



Province of the
EASTERN CAPE
EDUCATION

OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT-GENERAL

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TO: DDG's
CLUSTER CHIEF DIRECTORS
CHIEF DIRECTORS
DIRECTORS
ALL OFFICIALS
LABOUR UNIONS
SCHOOL GOVERNING BODIES

FROM: SUPERINTENDENT-GENERAL

SUBJECT: INSTRUCTION 6 – PREVENTION AND MANAGEMENT OF
CORONAVIRUS (COVID 19) – ALL OFFICIALS

DATE: 19 MARCH 2020

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. With the confirmed cases of the coronavirus (COVID-19) rapidly spreading in South Africa, and the President of the Republic having declared a National State of Disaster, COVID-19 is having an impact on the Department in various ways.
- 1.2. To mitigate the impact on the health of our employees, the health of the public we serve and our service delivery, it is important to have a common approach in the way we deal with cases linked to the virus.
- 1.3. All employees are urged to remain calm and act responsibly by following the instructions issued to members of the public service nationally and provincially.
- 1.4. The Head of Department (the HOD) has issued Instruction Notes providing guidance on opening and closing of schools, international school travel, domestic school activities and communication. These Instructions are to be read in conjunction with this Instruction. Further Instructions may follow as the situation unfolds.

2. GUIDANCE TO PREPARE FOR THE CONTAINMENT/MANAGEMENT OF COVID-19

- 2.1. The Department has a legal obligation in accordance with Section 8 of the Occupational Health and Safety Act, 1993, as amended, (OHSA) to, where reasonably practicable, provide and maintain a safe and healthy work environment that is without risk to employees.
- 2.2. Regulation 53 of the 2016 Public Service Regulations (PS Regulations) also places a responsibility on the Department to establish a safe and healthy work environment for employees of the Department and a safe and healthy service delivery environment for members of the public.

- 2.3. In pursuing compliance with these legal obligations and responsibilities and considering the coronavirus pandemic, SMS members are instructed to assist the HOD in creating these safe and healthy environments within their areas of responsibility.
- 2.4. The Department must take action to manage and contain the spread of the virus. SMS members are instructed to ensure that the tasks as set out below are complied with within their areas of responsibility:
- 2.4.1. Conduct a **risk assessment** to identify the risks of a COVID-19 outbreak in the Department. Areas in the Department are to be identified where provisions against COVID-19 are still inadequate. Processes to correct these must be implemented immediately/urgently.
- 2.4.2. Revise existing **health and safety** provisions in the Department.
- 2.4.3. Establish a Department **Steering Committee**

2.4.3.1. Head Office

The steering committee will be chaired by the Director Employee Wellness Services

The composition of the steering committee is as follows:

- Employee Wellness Services
- Employee relations
- Supply Chain Management
- School Governing Bodies
- Infrastructure
- ICT
- Human Resource Management
- School Safety and Health
- Two representatives per labour union
- Communications
- Resourcing and School Administration

. This Steering Committee must report directly to the HOD. .

2.4.3.2. Districts

The steering committee will be chaired by the District Director in each District

The composition of the steering committee is as follows:

- Employee Wellness Services
- Employee relations
- Supply Chain Management
- School Governing Bodies
- Infrastructure
- ICT
- Human Resource Management
- School Safety and Health
- Two representatives per labour union
- Communications
- Resourcing and School Administration

. This Steering Committee must report directly to the HOD. .

2.4.3.3. Meetings shall take place at least twice a week and signed off minutes shall be presented to the HOD within 24 hours of conclusion of the meeting

2.4.3.4. The main function of the steering committee is to coordinate, monitor and prepare interventions on a continuous basis regarding COVID - 19

- 2.4.4. The Department must classify its services in terms of Direct, Indirect, Back End and Transversal criteria and inform the public which key services will be available during the 3-month period.
- 2.4.5. The Department has decided to limit some of its services to better manage crowds and gatherings.
- 2.4.6. Where online services are provided, the public must be encouraged to use these services.
- 2.4.7. All visitors entering and leaving the Department must be recorded by signing in and out of the building being visited.
- 2.4.8. Each building or facility of the Department must establish a facility/sickbay for isolation purposes. The facility should be well ventilated and be regularly cleaned according to required safety standards.
- 2.4.9. Finance units are to ensure budget reprioritisation to facilitate funding to deal with COVID-19.
- 2.4.10. All non-essential domestic travel is suspended. Essential travel is regarded as travel that is absolutely necessary and required in the interest of service delivery. All essential travel requests for out of province are to be approved by the HOD.

