

DE/2026-027 – Freedom of Information Request

Request:

I would like to request the following information for each of the last ten academic years (or calendar years if easier to provide):

- 1.The number of school closures in Northern Ireland due to extreme weather conditions, including but not limited to storms, high winds, snow, ice, or flooding and broken down by each closure, including dates.
- 2.The total number of school closure days (include partial and full days) this amounted to in each year across all affected schools.

If available, please also indicate:

- whether the Department holds this information directly or relies on data reported by the EA or individual schools, and
- the definitions or criteria used to classify a closure as being due to “extreme weather”.

If any part of this request is unclear or would exceed the cost limit, please advise me as required under Section 16 FOIA.

3.A copy of the response to the FOI request DE/2025-291

Department Response:

Thank you for your request for information relating to number of schools closed because of extreme weather. The request was received on 12/2/26.

I would like to request the following information for each of the last ten academic years (or calendar years if easier to provide):

1.The number of school closures in Northern Ireland due to extreme weather conditions, including but not limited to storms, high winds, snow, ice, or flooding and broken down by each closure, including dates.

I can confirm that the Department does not hold the information requested over the last 10 years. Records prior to January 2019 have been deleted in line with the Department's Disposal Schedule. From January 2019, an online app was introduced to allow schools to apply for an exceptional closure, the app was refreshed in January 2023. A copy of the information requested from January 2019 onward is enclosed.

2.The total number of school closure days (include partial and full days) this amounted to in each year across all affected schools.

I can confirm that the Department only collects full day closures and based on the information attached, the Department is aware of 2231 closures since January 2019. This figure does not include schools who closed following instruction from either Education Authority or the Department. In those cases, schools were not required to apply for exceptional closures.

The Department does not require schools to apply for an exceptional closure for part day closures therefore does not hold information pertaining to partial days. As per DE Circular 2024/12, Exceptional Closures are for whole days closures for unexpected or unplanned for events.

3.A copy of the response to the FOI request DE/2025-291

Information Management Team will provide this information separately.