



## GAUTENG PROVINCE

EDUCATION  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

### Circular 3/2020

Date: 16/03/2020

#### Topic

**Measures for the containment and spread of  
COVID-19 at Schools**

#### Enclosures

NONE

#### Distribution

- ✓ Deputy Directors General
- ✓ Chief Directors
- ✓ Directors at Head Office and District Offices,
- ✓ Circuit Managers, Cluster Leaders/IDSOs, Curriculum Learning Implementation CESs and District Assessment Teams
- ✓ Principals and Staff of all Public Schools, Schools for Learners with Special Education Needs, and Independent Schools
- ✓ Members of Governing Body Associations and School Governing Bodies (SGBs)
- ✓ Teacher Organisations and Unions
- ✓ Relevant Non-Governmental Organisations

#### Enquiries

Office of the HOD

On request, this circular will be made available in Afrikaans, isiZulu or Sepedi  
within 21 days

Also available on the GDE website at: [www.education.gpg.gov.za](http://www.education.gpg.gov.za)

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## **1. INTRODUCTION**

On the 15 March 2020, the President has declared a national state of disaster and announced measures to contain and manage the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic. The measures included, amongst others, the closure of all schools. This circular provides guidelines and directives relating to measures affecting public schools.

## **2. PURPOSE**

The purpose of this Circular is to:

- 2.1 Provide schools with a guidance for planning during this disaster period.
- 2.2 Ensure that there is uniformity and consistency of practice across the Province.
- 2.3 Provide school-based employees and SGB members with guidance on how to manage operations during this difficult period.

## **3. POLICY AND LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK**

- 3.1 The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996 (Act No.108 of 1996), as amended
- 3.2 National Education Policy Act 1996 (Act No. 27 of 1996), as amended
- 3.3 South African Schools Act, 1996 (Act No 84 of 1996), as amended
- 3.4 Disaster Management Act, 2002 (Act No 57 of 2002)
- 3.5 Occupational Health and Safety, 1993 (Act No 85 of 1993)

## **4. SCHOOL CLOSURE**

In line with the declaration of school closures by the President, Schools are directed to close as follows:

- 4.1. In respect of Learners, schools will close on Wednesday, 18 March 2020 at 11h00. Where a school has no planned examinations for the 18 March 2020, schools may opt to release learners at the end of the school day on the 17 March 2020.
- 4.2 In respect of Educators and PS Staff, the last school day for the first term is Friday, 20 March 2020, this is to allow for the finalization of all outstanding administrative work.
- 4.3 To make up for the additional 10 days in the first term holidays, the school calendar for the second term will be adjusted to reduce the mid-year holidays by seven (7) days and the third term will be adjusted to reduce the third-term holidays by three (3) days.

## **5. CURRICULUM SUPPORT**

In order to ensure continuity of learning, school management teams are required to:

- 5.1 provide parents and learners with guidelines of curriculum topics, content and activities to be undertaken at home during this period. This will include the promotion of reading in support of national campaigns;
- 5.2 provide learner material for reading and self-study; DBE workbooks, textbooks and readers for use at home. This should include worksheets, tasks, projects and exercises; and
- 5.3 activate communication platforms with parents to ensure content and information flow.

## **6. HYGIENE**

In line with best practice, schools must emphasize and ensure that the following hygiene practices should be observed:

- 6.1 Wash hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. Use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer if soap and water are not available;
- 6.2 Be vigilant and look out for symptoms of fever (more than 38 degrees Celsius), coughing and shortness of breath;
- 6.3 Practice safe cough etiquette. Cough or sneeze into your flexed elbow or into a tissue and immediately dispose of the tissue in a safe place e.g. bin;
- 6.4 Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth as well as handshakes;
- 6.5 Identify, isolate and report learners, teachers or support staff showing symptoms especially if they have had contact with, or have travelled to highly affected countries as reported by the WHO;
- 6.6 Cleaning should be done regularly on frequently touched surfaces, spaces and areas using relevant detergents to curb the spread of the virus,
- 6.7 Observe social distancing as far as practically possible, by (two) 2 meters by maintain from each other.

## **7. LEAVE MANAGEMENT**

- 7.1 Where school-based employees, educators and administrative staff, take leave to contain the spread of the Covid-19 virus or take leave as a precautionary measure, leave taken will be classified as per the determination of leave of absence.
- 7.2 Where school-based employees have been advised to self-isolate by medical practitioner or Department of Health, employees should communicate this with their supervisors/managers to arrange for special leave accordingly.

## **8. EVENTS/MEETINGS/GATHERINGS/CAMPS/WORKSHOPS**

- 8.1 In line with the measures announced, the department recommends that all large school events be avoided during this period, and where it is necessary or essential the following directive apply viz., events, meetings, gatherings or Workshops of less than or equal to 50 participants is recommended.
- 8.2 The department will ensure that all teacher training activities be designed for groups less than or equal to 50 participants
- 8.3 All school tours and excursions, approved or not, are hereby suspended until further notice.

## **9. SCHOLAR TRANSPORT**

- 9.1. All learner transport, offered by the school or department, must adhere to basic hygiene practices, including the provision of hand sanitizers and masks.

## **10. NUTRITION**

Where the School has a feeding scheme, tuckshops and approved vendors preparing food for learners:

- 10.1 All nutrition practitioners must adhere basic hygiene practices; this may include, regular washing of hands with soap, cleaning of surface with appropriate cleaning detergents, and avoid sharing of utensils, crockery, and avail hand sanitizers and masks
- 10.2 Schools should adhere to nutrition guidelines and be mindful of expiry dates.

## **11. TRAVELING**

- 11.1 Where learners, teachers and other officials of the school travelled to medium- or high-risk destinations, they must present themselves to Department of Health for advice or testing in line with the established protocols in terms of testing and isolation.

## **12. CONCLUSION**

- 12.1 In taking cognizance of the binding decree by the President on all of us, we should work together to implement this circular.
- 12.2 We will continue to consult on, add and update, all measures as and when it is necessary. The department will issue additional guidance as frequently as required.

12.3 The GDE commits to work with all districts to ensure that there is an orderly closure of schools. Therefore, this process will be monitored closely to ensure that work is done accordingly.



**MR EDWARD MOSUWE  
HEAD OF DEPARTMENT**

DATE: 16/3/2020