Meetings

- 2.4.11. All non-essential/non-critical meetings inside or outside the Department are suspended until further notice. Teleconference and video conferencing facilities are to be used for face-to-face meetings where applicable and practically possible.
- 2.4.12. Face-to-face meetings arranged by or attended by district officials require approval from Cluster Chief Directors prior to a meeting being called and arranged.
- 2.4.13. Face-to-face meetings arranged by or attended by head office officials require approval from DDG's prior to a meeting being called and arranged.
- 2.4.14. The number of participants to pre-approved face-to-face meetings are to be kept within the minimum advised by the National Department of Health (NDoH). Necessary precautionary measures are to be established and/or provided for at all meetings.
- 2.4.15. All mass gatherings/events requiring a congregation of large numbers of employees and/or the public are to be postponed or cancelled.
- 2.4.16. Gatherings of more than 100 people are strictly prohibited.

Attendance registers

- 2.4.17. Accurate attendance registers must strictly be maintained on a daily basis.
- 2.4.18. Attendance registers must be sent to the Chief Director of each unit on a daily basis.
- 2.4.19. The Chief Director must in turn provide a copy of the attendance registers to his/her DDG on a daily basis.

Work from home

2.4.20. In instances where applicable, consideration will be given to those occupations that allow employees to work from home as a means to minimise travel and possible exposure to COVID-19. All such written requests may be approved only by Cluster Chief Directors in the case of District officials, and DDG's in the case of head office officials.

2.4.21. Where an employee received approval to work from home, the attendance register must reflect that the employee is absent but working from home.

2.4.22. The written approval to work from home must be submitted together with the attendance registers.

Provisions

2.4.23. The Supply Chain Management Unit, together with other relevant sections, are to ensure that the Department procures sufficient hand sanitisers, soap and toilet paper.

3. PRECAUTIONARY MEASURES TO BE ADOPTED BY EMPLOYEES

3.1. In order to remain healthy, it is important not to be exposed to COVID-19. SMS members are to instruct employees reporting to them to protect themselves and others by implementing the following precautionary measures:

3.1.1. Washing their hands frequently. Hands must be washed often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after going to the bathroom, before eating, and after blowing their nose, coughing, or sneezing. If soap and water are not readily available, alcohol-based hand sanitisers with at least 60% alcohol can be used.

3.1.2. Avoiding close contact with people who are sick. At least one (1) meter distance between yourself and anyone who is coughing or sneezing must be maintained.

3.1.3. Avoiding touching their eyes, nose, and mouth.

3.1.4. Covering their cough or sneeze with a tissue, and disposing of the tissue safely afterwards.

3.1.5. Cleaning and disinfecting frequently-touched objects and surfaces.

3.1.6. Wearing of masks is not necessary unless taking care of an infected person. It is recommended that only infected people wear masks to prevent the spread of the virus.

3.1.7. Employees who have a fever, cough and have difficulty breathing must seek medical attention immediately. The directions of the NDoH must be followed when seeking medical attention.

4. MANAGEMENT OF FRONTLINE EMPLOYEES AND MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

4.1. In order to ensure the continuation of the Department's service delivery, it is necessary that the following guidelines are followed where employees work directly with the public:

Frontline employees

4.2. Frontline employees come in direct contact with the public in executing their responsibilities and as such are most at risk of contracting COVID-19. To ensure the health and safety of frontline employees it is important that the following precautions be taken:

- 4.2.1. Provide frontline employees with the necessary protective equipment, e.g. latex gloves, etc. in handling documents and assisting the public.
- 4.2.2. Provide frontline employees with sufficient training to assist them to identify the risks and mitigating it sufficiently.
- 4.2.3. Ensure the workspace of frontline employees have sufficient facilities for them to wash their hands, or where not possible, to provide hand sanitisers.
- 4.2.4. Ensure the cleaning of the hard surfaces e.g. workstations, countertops, and doorknobs on an hourly basis. The cleaning of the surfaces must be recorded on a two (2) hourly basis.
- 4.2.5. Ensure frontline employees are conversant with the protocols pertaining to COVID-19 in order to respond timeously to identify risks.
- 4.2.6. Prevention of close or physical contact in the workplace, such as shaking hands.

