

**GN 343 of 23 June 2020: Directions regarding the re-opening of schools and measures to address, prevent and combat the spread of COVID-19 in the National Department of Basic Education, and Provincial Departments of Education, and all schools in the Republic of South Africa**  
(*Government Gazette* No. 43465)

**as amended by**

<b>Notice</b>	<b>Government Gazette</b>	<b>Date</b>
357	43488	29 June 2020
370	43510	7 July 2020
411	43578	2 August 2020*

**DEPARTMENT OF BASIC EDUCATION**

I, Angelina Matsie Motshekga, Minister of Basic Education, in terms of regulation 4 (3) of the Regulations made under the Disaster Management Act, 2002 (Act No. 57 of 2002), as published under Government Notice No. R.480, in *Government Gazette* No. 43258 of 29 April 2020, as amended by the Regulations published under Government Notice No. R.608, in *Government Gazette* No. 43364 of 28 May 2020, hereby issue the directions in the Schedule regarding the re-opening of schools and measures to address, prevent and combat the spread of COVID-19 in the National Department of Basic Education, all Provincial Departments of Education, all education district offices and all schools in the Republic of South Africa.

(Signed)

**MRS AM MOTSHEKGA, MP**  
**MINISTER OF BASIC EDUCATION**  
**DATE: 22 JUNE 2020**

**SCHEDULE**

**1. Definitions.**—In these directions, a word or expression bears the meaning assigned to it in the Disaster Management Act or in the Regulations, and, unless the context indicates otherwise—

“**certificate**” means a certificate issued in terms of direction 11 (3);

“**COVID-19 essentials**” means the Basic Hygiene and Sanitation Package for each School, as contained in Appendix 1 to the DBE Guidelines;

“**DBE Guidelines**” means the Department of Basic Education Guidelines on Maintaining Hygiene during Covid-19 Pandemic available on the Department of Basic Education website, accessible through the following link:

<https://www.education.gov.za/Portals/0/Documents/Recovery%20plan%20page/Links%20for%20schools/guidelines-for-schools-on-maintaining-hygiene.pdf?ver=2020-06-15-091428-963>;

“**DBE Standard Operating Procedure**” means the Department of Basic Education Standard Operating Procedure for the Prevention, Containment and Management of

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\* General Note: Direction 10 reads: “Every act done or decision made by the Minister, the Head of Department, a principal, the School Management Team or officials before the commencement of these directions that would have been lawful and valid if these directions had been in force at the time when it was done, is hereby validated and declared to have been lawfully and validly done by the Minister, the Head of Department, a principal, the School Management Team or officials.”.

COVID-19 in Schools and School Communities available on the Department of Basic Education website, accessible through the following link:

<https://www.education.gov.za/Portals/0/Documents/Recovery%20plan%20page/Links%20for%20schools/dbe-standard-operating-procedure-for-covid-19.pdf?ver=2020-06-15-091455-587>;

**“Department of Basic Education”** means the National Department of Basic Education;

**“Department of Health Guidelines”** means the Guidelines for symptom monitoring and management of essential workers for COVID-19 related infection, issued by the Department of Health in April 2020, accessible through the following link:

<https://www.saiosh.co.za/news/502409/Guidelines-for-symptom-monitoring-and-management-of-essential-workers-for-COVID-19-related-infection.htm>;

**“Disaster Management Act”** means the Disaster Management Act, 2002 (Act No. 57 of 2002);

**“education support centres”** means a centre that offers curricular support or extra tuition to learners;

**“Head of Department”** has the meaning assigned to it in section 1 of the South African Schools Act;

**“hostels”** means boarding houses run by a school, whether on school property or not, for the purpose of providing accommodation to learners registered at the school;

**“Minister”** means the Minister of Basic Education;

**“offices”** includes the Provincial Departments of Education, and the Department of Basic Education;

**“official”** means—

- (1) an employee appointed by the school governing body, in terms of section 20 (4) and (5) of the South African Schools Act;
- (2) a person defined as an officer in terms of section 1 of the South African Schools Act;
- (3) an educator as defined under the Employment of Educators Act, 1998 (Act No. 76 of 1998);
- (4) a person employed in terms of the Public Service Act, 1994 (Proclamation No. 103 of 1994); or
- (5) a person employed by a school board;

**“parent”** means parent as defined in section 1 the South African Schools Act;

**“permit”** means a permit issued in terms of direction 11 (1);

**“platooning”** means schools in which two separate sets of pupils use the same school building, one set in the morning and the other set in the afternoon;

**“Pre-Grade R”** . . . . .

[Definition of “Pre-Grade R” deleted by GN 357 of 29 June 2020.]

