

**MEDIA RELEASE**

**PSA calls upon the Limpopo Provincial Command Council to close schools amid rising COVID-19 cases in schools**

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The Public Servants Association (PSA) noted with concern the problems experienced by many schools in Limpopo that have the potential to increase the spread of the COVID-19 virus.


Despite the more than 50 schools that remains closed, the majority of schools opened are without water and proper sanitation which are part of necessities to contain the virus and promote good hygiene practices. Schools in Blouberg Municipality such as Letsoaka Primary, Mphela High experienced intermittent water supply while Seshego High did not have water at all. Mydarling and Maripo Primary Schools had dysfunctional thermometers hence educators and learners entered schools without scanning of temperatures. The learners at Seshego High could not receive their food and entered schools without being scanned, only to be scanned after 09h00 when a scanner was borrowed from another school.

The PSA have checked the schools in Limpopo and established that 90% of schools in Limpopo have not established the COVID-19 Steering Committees and have not appointed Compliance Officers in terms of Safety Directives. These committees and Compliance Officers are responsible to constantly check that the safety measures are implemented and adhered to. Safety measures in these schools are found to be partly implemented or not implemented at all which puts the lives of Educators and learners at risk.

The Council must note the alarming increase of COVID-19 infection for educators and pupils across the country which can be attributed to compromised safety measures and unpreparedness of schools. It is clear that, social distancing is not being observed, water supply is not adequate, lack of proper sanitation and screening processes compromised. Secrecy in containing information of positive COVID-19 cases by the Department of Education to avoid being exposed of their failure is another major issue. Sadly, this lack of transparency further compromises the lives of those going to these schools as most of them will not disinfect those schools which is a prerequisite where there is positive case.

The Principals who continues to keep learners at schools, allow them to access school premises without screening and temperature scanning, with no water and toilets must face the law as the accounting officers at schools. The Command Council must take the responsibility and order the schools to be closed to allow for proper preparations of schools before the problems become unmanageable. The call for more than 100 schools to be closed nationally should be a wakeup call to the Provincial Command Council.

The PSA values the importance of education however safety of educators and learners remains of utmost importance as failure to exercise extra caution can result in the escalating infection of the virus which might create major catastrophe in the Province.



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