Members of the public visiting frontline offices

- 4.3. Due to the HOD carrying responsibility for the establishment of a safe and secure service delivery environment to public, the following steps must be implemented as a minimum:
 - 4.3.1. Ensure cleaning of the waiting area for members of the public on a two (2) hourly basis.
 - 4.3.2. Provision of hand sanitisers at strategic places for members of the public. Ensure that the numbers of members of the public who are allowed in the venue is consistent with the protocols and guidelines of the Department and management of crowds in waiting areas or/and queues.
 - 4.3.3. Guide and direct members of the public displaying symptoms consistent with COVID-19 to a medical professional.
 - 4.3.4. Ensure posters on COVID-19 are placed in strategic locations where members of the public can be informed.

5. GUIDELINE ON TRAVEL

- 5.1. In line with the declared National State of Disaster all non-essential international and domestic travel is prohibited.
- 5.2. All essential out-of-province travel must be approved by the HOD.
- 5.3. All essential Eastern Cape travel must be approved by Cluster Chief Directors in the case of district officials, and DDG's, in the case of head office officials.
- 5.4. With regard to personal travel it is incumbent on the employee to disclose to the Department whether high/medium or low risk countries were visited during such travels. National protocols regarding travel must be followed. All private international travel by employees must be reported.
- 5.5. Where applicable a process to manage employees who return from official travel and national protocols must be followed.
- 5.6. Report the cases in the required format (See **Annexure C**) via the dedicated email address (info2020@ecdoe.gov.za).

6. GUIDANCE ON HOW TO MANAGE COVID-19 CASES

- 6.1. Given the ability to rapidly spread, the management of confirmed and suspected COVID-19 cases is of paramount importance. The guidelines below are to be observed as a minimum.

Employee tested positive

- 6.2. Where an employee tested positive for COVID-19, the employee must under no circumstances come to work.
- 6.3. It is imperative that documentary proof of the positive test result be submitted to the Department.
- 6.4. The Director will approve sick leave in accordance with the Determination and Directive on Leave of Absence in the Public Service upon receipt of the proof of the positive test result and upon an application for sick leave submitted for approval.
- 6.5. Where the employee has exhausted his/her normal sick leave, he/she may apply for incapacity leave in accordance with the Policy and Procedure on Incapacity Leave and Ill-health Retirement processes.
- 6.6. Where an employee who has tested positive for COVID-19 is asymptomatic, he/she must be given the choice to work from home, without making use of sick leave.
- 6.7. Contact must be maintained with an employee who is working remotely for quarantine purposes as a means of monitoring and evaluation.
- 6.8. Employees who tested positive and who are on sick leave, incapacity leave or are working remotely, must ensure that they can be contacted at all times. The address and contact details must be accurately recorded on his/her sick leave application forms and at the office where the employee usually reports for duty. The Department **must** be able to reach its employees even if they are on leave or are working remotely.
- 6.9. SMS members responsible for the office and building where a confirmed case was reported must ensure that the affected workspaces are cleaned and disinfected.
- 6.10. The employee may only return to work once written approval is granted by a medical practitioner, in line with the protocols as issued by the NDoH.

- 6.11. Report the cases in the required format (See **Annexure A**) via the dedicated email address info2020@ecdoe.gov.za.

Employee exposed to confirmed case

- 6.12. In terms of the NDoH's guidelines an employee who was in close contact with a medically confirmed infected person is required to self-quarantine at home for a period of 14 days or for a duration as prescribed by the NDoH while being monitored for symptoms.
- 6.13. The employee may complete an application for sick leave and provide a detailed explanation of the circumstances of the exposure as part of the application for sick leave.
- 6.14. The Director or Chief Director will formally grant approval for sick leave if satisfied that the requirements for compulsory self-quarantine, in line with the guidelines provided by NDOH, are met.
- 6.15. Approval may also be given to an exposed employee to work remotely, should the employee prefer not to apply for sick leave.
- 6.16. A list of such employees in this category who are on sick leave or who are working remotely must be kept and submitted to the Chief Director: HRM.
- 6.17. Employees who are under self-quarantine must ensure that they can be contacted during the period when they are away from work. The address and contact details must be accurately recorded. The Department **must** be able to reach its employees even if they are on leave or are working remotely.
- 6.18. Contact must be maintained with such employee as a means of monitoring and evaluation.
- 6.19. SMS members responsible for the office and building must ensure that the affected workspaces are cleaned/disinfected.
- 6.20. The employee may only return to work once written approval is granted by a medical practitioner.
- 6.21. Report the cases in the required format (See Annexure A) via the dedicated email address info2020@ecdoe.gov.za.

