

South Africa

Disaster Management Act, 2002

Directions Regarding the Re-opening of Schools and Measures to Address, Prevent and Combat the Spread of COVID-19 in the Department of Basic Education, All Provincial Education Departments, All Education District Offices and All Schools in the Republic of South Africa

General Notice 302 of 2020

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General Notice 302 of 2020

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[Repealed by [Directions Regarding the Re-opening of Schools and Measures to Address, Prevent and Combat the Spread of COVID-19 in the National Department of Basic Education, and Provincial Departments of Education, and all Schools in the Republic of South Africa \(General Notice 343 of 2020\)](#) on 23 June 2020]

I, Angelina Matsie Motshekga, Minister of Basic Education, in terms of regulation 4(3) of the Regulations made under the Disaster Management Act, 2002 ([Act No. 57 of 2002](#)), as published under Government Notice No. R.480, in Government Gazette No. 43258 of 29 April 2020, as amended by the Regulations published under Government Notice No. R.608, in Government Gazette No. 43364 of 28 May 2020, hereby issue the directions in the Schedule regarding the re-opening of schools and measures to address, prevent and combat the spread of COVID-19 in the National Department of Basic Education, all provincial education departments, all education district offices and all schools in the Republic of South Africa.

Mrs AM Motshekga, MP

Minister of Basic Education

1. Definitions

In these directions, a word or expression bears the meaning assigned to it in the Disaster Management Act or in the Regulations, and, unless the context indicates otherwise—

"certificate" means a certificate issued in terms of direction 6;

"Department of Health Guidelines" means the Guidelines for symptom monitoring and management of essential workers for COVID-19 related infection, issued by the Department of Health in April 2020, accessible through the following link: <https://www.saioh.co.za/news/502409/Guidelines-for-symptom-monitoring-and-management-of-essential-workers-for-COVID-19-related-infection.htm>;

"Disaster Management Act" means the Disaster Management Act, 2002 ([Act No. 57 of 2002](#));

"education department" means the department established by section 7(2) of the Public Service Act, 1994 ([Proclamation No. 103 of 1994](#)), which is responsible for education in a province;

"head of department" has the meaning assigned to it in the Public Service Act;

"Minister" means the Minister of Basic Education;

"offices" includes the education department, its district offices including any other office within the jurisdiction of the head of department and the National Department of Education

"official" includes—

- (a) circuit Managers;
- (b) district directors;
- (c) provincial educator performance managers;
- (d) provincial whole school evaluation supervisors;
- (e) Chief Education Specialists;
- (f) Deputy Chief Education Specialists;
- (g) health and social Work professionals in schools;
- (h) National School Nutrition Programme Directors;
- (i) District National School Nutrition Programme Managers or Coordinators;
- (j) volunteer workers and food handlers;
- (k) Chief food handlers;
- (l) provincial and district school health programme managers;
- (m) HIV or AIDS life skills education programme managers;
- (n) non-teaching staff, including administrative and general support workers;
- (o) school principals;
- (p) school heads of department; and
- (q) educators;

"permit" means a permit issued in terms of direction 6;

"platooning" means schools or a schooling system in which two separate sets of teachers and pupils use the same school building, one set in the morning and the other set in the afternoon;

"principal" means an educator appointed or acting as the head of a school as contemplated in the South African Schools Act;

"school" has the meaning assigned to it in the South African Schools Act;

"South African Schools Act" means the South African Schools Act, 1996 ([Act No. 84 of 1996](#));

"state of disaster" means the national state of disaster, declared by the Minister of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs on 15 March 2020 in terms of section 27(1) of the Disaster Management Act; and

"the Regulations" means the Regulations made in terms of section 27(2) of the Disaster Management Act and published under Government Notice No. R. 480 in Government Gazette No. 43258 of 29 April 2020, as amended by the Regulations published under Government Notice No. R.608, in Government Gazette No. 43364 of 28 May 2020.

2. Objectives

The objectives of this direction are—

- (a) to provide for arrangements for a phased return of educators, officials and learners to schools and offices;

- (b) for the Department of Basic Education, provincial education departments, education districts, offices and schools to comply with their obligations in accordance with—
 - (i) the Regulations;
 - (ii) the directions issued by the Minister of Employment and Labour in terms of regulation 10(8) of the Regulations;
 - (iii) Circular 7 of 2020, issued by the Department of Public Service and Administration, entitled: State of Disaster: Guidelines for the Containment/Management of the Corona Virus (COVID-19) in the Public Service;
 - (iv) Circular 18 of 2020, issued by the Department of Public Service and Administration, entitled: State of Disaster COVID-19: Public Service Return to Work Guidelines after the Easing of the National Lockdown; and
 - (v) Chapter H of the Personnel Administrative Measures dealing with leave measures applicable to educators; and
- (c) to ensure a uniform approach in respect of the manner in which the Department of Basic Education, provincial education departments, education districts and schools phase in the return to schools and offices.

