

FOR PSA MEMBERS: NORTHERN CAPE- DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

12-05-2020

Update: COVID-19 Department of Education - Northern Cape

The Steering Committee of the Department of Education sat on 8 May 2020 and the following is an update on what was deliberated at the meeting on 21 April 2020:

- Name of committee changed from Covid-19 Steering Committee to Occupational Health and Covid-19 Safety Committee in terms of DPSA Circular 18.
- Dr Ishmael was appointed as the Compliance Officer, also in terms of the DPSA Circular.
- All Offices of the department will open on 11 May 2020 although it was supposed to open on 4 May 2020, the department was not ready at that stage.
- Permits will be issued to all staff that report for duty on 11 May 2020

Social Distancing:

- 1/3 of the staff in all offices will return to work on Monday, 11 May 2020 but not all employees will be starting at the same time, the starting times will be staggered, *eg.* 07:30, 08:00, 09:00 and 10:00 daily. Critical staff as identified by the employer will be expected to return to work.
- Employees with co-morbidities, pregnant women, persons who are 60 years old and above, to remain at home on special leave, but employees with tools of the trade will work remotely from home. NB!! Employees with co-morbidities must present doctor's certificates indicating their chronic illnesses and vulnerability in contracting the virus. The employer will also distribute a circular soon, indicating the co-morbidities after engaging the Department of Health.
- For natural ventilation, all welded windows will be opened to allow fresh air into the offices.

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE):

- Temperature scanners will be delivered to the Provincial Office of the department on 8 May 2020 and will be distributed to all districts by the weekend before 11 May 2020.
- Screening training: Directors and Management in the districts have already been trained, training was provided by the Department of Health. As soon as the scanners arrive, the screeners at offices will be trained by Health. Health and Safety Representatives will also be given the screening training. The Department made it categorically clear that they will not be dealing with any testing because that is the responsibility of the Department of Health. Employees showing any signs of the virus will be transported immediately to the nearest health facility.

- Masks are available for all staff, surgical and cloth masks. Surgical masks will be kept at Security for all persons arriving at the entrance without masks. All staff reporting for duty will then receive 2 cloth masks, each.
- Sanitising liquid: The department has acquired more than enough. Sanitisers will be readily available at entrances and offices.
- Department has acquired sufficient liquid soap.
- Gloves and plastic aprons for cleaners: will be delivered to the department over the weekend - on 9 - 10 May 2020.

Communication/Way forward

- In terms of communication, Unions raised certain challenges at lower levels of management in districts (Circuit Managers), who are not professional in distributing information or notices, especially by WhatsApp therefore causing a lot of confusion amongst employees. Communication protocol circular will be sent out soon by the department.
- Cleaning of premises to be resolved over the weekend: 9- 10 May 2020.
- Co-morbidities communique to be distributed soon.
- All unions will be notified about the delivery of scanners before 11 May 2020.
- Most importantly - Employees have the right to refuse to commence any duties if the following is not in place, Deep cleansing has not taken place at any workplace, non-availability of PPE's, and temperature scanners.

Members who are recalled to resume work from 4 May, are requested to contact the PSA's Russle @ 082 883 7563, Eugene @076 289 2849 and Neo @ 082 8808982, where employer do not supply PPE.

GENERAL MANAGER