Employee exposed to unconfirmed case

- 6.22. If an employee has been in contact with a person who has not yet been confirmed as infected by COVID-19 while laboratory test results for COVID-19 are awaited, the HOD will decide, guided by NDoH, Legal Services and Human Resources if restrictions or special control measures need to be applied until the results are known.
- 6.23. Once the laboratory test results are known, protocols as issued by NDoH must be implemented, if applicable.
- 6.24. Report the cases in the required format (See **Annexure A**) via the dedicated email address (info2020@ecdoe.gov.za).

Employee appears ill

- 6.25. If an employee presents him/herself at work with similar symptoms consistent with COVID-19; being high fever, respiratory distress, dry cough, etc. he/she must be advised to contact the hotline, consult a medical professional and follow the NDoH protocols for COVID-19.
- 6.26. The employee must be isolated temporarily in a sickbay or room identified for temporary isolation while arrangements are made for him/her to be transported to a medical facility. Employees must be encouraged to seek medical attention if they display flu like symptoms and to not report for duty.

- 6.27. Further action should be taken once confirmation of diagnosis of a medical professional has been confirmed.
- 6.28. Report the cases in the required format (See **Annexure A**) to the dedicated email address info2020@ecdoe.gov.za.

Family responsibility leave

- 6.29. If an employee needs to attend to his/her child, spouse or life partner who is/are either in quarantine or isolation he/she may be granted family responsibility leave in accordance with the provisions as outlined in the Determination and Directive on Leave of Absence in the Public Service.
- 6.30. The terms and conditions attached to the granting of family responsibility leave as stipulated in the Determination and Directive on Leave of Absence in the Public Service must be adhered to.
- 6.31. An employee who has used all their family responsibility leave may apply to use available annual leave or use up to 184 calendar days of unpaid leave. Unpaid leave may only be taken subject to the approval of the HOD.
- 6.32. Report the cases in the required format (See **Annexure A**) to the dedicated email address info2020@ecdoe.gov.za.

Failure by employee to report for duty

- 6.33. If an employee decides to self-quarantine/isolate after their perceived contact with COVID-19 without medical intervention or a request from the Department such isolation must be construed as a leave of absence and be covered by the employee's available annual leave and thereafter unpaid leave if insufficient annual leave credits are available. SMS members are instructed to inform employees of this process.
- 6.34. Annual leave may be applied for during this period but may only be approved if the unit or section in which the employee works can meet its obligations and responsibilities in terms of service delivery.
- 6.35. Where an employee refuses and/or fails to report for duty, contrary to the instructions and/or prior approval of the Department, such absence will be unpaid if the employee's annual leave credits are exhausted and will be dealt with in terms of the relevant disciplinary codes.
- 6.36. Disciplinary measures in terms of the Disciplinary Codes must be invoked if abuse of leave provisions are identified during the containment of the COVID-19.
- 6.37. Report the cases in the required format (See **Annexure A**) to the dedicated email address info2020@ecdoe.gov.za.

Closure of a unit/component/office

- 6.38. Where an employee has tested positive for COVID-19, the Director or Chief Director, responsible for the unit/building is to report such incidents to the NDoH.
- 6.39. Relevant public health officials must be contacted to discuss the case, identify people who have been exposed and advise on any actions or precautions that should be taken.
- 6.40. An assessment of the unit/component/office will be conducted by the public health officials and advice on the management of the occurrence based on this assessment will be provided.
- 6.41. The decision to close a unit/component/office in the Department lies with the HOD and will be based on the advice received from public health officials.

- 6.42. The closure of a unit/component/office will be considered with due regard to the extent of the exposure and its implications on health and safety including the service delivery needs of the Department.
- 6.43. Report the steps taken, the advice received from public health officials, and the decisions taken in the required format (See **Annexure B**) to the dedicated email address info2020@ecdoe.gov.za.

