

MEDIA RELEASE PSA mourns learners who died in Vanderbijlpark scholar-transport crash

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The Public Servants Association (PSA) mourns the tragic loss of 13 learners who died in a scholar-transport crash in Vanderbijlpark, Gauteng, on 19 January 2026.

According to news reports and official updates, the collision between a private scholar-transport minibus and a tipper truck occurred shortly after 07:00 on Fred Drost Road in Vanderbijlpark. It was reported that eleven learners were declared dead at the scene, and two later died in hospital.

The PSA sincere condolences to the parents, guardians, families, educators, and school communities affected by this devastating tragedy. The Union also wishes the injured learners a speedy recovery. The PSA notes that the South African Police Service has opened 13 counts of culpable homicide, with investigations continuing and the possibility of additional charges, depending on findings. The PSA supports a thorough, transparent investigation to ensure that facts are established, and accountability follows where warranted.

This tragedy once again exposes the urgent need to strengthen the safety of scholar transport. Public discourse and reporting around this incident have already raised concerns about road behaviour and the standards of learner-transport services. Whilst the investigation must determine the cause of the accident conclusively, the PSA calls for immediate, enforceable measures to protect children on their daily journeys to and from school. Such measures should include strict roadworthiness compliance, safe loading practices, and firm consequences for reckless conduct.

The PSA further calls for coordinated psychosocial support for affected families, learners, and educators as communities in the Vaal region grapple with shock and grief. Children must never pay with their lives for failures in road safety, transport oversight, or law enforcement. The PSA will continue to advocate for safer public systems and stronger protection for learners and communities across South Africa.

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