

MEDIA RELEASE **COVID-19: PSA calls for delay of return of school management teams and support staff**

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EMBARGO None

ENQUIRIES communication@psa.co.za

The Public Servants Association (PSA), is calling on the Minister of Basic Education to delay the return of School Management Teams (SMT) and support staff as COVID-19 continues to ravage the country.

These teams returned to schools on 25 January 2021 to prepare for the return of learners on 15 February 2021. The PSA, which represents thousands of Educators and Administrative staff in schools nationwide, regards the return as premature and posing an unnecessary risk of fuelling the spread of the virus ahead of the start of the school year. These teams could have returned on Monday, 8 February 2021 to do the necessary preparations in good time.

Education Sector employees are also regarded as frontline workers and should also be regarded as such when the COVID-19 vaccine is rolled out from 1 February 2021. Educators are in daily contact with learners coming from multiple households, which can cause a further rapid spreading of the virus. It therefore makes sense to delay the return of SMT and support staff until they have been vaccinated.

Since the onset of the pandemic, thousands of educators were infected and more than a hundred lost their lives. Delaying the return of SMT and support staff until the vaccination process has started will not impacts on the preparation of schools but will rather ensure that educators and learners are safe and can focus on teaching and learning.

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