

## **COVID 19 FOUNDATION PHASE GRADE R**

### **1. Background**

The South African President announced on 15 March 2020 the early closure of schools for Term 1 on 18 March 2020. On 23 March 2020 the President announced the lockdown for the country. This decision was informed by the warnings provided by the National Institution of Communicable Diseases and World Health Organisation who have highlighted the alarming increase of infections of the Coronavirus (COVID 19) within the country. Schools have thus been identified as high-risk areas where the infections could spread easily.

The COVID 19 lockdown has created a unique situation where the school calendar has been disrupted which has impacted negatively on the implementation of the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) for the 2020 academic year. The Department of Basic Education (DBE), working in collaboration with Provincial Education Departments (PEDs), has put together a framework for curriculum recovery plans to support schools following the COVID 19 lockdown. The framework proposes a revised curriculum reorganization and trimming as some of the strategies to create opportunities for curriculum recovery as soon as schools re-open.

### **2. Foundation Phase – Grade R in action**

There are calls for urgent and immediate attention to the revision of the ATPs in order to ensure that meaningful teaching proceeds during the revised school calendar. Curriculum planning must be done for all subjects that will enable teachers to cover the essential core content in each grade and phase, in preparation for the subsequent grades and phase, laying the necessary cumulative foundation for the assessment for progression. Assessment is integral to curriculum delivery and

completes the learning cycle. Hence any curriculum planning must involve aligned assessment planning. Assessment continues in an informal way during learning and teaching.

## **2.1 Communication to all Primary schools**

All Primary Schools and Grade R Centres or schools need instructions before the re-opening with recommendations. The first week should be used as an orientation week to reintegrate learners back into the school environment with a huge focus on the new practices and operations that will take place every school day. Expose learners to their daily routine and revise the work that was done in Term 1. Most importantly, since Grade R learners are at an age and stage where the pedagogy of play is key, this must be taken into consideration, whilst being cognizant of social distancing and hygiene practices.

## **2.2 Mapping of the CAPS Curriculum**

The CAPS has mapped out the curriculum in terms of the knowledge, skills, values, and attitudes that should be covered. Curriculum content mapping is a process of reviewing and organizing an existing curriculum that allows teachers to determine how content, skills, and assessments will unfold over the course of the year. The content is therefore mapped out for each subject and grade, setting out the content to be covered per week and per term. The ATPs assist in the sequencing, scaffolding, and pacing of teaching and learning per week and term across all subjects in one year.

### 2.3 Curriculum trimming and reorganization in Grade R Foundation Phase

In the context of the framework for the school curriculum recovery plan whose overarching aim is to ensure that the critical skills, knowledge, values, and attitudes outlined in the CAPS are covered over a reduced period of time, the purpose of the curriculum reorganization and trimming is to:

- Reduce the formal curriculum into manageable core content, so that schools have ample room for deep and meaningful learning. To educate learners about **the COVID 19 restrictions, healthy hygiene and disinfection practices and social distancing.**
- Define the core knowledge and skills to be taught so that it provides guidance and support to teachers;
- Align curriculum content and assessment according to the available teaching time;
- Maintain the alignment in the learning trajectory for learners, without compromising learners' transition to Grade 1
- Present a planning tool to inform instruction during the remaining school terms

### 2.4 Foundation Phase- Grade R COVID 19

The COVID 19 pandemic has had a negative influence on teaching and learning in Grade R. We have been forced to be creative and inventive regarding the trimming and reorganization of the CAPS curriculum. The aim is to give each learner in the Grade R the opportunity to develop holistically, through multi-modal and hands-on experiences. This is aligned to the pedagogy advocated which will further develop their imaginations, language acquisition, perceptual development and all pre-skills, which are the foundations for further teaching and learning. They will acquire the fundamental building blocks for the sound development in the

later grades of learning the key content, knowledge, and skills to progress to the next grade, without being disadvantaged. Teachers are to stick closely to the prescripts of teaching.

The following **pedagogically sound recommendations** are **advocated**:

- The trimming according to the restrictions of the COVID 19 are crucial for teachers and learners. This will be a temporary measure until schooling is declared safe and regulations are lifted by Government and Health authorities.
- Beginning Knowledge and Personal and Social Well-being in the Life Skills curriculum are organized into topics. The use of topics is suggested as a means to integrate the content from the different study areas where possible and appropriate. Selected Life Skills topics in the CAPS for term 2, 3 and 4 need to be covered.
- During this phase of addressing the importance of social distancing, this subject will address social health, emotional health and relationships with other people and our environment, including values and attitudes.
- Whilst disinfection and social distancing are strict requirements which will should be adhered to in preventing the spread of COVID 19, activities such as Physical Education and Creative Arts are imperatives in the curriculum. Carefully planned outdoor play (15 minutes each day) can take place under strict supervision. No sharing of any equipment unless it has been sanitized and the use of the Jungle gym is strongly discouraged. Learners are to use their own bean bag, or a ball made from crumbled newspaper.
- Grade R is the reception year where young learners are prepared for formal schooling through a pedagogy of play which is informal in its approach and guided by the Daily Programme with its structure and routines.
- Recommendations by the CAPS Curriculum for Grade R includes whole and small group activities as well as individual choice times. These have been adapted for social distancing purposes.