3. Scope and application

- (1) These directions apply to—
 - (a) all schools, offices; and basic education institutions;
 - (b) learners;
 - (c) educators; and
 - (d) officials.
- (2) The provisions contained in these Directions apply for the duration of the state of disaster, unless otherwise indicated.

4. Phased in return to school of learners, educators and officials

- (1) The phased in return of learners, educators and officials to school will be as follows:

Grades	Return to school date
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grade 7; • Grade 12; and • School of Skills: Year 4 	1 June 2020
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Early Childhood Development ("ECD"); • Grades R; • Grade 3; • Grade 6; • Grade 10; • Grade 11; • School of Skills: Years 2 and 3; • Schools for Learners with Severe Intellectual Disabilities ("SID"): Grades R, 1,2, 3 and 6; and • Special Care Centres for Learners with Severe and Profound Intellectual Disabilities ("LSPID"): Years 1-3 	6 July 2020
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grade 4; • Grade 5; • Grade 8 • Grade 9; • School of Skills: Year 1; and • Schools for Learners with Severe Intellectual Disabilities ("SID"): Grades 4 and 5 	3 August 2020

- (2) Only those schools and offices that have complied with the minimum health, safety and social distancing measure on COVID-19, as contemplated in these Directions and the Regulations, will be allowed to open as contemplated in subdirection (1).
- (3) A school or office that has failed to comply with the minimum health, safety and social distancing measures on COVID-19, as contemplated in these Directions and the Regulations, will remain closed until all the health, safety and social distancing measures are in place.
- (4) A parent who chooses not to send a learner to school must apply to the head of department, who, in terms of section 4 of the South African Schools Act, may exempt a learner entirely, partially or conditionally from compulsory school attendance, if it is in the best interests of the learner.
- (5) A parent who chooses not to send a learner to school is obliged to apply for home education in terms of the relevant section of the South African Schools Act.

- (6) All events at schools, including sport, choral eisteddfods or choir rehearsals, arts and other cultural festivals remain suspended until determined by the Minister or an official delegated by the Minister after consultation with the Cabinet.

5. May/June examination

The May/June 2020 examination for candidates who registered for the Senior Certificate and the National Senior Certificate will be administered in November/December 2020, unless unforeseen circumstances occur, in which instance the Minister shall make the necessary determination.

6. Issuing of permits and certificates

- (1) In accordance with regulation 16(2)(b) and (4) of the Regulations, read with regulations 34(5) and (6) of the Regulations, movement between provinces, metropolitan areas and districts are permitted —
 - (a) for officials and educators who have a permit that substantially corresponds with Form 2, attached to Annexure A of the Regulations, to perform an essential or permitted service during the applicable Alert Level and who have to commute to and from work on a daily basis; and
 - (b) for learners who have been issued with a certificate that substantially corresponds with Form 3A, attached to Annexure A of the Regulations, to commute to and from school on a daily basis.
- (2) A permit referred to in subdirection (1) may be issued by the heads of department or a delegated official or, in the case of a school, by a principal or a person delegated by him or her.
- (3) The certificate referred to in subdirection (1)(b) may be issued by the principal or a delegated official.
- (4) The issuing of permits and certificates referred to in subdirection (1) must be done in compliance with the Regulations.
- (5) Officials of the Department of Basic Education, provincial education department, district offices and educators may commute between their places of residence, offices, and schools within their provincial area of work for purposes of performing permitted services upon presenting the permit referred to in subdirection (1), together with any form of identification, if requested to do so by enforcement officers.
- (6) A learner, other than the learner referred to in subdirection (1)(b), must be issued with a certificate, by the principal or a person delegated by him or her, on a form which corresponds to Annexure A to these directions, for purposes of travel, which states that the learner attends that specific school.
- (7) The certificate referred to in subdirection (6) must contain the name and address of the school and the particulars of the learner concerned.
- (8) A person transporting a learner to school must be issued with a permit as contemplated in regulation 34(7) of the Regulations.
- (9) The certificate and permit referred to in subdirections (1), (3) and (8) respectively, must be issued no later than seven days from the respective commencement dates specified for the phased in return of learners, educators and officials, as contemplated in direction 4(1).

7. General safety measures at offices and schools for duration of state of disaster

- (1) All offices and schools must develop a workplace plan, as contemplated in regulation 16(6)(b) and Annexure E to the Regulations.
- (2) Parents and guardians must not send learners to school if the learners have any of the symptoms of COVID-19.

- (3) Every office and school must implement the health and safety measures as contained in these directions and in the Regulations.

