

**MEDIA RELEASE**                      **Limpopo Special School: PSA calls for urgent intervention on shocking conditions**

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The Public Servants Association (PSA) visited the Benedict and Hope Centre Special School in Mankweng in Limpopo on 25 August 2020 and was shocked about conditions at the School, which impacts on the health and safety of learners and employees.

The School caters for learners with mental and physical disabilities, necessitating specialised care. This care is, however, lacking as the cleaning standards are poor as the environment is very dirty. The School recently reopened without any cleaning or disinfection taking place, exposing learners and employees to COVID-19 infection.

The School hostel has no ventilation as windows are welded and cannot be opened. The congested facility caters for 100 learners with no possibility of social distancing. These learners are sharing two broken and often blocked toilets. The three showers must be shared by 35 learners. The only washing machine and tumble dryer are not working, forcing cleaners to handwash clothes. The School Governing Body is absent, leaving the Principal with unfettered power with a risk to proper governance and accountability. The Department of Education has also failed to provide employees with uniforms.

The situation at the School reflects little care by the Department and is tantamount to discrimination against the vulnerable learners. The PSA condemns treating learners with special needs as second-grade learners and will continue protecting the rights of those who cannot defend themselves. The PSA calls on the Limpopo MEC of Education to urgently intervene as this situation could result in the loss of lives for these neglected learners .

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