- The Daily Programme requires adaptations because of the required COVID safety regulations. The following are recommendations to consider bearing in mind the different contexts of the Grade R classes in the Provinces.
  - i) The daily Programme routines – Screening (to be added), toilet time, refreshments and pack away/tidy up times require extended times.
  - ii) Toilet routine can be used for perceptual development e.g. zig -zag lines on the ground to the toilet ensuring social distancing.
  - iii) Individual activities which include tearing and pasting, painting, use of play dough for personal use, cutting etc. must be monitored daily. All equipment must be sanitized before it is used by a second group of learners OR teachers are to ensure that they have enough equipment for each learner.
  - iv) Water and sand play can continue. Adherence to the recommended measures must be followed.
- Physical Education sessions will be included for indoor movement within learners' space on or in front of their chair for 15 minutes per day. Important concepts such as left and right, abdominal muscle tone, crossing the midline etc. will be incorporated. Later, when learners understand the concept of social distancing, a gradual phasing in of movement on the outside terrain utilizing a longer period of time. The development of large muscles and perceptual development is paramount for this age group. It will also provide a release of energy and enjoyment in this climate.
- Creative Art is a language and a vehicle employed to develop imagination, language, solve problems, “write” creatively and apply skills learned in Mathematics (shapes, patterns, estimation, etc.). Teachers are to ensure that learners have their own stationery to complete tasks.
- Assessment for and of learning will continue informally on a continuous basis.

**Consideration should be given to the following:**

- i. Reducing the number of display areas (close areas and pack away resources) will give more space for the learners to sit, stand, move and reduce the temptation of the learners to fiddle and touch the display items. The theme table remains and should only be touched by the teacher. Items which are easily accessible can be brought by the learners and teacher. These must be sanitized.
- ii. Create a “safety corner” place the sanitizing containers, water and soap, masks sealed in a plastic bag, thermometer, so that they become part and parcel of the class environment. Initially discuss frequently to reinforce use and importance. Songs with actions should be used to teach learners the correct way to wash hands, how to wear a face mask correctly, (wash hands for 20 seconds) – not to touch their face, be aware of touching surfaces, greeting and how to sneeze and cough correctly.  
Poster at “safety corner” should have pictures showing young learners the basic steps to be safe E.g. wash hands, sanitizer (explain what this is (look, touch and smell) why and how we must use it) and social distancing.
- iii. Creative ways should be considered to help our learners adapt to social distancing in the classroom. E.g. Use colour tape to mark “X” where each learner can sit for greeting, story or movement on the spot. Place a dot/sticker on tables where they can sit in groups. Make the most of the floor space, sitting on mats and at tables. Make provision for plastic or cardboard mats for learners to sit on the floor. By doing this consistently the learners will learn what to do and feel safe in their classroom.
- iv. Introduce **these** additional rules during Orientation and Safety week and then reinforce DAILY. These can be visually illustrated on a chart or read daily as a story.

- v. Show learners through song and rhymes how to practice social distancing i.e. spread out arms to side, [right and left, front and back] and no one can come into that space when doing activities, walking to toilet and eating. Teachers to diligently supervise moving from one place to another and eating routine.
- vi. Resourcing for the daily activities will require careful planning. Consider each learner having a container of their own with scissors, crayons, bag of play dough and name tag. Where resources are limited ways of sanitizing must be prioritized in planning. Books, puzzles, cardboard games (dominoes) are wiped down with damp sanitized cloth. Other items such as brushes, scissors, crayons, beads, cubes, blocks, instruments, plastic spades buckets and plastic objects to be washed after use every day before the next group uses it.
- vii. Consider that during snack time learners that receive food from the feeding schemes should have their **own labelled** plate/bowl and spoon. Learners must be shown how to move masks below the chin, sanitise hands before they eat. Sanitize hands and place it back when they are finished eating. No sharing must be allowed. Learners will be responsible for cleaning before and after eating if the set-up allows. All utensils should be safely stored.
- viii. Toilet routines – will require careful planning and preparation – no sharing/touching of towels or cups or paper towels. Clearly marked spaces of where learners can stand while waiting to wash hands – and dustbin with lid for paper towels.

**Please note: This does not mean that all learners will just sit at desks and just do worksheets!**