**“principal”** means an educator appointed or acting as the head of a school as defined in section 1 of the South African Schools Act;

**“Provincial Department of Education”** means the department responsible for education in a province and includes all public schools, further education and training institutions and departmental offices in such provinces;

**“Regulations”** means the Regulations made under section 27 (2) of the Disaster Management Act and published under Government Notice No. R. 480, in *Government Gazette* No. 43258 of 29 April 2020, as amended under—

- (a) Government Notice No. 608, published in *Government Gazette* No. 43364 of 28 May 2020;
- (b) Government Notice No. 714, published in *Government Gazette* No. 43476 of 25 June 2020;
- (c) Government Notice No. 763, published in *Government Gazette* No. 43521 of 12 July 2020; and
- (d) Government Notice No. 846, published in *Government Gazette* No. 43577 of 31 July 2020;

[Definition of “Regulations” substituted by GN 411 of 2 August 2020.]

**“school”** has the meaning assigned to it in section 1 of the South African Schools Act;

**“South African Schools Act”** means the South African Schools Act, 1996 (Act No. 84 of 1996); and

**“third parties”** means persons who do not fall under the definition of an “official”, but may access a school or offices, including, but not limited to—

- (a) volunteer workers;
- (b) persons appointed in terms of the Expanded Public Works Programme and as community development workers;
- (c) food handlers;
- (d) chief food handlers;
- (e) parents of learners attending the school; and
- (f) persons delivering goods or providing services to the school.

**2. Objectives.**—The objectives of these directions are—

- (a) to provide for arrangements for a phased return of educators, officials and learners to schools, hostels and offices;
- (b) to provide for the schools, hostels and offices to comply with their obligations in accordance with—
  - (i) the Regulations;
  - (ii) all directions and circulars issued by the Minister of Employment and Labour and the Department of Public Service and Administration, in relation to Covid-19 and the national state of disaster; and
  - (iii) Collective Agreement No. 1 of 2020, which deals with the concession process to follow in respect of employees with a comorbidity; and
  - (iv) Chapter H of the Personnel Administrative Measures, dealing with leave measures applicable to educators; and
- (c) to ensure a uniform approach, as far as possible, in respect of the manner in which the Department of Basic Education, Provincial Departments of Education, and schools phase in the return of learners and officials to schools, hotels and offices.

**3. Scope and application.**—(1) These directions apply to—

- (a) all schools, hostels and offices;
- (b) learners;
- (d) officials;

(Editorial Note: Numbering as per original *Government Gazette*.)

- (e) third parties; and
- (f) governing bodies and school boards.

(2) The provisions contained in these directions apply for the duration of the national state of disaster, unless otherwise indicated.

**4. Entry to school premises.**—No person, other than a learner or official, may enter a school premises or hostel, unless such person obtains the permission of, and makes arrangements with, the principal or Head of Department in advance before entering the school premises or hostel.

**5. Phased return of learners and officials to school.**—(1) (a) The phased return of learners and officials to school will be as follows:

<b>GRADES</b>	<b>RETURN TO SCHOOL DATE</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Grade 7;</li><li>• Grade 12; and</li><li>• Schools of Skill: Year 4.</li></ul>	1 June 2020
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Grade R;</li><li>• Grade 6; and</li><li>• Grade 11.</li></ul>	6 July 2020
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Grade 3;</li><li>• Grade 10;</li><li>• Schools of Skill: Years 3;</li><li>• Schools for Learners with Severe Intellectual Disabilities (“SID”): Grades R, Grade 3 and final year (Occupational);</li><li>• Schools with Learners with Severe and Profound Intellectual Disabilities (“LSPID”): Year 3; and</li><li>• Schools with autistic learners: final year (18 years and above).</li></ul>	20 July 2020
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Grade 1 and 2;</li><li>• Schools of Skill: Years 2;</li><li>• Schools for Learners with Severe Intellectual Disabilities (“SID”): Grades 1 and 2;</li><li>• Schools with Learners with Severe and Profound Intellectual Disabilities (“LSPID”): Years 1 and 2; and</li><li>• Schools with autistic learners: Junior group (below 13 years).</li></ul>	27 July 2020
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Grade 4;</li><li>• Grade 9;</li><li>• Year 1 in Schools of Skill; and</li><li>• Schools with autistic learners: Senior Group (13 years and above).</li></ul>	17 August 2020

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Grade 5;</li> <li>• Grade 8; and</li> <li>• Schools for Learners with Severe Intellectual Disabilities (“SID”): Grades 4 and 5.</li> </ul>	<p>31 August 2020</p>
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(b) A Member of the Executive Council responsible for education in a province, who is unable to comply with the phased return of learners and officials to school, must, at least seven days before the date identified for the return of the respective grades, as contemplated in paragraph (a), submit a report to the Minister for concurrence or further determination, which report must include—

- (i) the reasons for the non-compliance; and
- (ii) a plan with the proposed dates for the phased return of learners and officials in the respective grades.

