

Update COVID-19: Level 4 return to work

The PSA in the Eastern Cape is inundated with calls from employees of the Department of Education Department about the return to work in the wake of the risk-adjusted strategy for economic activity announced by President Ramaphosa on 23 April 2020. The strategy referred to as “Level 4” seeks to relax some measures that were implemented to prevent the spread of COVID-19, permitted retail and service operations to commence with effect from 1 May 2020. COVID-19 Level 4 included the opening of operations in most departments with strict instructions that should be adhered to before any recalling of employees is considered, which includes:

- The third of the work force to be recalled and maintaining social distancing
- Provision of adequate PPE and screening devices
- Measures to be in place for officials with underlying health challenges
- Strict adherence to the *Occupational Health and Safety Act, 1993*
- The disinfection/fumigation of workplaces before return of employees

On 2 May 2020 the Department of Education arranged a virtual consultation meeting with all stakeholders, chaired by the Head of Department. Two draft instructions were discussed, i.e. Instruction 13 covering the opening of the Education sector and public schools and Instruction 14 covering Support staff at schools, and interim health and safety measures during COVID-19. Both were agreed upon and approved after inputs and clarifications from all stakeholders for circulation.

Below are some of the urgent matters in terms of reporting according to dates that are also contained in the Instructions:

- 4 May 2020: Only HOD, District Directors and Identified Senior Officials.
- 11 May 2020: Only Principals and SMT to report.
- 18 May 2020: All teaching staff will be expected to report.
- 1 June 2020: Will be guided by the Minister in terms of readiness for the phasing in of learners.
- All other categories, including office-based officials: Return to work will be informed by developments in the sector and will be communicated when arising.

Instructions 13 and 14 will be made available to members once available.

GENERAL MANAGER

