

INFORMUS



FOR PSA MEMBERS: WESTERN CAPE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION (WCED)

07-04-2020

Update: WCED

Reopening of schools

The WCED today indicated that the resumption of new school terms cannot be announced yet. The employer has, however, informed labour that it has been in communication with Principals of Schools to be prepared for schools to reopen on 20 April 2020 for Educators and 22 April 2020 for learners. The final date will depend on the successful application of the lockdown period as determined by the President.

School Nutrition Feeding Schemes

The Department is aware that the food that some 485 000 learners receives from the feeding schemes are the only meals they received in a day. Hence the employer approached the Provincial Treasury for additional funding to resume the provision of food to learners during the lockdown period. *Pro-rata* funding was approved, and the Department has been in communication with Principals and Circuit Managers of schools where feeding schemes are provided to ensure that these learners are provided with prepared meals. Permits have been issued to Departmental employees involved in preparing and handing out of food to allow them to travel to distribution points to provide these meals. Learners will not be allowed to gather at these points to eat their food but will be able to take the food to their homes thereby maintaining proper social distancing. The employer is furthermore tracking down all vulnerable learners who participate in the feeding schemes to assist them to collect their food at the distribution point closest to where they live to minimise unnecessary travel.

Possible use of school hostels as isolation centers

The employer confirmed that it has been approached by Government to assist in having school hostels used as isolation or quarantine units. However, the employer indicated that it is, at this stage, not in a position to relinquish hostels for this purpose. It may be that schools re-open in a while, and then the hostels may not be ready and prepared for the return of learners. However, should the need arise, and schools remain closed for an extended period, the employer may reconsider its decision. The decision to use school hostels for isolation/quarantine centers remains a last resort. The employer once again re-assured unions that it is doing everything possible to ensure that members are safe, and that only critical and essential employees are required to report for duty - mainly those responsible for capturing and payment of salaries and payments to service providers. The employer is also ordering sanitising material (e.g. sanitation packs, gloves and masks) to replenish its stock.

Members are urged to abide by the lockdown rules, to wash hands regularly and stay safe and healthy.

GENERAL MANAGER