

## Update: Plan to mitigate COVID-19 and framework for curriculum recovery

The Department consulted labour on 21 April 2020 and revealed its plans to deal with post-lockdown issues at schools. The points listed below were also discussed:

- COVID-19 Steering Committee
- Communication and Awareness
- Budget and financial implications
- Precautionary measures to prevent and contain COVID-19 transmission
- Learning and Teaching Recovery Plans
- Examinations and Assessment

### Steering Committee

A Steering Committee has been appointed by the Department to deal with COVID-19 issues. Labour was also invited to form part of the Steering Committee (one representative per registered union). All Senior Managers are available during the lockdown.

### Communication and awareness

Regular communication will happen by way of video conferencing, information posters, and flyers will be distributed to schools and offices containing information on hygiene, including hand washing. Schools will receive the flyers by 24 April 2020. Facility Managers have been engaged on the need for regular cleaning of offices, ablution and other facilities. Schools that were vandalised during the lockdown and need infrastructure to be attended to are being prioritized. All this was done in preparation for the opening of schools around 6 May 2020.

### Budget and financial implications

Funds have been made available and procurement of PPE, basic hygiene packs, masks and important cleaning material (e.g. liquid soap, soap dispensers, hand sanitisers, including spray bottles, visors and plastic aprons). Lists of what should be procured are ongoing. A Departmental Directive was issued to suspend non-essential travelling. Procurement of items is done in consultation with the DBE and the Department of Health.

### Precautionary measures to prevent and contain COVID-19 transmission

The number of participants in meetings will be kept to the minimum as advised by Department of Health. Mass meetings/gatherings will be postponed or cancelled, including assemblies at schools.

The Department committed to keeping to lockdown regulations. Prescribed hygiene packs will be distributed to all schools and offices. Offices have already been re-organised to allow for social distancing. The Department took note of the problem of the open-plan setup at the provincial HR. Learners at all schools must have staggered intervals. Before entering Departmental buildings, screening will be done by unemployed youth who will be appointed through the EPWP grant. Departmental offices and other buildings will be disinfected by 30 April 2020. Critical staff will be required to start on 28 April 2020 to prepare for the opening of schools. At schools, Senior Management Teams, Administration and Cleaning staff are part of critical staff. The Department will appoint 182 temporary staff members under the EPWP grant at identified schools and 18 offices to augment cleaning staff. All Departmental vehicles will be sanitised before and after every use. The Department has partnered with the Department of Public Works to assist in disinfecting the government fleet. A Departmental team is dealing with the transportation of learners in implementing sanitisation and social distancing. Schools with no water will be provided with water tanks by the DWS. In terms of ablution facilities, minor maintenance will be conducted at hostels to ensure basic functionality. In areas where there was severe overcrowding, mobile ablution facilities will be provided, including mobile classrooms.

### **Learning and Teaching Recovery Plans**

The Department indicated that it made a provision for 542 replacement educators to replace educators who may contract the virus (substituted by replacement educators for a minimum of three months). The feeding scheme will be aligned with the Curriculum Recovery Plan. Recovery programmes for all subjects will be developed for implementation when schools re-open. Annual Teaching Plans (ATP) will be adapted to look at critical areas. There may also be a possible extension of school days, including a review of Curriculum Prescribed Assessment Programmes. Teaching time, especially for Grade 12 learners, will be looked at when schools open after lockdown. The Department intends opening schools for Educators and other staff on 28 April 2020. Grades 12 and 7 learners will start on 6 May 2020. The phased-in approach will allow schools to manage the school with reduced number of learners. Additional learners will only be added after the current grades have fully adapted to the post COVID-19 environment. Regulation that include physical distancing, hygiene, sanitising requirements including body contacts, must be ensured during the phase-in period. Educators must be fully orientated on the post COVID-19 environment.

### **Proposed phasing-in dates**

Grade 12 & 7 - 6 May 2020, Grade 11 & 6 - 20 May 2020, Grade 10 & 5 - 3 June 2020, Grade 9 & 4 - 17 June 2020, Grade 8 & 3 - 1 July 2020, Grade 2 & 1 - 8 July 2020, and Grade R - 15 July 2020.

### **Examinations and Assessment**

No internal June exams will be conducted. Grade-12 preparatory exams will be conducted in September 2020. The May/June 2020 Senior Certificate exams are postponed to November/December 2020. A revised circular with regards to School-Based Assessment will be issued to all schools. Revised timetables and details to be issued to stakeholders and candidates. The Department will communicate with labour as the need arises.

Members are advised to direct concerns and possible questions to the PSA's Eugene Louw at 076 289 2849 or [eugene.louw@psa.co.za](mailto:eugene.louw@psa.co.za). Educator members can also join the WhatsApp group by forwarding their cell number to Eugene.

**GENERAL MANAGER**