8. Symptom screening

- (1) Symptom screening must be conducted at offices or schools in accordance with the Department of Health Guidelines.
- (2) Any person who enters an office or school must be screened, to ascertain whether they have any of the observable symptoms associated with COVID-19, namely fever, cough, sore throat, redness of eyes, shortness of breath or difficulty in breathing.
- (3) Any person who suffers from the symptoms referred to in subdirection (1) or who experiences additional symptoms of body aches, loss of smell or loss of taste, nausea, vomiting, diarrhoea, fatigue, weakness or tiredness, while at the office or school, must immediately report such symptoms to the compliance officer or designated official.
- (4) If a person presents with the symptoms referred to in subdirection (1) or (2), or informs the compliance officer or designated official of these symptoms, the office or school must—
 - (a) not permit the person to enter the premises; or
 - (b) if the person is already on the premises of a school or office—
 - (i) immediately isolate the person, and require that person or, in the case of a learner, advise the parent or guardian, to make arrangements to be transported in a manner that does not place any other person or members of the public at risk, either to be self-isolated or for a medical examination or testing; and
 - (ii) assess the risk of transmission, disinfect the area and any official's, educator's or learner's workstation, refer those persons who may be at risk for screening and take any other appropriate measure to prevent possible transmission.
- (5) If there is evidence that the official, or educator contracted COVID-19 as a result of occupational exposure, lodge a claim for compensation in terms of the Compensation for Occupational Injuries and Diseases Act, 1993 ([Act No. 130 of 1993](#)) in accordance with Notice 193 published on 3 March 2020, if applicable.
- (6) If any person has been diagnosed with COVID-19 and isolated in accordance with the Department of Health Guidelines, an office or a school may only allow the return of such person to the office or school on condition that he or she has undergone a medical evaluation confirming that he or she has tested negative for COVID-19.

9. Sanitizers, disinfectants and masks

- (1) For the purposes of these directions, a hand sanitizer must be one that contains at least 70% alcohol and is complies with the recommendations of the Department of Health.
- (2) Every office and school must ensure that there are—
 - (a) easily accessible, sufficient quantities of hand sanitizers, based on the number of learners, educators or officials or other persons who access the office or school at the entrance of, and in, the workplace which the persons are required to use; and
 - (b) facilities for washing of hands with soap and clean water.
- (3) Every office and school must take proper measures to ensure that—
 - (a) all work surfaces and equipment are cleaned before school or work begins, or after school or work ends; and

- (b) all areas, such as toilets, common areas, door handles and shared electronic equipment are regularly cleaned;
- (4) Every office and school must—
 - (a) provide each official and educator, with a minimum of two cloth face masks; and
 - (b) require learners and any other person entering the office or school premises to wear a cloth face mask, a homemade item that covers the nose and mouth or another appropriate item to cover the nose and mouth, when in a public place.

10. Social distancing and timetable models

- (1) Every office and school must comply with the social distancing requirement of at least 1.5 meters, as prescribed in the Regulations.
- (2) In order to ensure compliance with health, safety, and social distancing requirements, school facilities must operate at 50% or less of their capacity at any given time.
- (3) Subject to subdirection (4), schools may consider and apply any of following available timetable models suitable for their context and functionality:
 - (a) Daily and weekly rotation;
 - (b) bi-weekly rotation;
 - (c) platooning or shifts;
 - (d) traditional and daily; or
 - (e) a hybrid of the latter.
- (4) Subject to subdirection (5), schools with large enough facilities to comply with health, safety, and social distancing requirements do not have to change their standard timetable models and may continue to operate in accordance with those timetable models, provided that they ensure compliance with the health, safety, and social distancing requirements as set out in these directions and in the Regulations. Such schools are exempted from subdirection (2).
- (5) Schools that require to be exempted from following subdirection (4) must apply, in writing, to the provincial head of department through the nearest circuit office.
- (6) The head of department or delegated official who considers an application by a school in terms of subdirection (5), must ensure that the school has met the health, safety and social distancing measure before approving the exemption.

11. Curriculum trimming and re-organisation

- (1) In order to accommodate the teaching time lost as a result of the state of disaster and the adjustment of timetables, the curriculum, as articulated in the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement, has been reviewed by the Minister in accordance with [section 3\(4\)\(l\)](#) of the National Education Policy Act, 1996 ([Act No. 27 of 1996](#)), which empowers the Minister to determine national policy for curriculum frameworks, core syllabuses and education programmes.

12. Short title and commencement

These directions are called the Directions regarding the re-opening of schools and measures to address, prevent and combat the spread of COVID-19 in the Department of Basic Education, all provincial education departments, all education district offices and all schools in the Republic of South Africa, and come into operation on the date of publication thereof in the Government Gazette.

Annexure A

Certificate for learners attending school

[Issued in terms of direction 6(5)]

To be completed by the principal or a person authorised by the principal

I, _____ (Name and Surname), the principal or authorised person, of:

Full name of school:	
Full physical address of school:	
Contact number of school:	

hereby issue this certificate for travel to the following learner:

Full names:	
Surname:	
Full address of place of residence of learner:	

hereby issue this permit to the following person/s to transport the learner mentioned in this permit:

1. Full names:						
Surname:						
Identity number						
Full address of place of residence:						
Contact details	Cell nr		Tel No (h)		e-mail address	
2. Full names:						
Surname:						
Identity number						
Full address of place of residence:						
Contact details:	Cell nr		Tel No (h)		e-mail address	

Signed at _____ this ____ day of _____ 2020.

Principal or authorised person issuing

*Official
stamp*