

MEDIA RELEASE	COVID-19: PSA welcomes temporary closure of schools but questions status of private schools
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The Public Servants Association (PSA), which represents thousands of educators and of non-teaching staff at schools, welcomes the announcement on 23 July 2020 by the President Cyril Ramaphosa to temporarily close schools.

The PSA regards the temporary closure of schools as a sensible approach, considering the serious increase in the rate of COVID-19 infections. The PSA is, however, disappointed that no mention was made of private schools, which effectively means that these schools will remain open. Private schools are already in an advantaged position thanks to superior infrastructure and resources. The fact that learners at private schools will continue to attend schools during this period will widen the gap in the unequal education system.

The PSA has also noted with disappointment that some learners will be asked to return to school in a week's time even though no learner, irrespective of grade, is immune to the virus. No learners should have returned to school until the country gains control over the infection rate.

In addition, the public is still left with uncertainties on how the Department of Basic Education intends implementing a plan to salvage the school academic year and the PSA calls upon Government to act swiftly in this regard.

The PSA lauds the President for taking a tough stance on corruption and looting by ruthless persons who are exploiting the current crisis in the country to fraudulently enrich themselves. The PSA calls on law enforcement agencies to act swiftly against these perpetrators who are depriving the most vulnerable in the country of their basic of needs, including food and personal protective equipment.

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