Most German schools to close over coronavirus: officials

13 March 2020

Most schools across Germany will now be shut from Monday after North Rhine-Westphalia joined Bavaria, Baden-Wuerttemberg and other states in announcing closures.

Twelve of Germany's 16 states have now announced school closures as part of efforts to stem the coronavirus outbreak.

"The schools are closed from Monday," said Armin Laschet, premier of Germany's most populous state North Rhine-Westphalia, on Friday.

They will stay closed at least until the end of the Easter holidays on April 19, in line with announcements by other states.

In Germany's federalised system, education falls under the remit of individual states.

Berlin, Hamburg, Thuringia, Lower Saxony are among the other states to have announced school closures with more expected to follow.

North Rhine-Westphalia, with its 18 million residents, has been hardest hit by the virus outbreak so far.

Laschet said parents with no childcare solutions could still drop off their kids at school on Monday until alternatives are found, especially for those working in jobs needed to keep critical infrastructure going like healthcare workers, police officers and train drivers.

"But grandparents are not the answer," he said, stressing the deadly impact of the pandemic on the elderly.

Germany has recorded over 2,300 cases of the virus and seven people have died, according to an updated tally from DPA news agency.

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