



# GAUTENG PROVINCE

EDUCATION  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

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## STAFF MEMORANDUM NO. 29 OF 2020

**TO: PRINCIPALS AND STAFF OF SCHOOLS  
GAUTENG DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION**

**Cc: SGB ASSOCIATIONS  
LABOUR UNIONS IN THE EDUCATION SECTOR**

**FROM: MR. EDWARD MOSUWE  
HEAD OF DEPARTMENT**

**DATE: 09 MAY 2020**

**SUBJECT: PHASED-IN RESUMPTION OF WORK BY GDE SCHOOL  
STAFF**

The Presidential address of 23<sup>rd</sup> April 2020 indicated that the National Coronavirus Command Council has determined that the Corona Virus lockdown alert level be lowered from level 5 to level 4, with effect from 1<sup>st</sup> May 2020.

Therefore, it is expected that **we all take extreme precaution to limit community transmission and outbreaks, while allowing a phased recovery of education services.**

Subsequently, on the 30<sup>th</sup> April 2020, the Minister for Basic Education announced the details regarding the re-opening of the Basic Education System on an incremental basis with effect from 4<sup>th</sup> May 2020.

This memorandum therefore serves to clarify and provide direction in the resumption of work by all school-based staff members and managers in the Department, including teaching-aides and interns appointed or hosted by the department.

### 1. Resumption of Duty by School-Based Staff

In line with the provisions of DBE guidelines on the resumption of schooling and **DPSA Circular 18 of 2020**, the process outlined below for resumption of duty by staff at different levels of the Gauteng education sector will apply:

## PHASED-IN RESUMPTION OF WORK BY GDE STAFF

SCHOOL LEVEL	
Category of Employees	Date of Return
<b>Principals and/or their Deputies</b> will be required to be available from <b>Wednesday 13 May 2020</b> , to receive PPEs for the school and school disinfection programmes. (See 1.1)	<b>13 May 2020</b>
<b>School Management Teams (SMTs)</b>	<b>To be advised in line with Par. 1.2 below</b>
<b>All teachers, including Grade R practitioners and all other staff members</b> (in line with the social distancing protocols)	<b>To be advised in line with Par. 1.2 below</b>
HEAD OFFICE AND DISTRICT OFFICES LEVEL	
Category of Employees	Date of Return
<b>Districts and Head Office will resume duties</b>	<b>11 May 2020</b>

- 1.1 In terms of schools, Principals and/or their Deputies will be required to be available from **Wednesday 13 May 2020**, to receive the procured PPEs and the programme for the disinfection of schools in preparation of return of staff at school level. A delivery schedule of the PPEs will be communicated with Principals of schools in due course.
- 1.2 It is important to note that schools will not reopen unless the basic essentials agreed to are in place. We are working towards ensuring all schools are ready to open at the same time. However, due to varying scope and degree of deep cleaning and disinfection required by the different schools, some schools will not be ready for resumption of schooling by the agreed date. As such, these schools will open as and when readiness has been verified and affected schools and parents will be informed accordingly.
- 1.3 The disinfection of all schools will commence on 18 May 2020 and will be completed before 1 June 2020. A schedule for the decontamination of schools will be communicated with the respective schools.

## **2. Implications and Compliance to COVID-19 Regulations and DPSA prescriptions the following arrangements are in place:**

There are implications for our work arrangements which are to be applied to curb the spread of the COVID-19 virus. The OHS requirements and precautionary measures to be met by the Department, include amongst others, the following:

### **2.1 Acquisition of PPEs and disinfection of school facilities**

The Department in consultation with the Provincial Steering Committee (an employee's/employer structure on COVID-19), has made significant progress in finalising infrastructural and OHS readiness for the re-opening of our educational facilities.

The minimum essential PPEs for Teachers, Learners and Staff have been procured. Deliveries of these to schools will be completed by the end of May 2020.

These will be issued to learners, teachers and staff on their return to the school.

## **2.2 Social Distancing in school offices and staffrooms:**

Social distancing at the workplace is to be institutionalised in preventing the spread of COVID-19. In this regard:

- All entrances to the school premises, security and frontline personnel are provided with PPEs and access to the school will be controlled.
- All visitors to the schools are discouraged and will only be allowed by appointment.
- SMTs are strictly directed that office space and seating plans are re-arranged to adhere to at least 1 to 1,5 metres between employees in the workspace.
- Staff should ensure that the seating arrangements set up is maintained at a distance of at least one and a half metres from each other.
- SMTs and Staff should not set up face-to-face meetings with parents or the public, unless necessary. Designated areas have to be set aside for waiting and meeting with external persons.
- SMTs should promote the use of dedicated email addresses and telephone contact numbers, which should be used for services to the parents.

## **2.3 Standards of hygiene and Health Protocols**

The following protocols, procedures and measures have been established for the workplace:

- There are measures to **screen all learners, staff and any other person entering the workplace**, for any observable symptoms associated with COVID-19.
- **PPEs are provided to all learners, teachers and staff** in the workplace, which include masks.
- **The frontline employees, including teachers, at schools should be trained** to be conversant with the protocols pertaining to COVID 19 to respond timeously and identify risks.
- **It is always mandatory for everyone in school to wear a face mask**
- Disinfection of schools facilities introduced wherein **all work surfaces** and equipment will be **disinfected** regularly.
- There are **sanitizers strategically placed** at common areas, doorways, as well as hand soaps in bathrooms at each block in the schools.
- There are protocols as to the use of shared office equipment and how documents are handled, conveyed, disposed and stored and these are displayed in prominent places
- Procedures are in place for monitoring the depletion of sanitation packages and timeous re-ordering.
- **Please wash hands regularly with soap and water for at least 20 seconds regularly.**

3. Teachers and Staff members who are classified as **vulnerable and/or with underlying conditions** are expected to alert their supervisors and complete the necessary form for this purpose so that applicable work arrangements and/or leave can be arranged. SMT members must ensure that there is no compulsion for disclosure.
4. All SMT members should ensure that the internal protocols and communication strategies for the management of office staff and members of the public are observed, for continuity of service delivery.
5. SMTs, teachers and staff must ensure that all work arrangements made in all units are based on:
  - Operational requirements at your area of work;
  - Completion of all essential and outstanding educational or teaching tasks; and
  - Regular reporting and escalation of any issue you are unsure of.

Managers are urged to be very supportive in handling staff management issues during this period.

6. All SMT should meet with their School Governing Body before the schools open to communicate the steps that are being taken in the school. If possible, the SGB and SMT should identify community structures to be met before schools open so that schools maximise communication that builds public confidence.
7. Please note that the detailed protocols, guidelines and standard operating procedures related to the management of COVID-19 at schools is being finalized jointly with the Department of Basic Education (DBE) and in consultation with Unions and SGB Associations.

These will be issued to all affected personnel in schools with the necessary orientation and training.

8. It is expected that all Independent schools would use these guidelines to formulate their own resumption of schooling plan that is consistent with the national COVID 19 regulations and related OHS guidelines and prescriptions.
9. I would like to appeal to all staff members and managers to adhere to the above-mentioned Departmental measures against COVID-19 pandemic.

Yours sincerely



**MR EDWARD MOSUWE**  
**HEAD OF DEPARTMENT**

DATE: 9/5/2020