

29 MAY 2021

## NEW DIRECTIONS ON THE RETURN TO DAILY ATTENDANCE OF LEARNERS IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS

The Department of Basic Education has issued Directions that provide clarity on the date of the return of all learners in primary schools. The Government Gazette released on Friday also addresses issues regarding the suspension of contact sports in schools.

Basic Education Minister Mrs Angie Motshekga signed the Directions on Friday.

In terms of the Directions primary school learners (Grades R to 7) must return to the daily attendance and traditional timetabling model from 26 July 2021. This provided that the risk adjusted differentiated strategy is implemented.

Based on the risk adjusted differentiated strategy, schools for learners with special education needs (Grades R to 12) must also return to the daily attendance and traditional timetabling model from 26 July 2021. According to the current 2021 School Calendar the Second Term ends on 9 July and schools will reopen for the Third Term on 26 July 2021.

A risk adjusted differentiated strategy means an approach to school attendance that is determined by the direction the COVID-19 pandemic is taking in the district municipality and country.

The Gazette also states that where practicable, a primary school, a school for learners with special education needs that returns to the traditional timetabling model and school hostels must comply with the social distancing, minimum health and safety measures on COVID-19, as contemplated in these directions, the DBE Standard Operating Procedure and the Regulations.

Teaching and learning may be conducted outside the confines of a classroom provided that all health and safety measures on COVID-19, as contemplated in these directions, the DBE Standard Operating Procedure and the Regulations, are adhered to and the safety of learners is ensured.

The Directions must be read with Circular No. 3 of 2021, dated 27 May 2021, regarding the temporary suspension of contact sport in schools, which is available on the Department of Basic Education website. The directions are an outcome of research and extensive consultation with stakeholders in the basic education sector.

The Council of Education Ministers, the Committee of Heads of Education Departments (HEDCOM), school governing body associations, teacher unions, principals association (SAPA), South African National Association for Special Education, (SANASE) and civil society organisations facilitated by the National Education Collaboration Trust (NECT) all had an opportunity to make input which informed the Directions that have been gazetted.

The Department appreciates the contribution from all stakeholders particularly in the management of the impact of the pandemic on schooling.

### ISSUED BY THE DEPARTMENT OF BASIC EDUCATION

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