many schools will be adopting a phased approach for the first two weeks of term, but all learners will be back in school by 14 September. Schools may consider staged arrival, departure and break and may therefore need to make temporary changes to the start and finish times of the school day. This supports the advice contained within the [operational guidance for schools and settings from the autumn term](#) that schools should consider staggering start and finish times to limit contact groups.

The Changing of School Session Times (Wales) Regulations 2009 set out the procedure some school governing bodies and local authorities must follow to make such changes. This includes consulting producing a statement, holding a meeting with parents and considering any written determination. They also provide that such changes can only occur at the beginning of a term or a beginning of a school year (depending on the proposal).

The notice temporarily disapplies regulations 3 and 4 of the Changing of School Session Times (Wales) Regulations 2009, to enable changes to school session times without the need for consultation or giving notice. This temporary disapplication only applies to changes to session times made due to the incidence of coronavirus and any changes made whilst the notice has effect will not be permanent.

This notice is effective for 30 days from 1 September and will be reviewed on a monthly basis.

Actions for schools and local authorities

School governing bodies and local authorities should ensure they are able to welcome back all learners by 14 September and should plan their school session times based on the latest advice provided by the Welsh Government.

Changes to the start and end times of the school day, as well as lunch breaks, are permitted without the need for prior consultation or giving notice, for the purposes of increasing operations during the coronavirus pandemic only.

Changes to start and finish times can be disruptive for working parents. In addition, shortened break times may detrimentally affect learners, particularly if time to eat is limited. Schools and local authorities should ensure they carefully consider the impact on learners and parents when making such changes. Consideration should also be given to the impact that any changes may have on arrangements for dedicated school transport.

Long-term changes to school session times not related to the coronavirus pandemic must follow the procedures for consultation and notice periods set out in the Changing of School Session Times (Wales) Regulations 2009.

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