



**basic education**

Department:  
Basic Education  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

27 JUNE 2020

## **BASIC EDUCATION DEPARTMENT URGES SCHOOLS TO APPLY STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES IN HANDLING COVID-19 CASES**

The Department of Basic Education has successfully opened schools in a new unfamiliar environment. It is an environment with contradictions where as a country we are facing rising records of infections whilst the advice from health experts and advisors is that as a country we need to live side by side with the virus.

This has understandably caused panic and anxiety. The Department wants to continue to urge school principals to ensure that all the health protocols on the management of the virus are strictly followed.

Principals must take measures to:

- Ensure that learners and employees are screened when the schools reopen using the Department of Health COVID-19 procedure and questionnaire. Learners and employees should report any of the following additional symptoms: body aches, loss of smell or loss of taste, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, fatigue, weakness or tiredness;
- Ensure that learners and employees are informed, trained and instructed as to the correct use of cloth masks; and
- Ensure that a risk assessment is conducted to identify categories of employees requiring Personal Protective Equipment (PPE). Those employees should be provided with the accredited PPE in accordance with Department of Health guidelines.

The Standard Procedures are available on the link below:

<https://www.education.gov.za/Portals/0/Documents/Recovery%20plan%20page/Links%20for%20schools/dbe-standard-operating-procedure-for-covid-19.pdf?ver=2020-06-15-091455-587>

In his address President Cyril Ramaphosa has said: "...from the 1st of June, our prevention response is now largely focused on the simple everyday things that each of us can do to protect ourselves and our communities. It is about each of us taking personal responsibility, wherever we are and whoever we are, for curbing the spread of the disease. The power to defeat coronavirus is in our hands."

Schools play an important role in the efforts to control the spread of COVID-19. Schools must therefore take steps to circulate information about the disease and its potential transmission within the school community. Schools must prepare to take the steps necessary to prevent the spread of COVID-19 among their learners and staff, should health officials identify the need. School plans should be designed to minimize the disruption of teaching and learning, and protect learners and staff from social stigma and discrimination. Plans can build on the recommended everyday practices (the Golden Rules): encouraging

conscientious hand hygiene (frequent and thorough hand washing and avoidance of touching of the face and eyes), cough etiquette, staying at home when sick, and monitoring absenteeism and communicating routinely.

The Department issued directions on 23 June 2020 in which the 6th of July 2020 was confirmed as the date for the return of learners in other grades back to school.

Schools have been temporarily closed and reopened around the country in the past 3 weeks to allow affected areas to be disinfected. The breakdown per province is as follows as at 26 June 2020:

PROVINCE	NUMBER OF SCHOOLS AFFECTED	NUMBER OF LEARNERS	NUMBER OF STAFF
NC	11	1	9
MP	10	7	8
LP	3	3	10
NW	14	6	22
FS	12	31	13
EC	154	270	271
GP	176	58	188
KZN	63	13	63
WC	332	134	557
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>775</b>	<b>523</b>	<b>1169</b>

Schools are an integral part of society and a reflection of its community. Schools, just like clinics, police stations, shops, mines and other frequently visited places, have found themselves also having to close and reopen. This is in response to infections identified during the screening process and in line with health protocols on how to treat and environment with possible contamination.

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**ISSUED BY THE DEPARTMENT OF BASIC EDUCATION**