7. COMMUNICATION AND AWARENESS

- 7.1. Chief Directors and Directors are to conduct awareness sessions with the employees in their units on the prevention and control of COVID-19.
- 7.2. Posters should be displayed in all buildings (you may download these from our website)
- 7.3. The HOD will issue regular communication in the Department regarding the measures in place as well as the response of the Department to the pandemic. Chief Directors and Directors must ensure that all employees in the units are informed and kept up to date with the Department communications issued.
- 7.4. SMS members are required to keep up to date with NDoH and the World Health Organisation (WHO) advice, updates and communicate these to employees regularly.
- 7.5. In order to stay well informed of the current state of affairs relating to the pandemic, SMS members are advised to refer to the following resources:
- National Department of Health: <https://www.health.gov.za>
 - South African Coronavirus Hotline Number: 0800 02 99 99
 - National Institute for Communicable Diseases: <https://www.nicd.ac.za>
 - National Institute of Occupational Health: <https://www.nioh.ac.za>
 - National Health Laboratory Service: <https://www.nhls.ac.za>
 - World Health Organisation: <https://www.who.int>
- 7.6. To strengthen communication and to discourage the spreading of fake news the National Department of Health (NDoH) developed a service *via* WhatsApp where the latest information on COVID-19 can be obtained and accessed on +27 600 123 456. This service must be communicated to employees to ensure they are in receipt of the latest information and to combat the spreading of fake news that has the potential to disrupt service delivery, undo containment measures and lead to panic.

8. DEPARTMENT INFORMATION CENTRE

- 8.1. To facilitate the sharing of information and reporting potential risks on matters affecting the Department as a result of COVID-19, an Information Centre has been established. This will enable the Department to collect information to make informed decisions based on accurate and verified information received.
- 8.2. The Information Centre is the hub for the collection of all relevant information, is not a medical helpline, and does not replace any other helplines or toll-free numbers established by any other Department.

8.3. The Information Centre also does not replace any other communication systems already in place in the Department.

8.4. Contact details for the Information Centre

Information can be shared by way of:

telephone calls, sms messages and WhatsApp messages to -

087 1311 455

or e-mail to -

info2020@ecdoe.gov.za

8.5. Everyone is urged to verify information before it is shared. Please do not share fake news.

8.6. In dealing with the response to COVID-19 SMS members must seek advice and use discretion in dealing with matters not covered in this instruction note.

9. DISSEMINATION OF INSTRUCTION

SMS members must ensure that all employees within their areas of responsibility are informed of this Instruction.

It is of utmost importance that no person affected or infected with the virus, be stigmatised in any way. Any reports and medical information about officials must be dealt with in the strictest confidentiality.

Let us continue to call for calm and cooperation from employees during this period. Our collective and joint actions to support the national efforts to contain and manage COVID-19 is every employee's responsibility. Employees are also requested to share these messages with their families and their communities.

Yours faithfully



**MR. T.S. KOJANA
SUPERINTENDENT-GENERAL**

Date: 19/03/2020

ANNEXURE A

Province	Eastern Cape
Department	Eastern Cape Department of Education

REPORTING OF EMPLOYEES WITH COVID-19

NAME	PERSAL NUMBER	DISTRICT/DIRECTORATE IF AT HEAD OFFICE	DATE OF INFECTION	ISOLATION DATE	QUARANTINE DATE	CONFIRMED CASE OF COVID 19 Y/N	SUSPECTED CASE Y/N	DEATH	QUARANTINED AS PRECAUTION

REPORT COMPILED BY:

NAME: _____
SIGNATURE: _____
DESIGNATION: _____

REPORT APPROVED BY:

NAME: _____
SIGNATURE: _____
DESIGNATION: _____

ANNEXURE B
REPORTING OF CLOSURE OF OFFICES DUE TO COVID 19

UNIT/OFFICE BUILDING	DATE OF CLOSURE	NUMBER OF OFFICIALS AFFECTED	PHYSICAL ADDRESS	TYPE OF SERVICE IMPACTED BY CLOSUR	ENVISIONED DATE OF RE-OPENING

REPORT COMPILED BY:

NAME: _____

SIGNATURE: _____

DESIGNATION: _____

DATE: _____

REPORT APPROVED BY:

NAME: _____

SIGNATURE: _____

DESIGNATION: _____

DATE: _____

ANNEXURE C
REPORTING OF TRAVEL

NAME	PERSAL NUMBER	DISTRICT/ DIRECTORATE IF AT HEAD OFFICE	DATE OF TRAVEL	COUNTRIES VISITED	QUARANTINED DATE IF APPLICABLE	CONFIRMED CASE OF COVID 19 Y/N	SUSPECTED CASE Y/N	DEATH	QUARANTINED AS PRECAUTION

REPORT COMPILED BY:

NAME: _____

SIGNATURE: _____

DESIGNATION: _____

DATE: _____

REPORT APPROVED BY:

NAME: _____

SIGNATURE: _____

DESIGNATION: _____

DATE: _____