[Direction 5 (1) substituted by GN 357 of 29 June 2020 and by GN 370 of 7 July 2020.]

(2) Only those schools and offices that have complied with the minimum health, safety and social distancing measure on COVID-19, as contemplated in these directions and the Regulations, will be allowed to open as contemplated in sub-direction (1): Provided that a public school must also have all the COVID-19 essentials in place.

(3) A school or office that has failed to comply with the minimum health, safety and social distancing measures on COVID-19, as contemplated in these directions and the Regulations, will remain closed until all the health, safety and social distancing measures are in place.

(4) The Head of Department, or a person duly authorised by him or her, must continuously monitor and evaluate the phased return of schools and the maintenance of hygiene and safety standards for the duration of the national state of disaster and must report, in writing, every two weeks, to the Department of Basic Education on—

- (a) the number of COVID-19 cases in schools;
- (b) any failure to meet the required minimum health, safety and social distancing measures on COVID-19, including those set out in section 5 of the DBE Standard Operating Procedures and the DBE Guidelines, including the COVID-19 essentials in the case of a public school; and
- (c) the Head of Department’s determination on whether a school will be permitted to open, in terms of sub-directions (2) and (3).

(5) Should it be determined, in terms of sub-direction (4) (c), that a school does not meet the minimum health, safety and social distancing requirements on COVID-19, the Head of Department, or a person duly authorised by him or her, must, together with the school, formulate a plan that includes, but is not limited to, the following—

- (a) Scope of the problem;
- (b) measures taken to address the problem; and
- (c) any challenges experienced in addressing the problem.

(6) The school must ensure that the plan, as contemplated in sub-direction (5), is communicated to officials, parents and learners without undue delay.

(7) The Head of Department, or a person duly authorised by him or her, must make reasonable arrangements with schools to ensure the provision of learning material and continued teaching to learners who are unable to attend school due to—

- (a) an underlying health condition;
- (b) being self-isolated or quarantined due to COVID-19 symptoms or testing positive for COVID-19;

(c) a decision taken by the Head of Department to close a school or part of a school, after consultation with a health official in accordance with the DBE Standard Operating Procedures as a result of a confirmed COVID-19 case; or

(d) a determination made in terms of sub-direction (4) (c).

(8) A parent, caregiver or a designated family member, must ensure that the teaching and learning material, as contemplated in sub-direction (7), are collected or accessed as per arrangement with the school.

**(8A) The Head of Department must ensure that the schools continue to conduct assessments of learners and provide feedback to the learners or parents.**

[Direction 5 (8A) inserted by GN 411 of 2 August 2020.]

(9) Aftercare facilities that are managed by or operating at a school, and aftercare facilities in education support centres, are allowed to re-open in line with the phased re-opening of grades, as contemplated in sub-direction (1): Provided that they comply with the minimum health, safety and social distancing measures and requirements on COVID-19, referred to in the section 5 of the DBE Standard Operating Procedures and the DBE Guidelines.

(10) All events at schools, including sport, choral eisteddfods or choir rehearsals, arts and other cultural festivals remain suspended until a date determined by the Minister or an official delegated by the Minister, after consultation with the Cabinet.

(11) Scholar transport must comply with the Directions issued by the Department of Transport.

**5A. School break and arrangements after break.—(1) All public schools will break from 27 July 2020 and the school arrangements after the break are as follows:**

<b>Week</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>School arrangements after break</b>
Week 1	27 – 31 July 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The principal and the School Management Team will determine the staffing requirements to ensure compliance with the health, safety and social distancing requirements and to assist with the distribution of learning material and the roll out of the daily school feeding programme for all qualifying learners.</li> <li>The principal and the School Management Team must be on duty to make arrangements for the receipt of the learners anticipated in the weeks ahead.</li> <li>Schools will remain open for feeding of qualifying learners in terms of the National School Nutrition Programme.</li> </ul>
Week 2	3 – 7 August 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Grade 12 and Schools of Skill: Year 4 learners will return to school on 3 August 2020.</li> <li>Grade 12 and Schools of Skill: Year 4 teachers (and teacher support staff) will return to school on 3 August 2020.</li> <li>The principal and the School Management Team (as required) will be in attendance at school.</li> <li>Officials (as identified by the principal and the School Management Team) will return to school on 3 August 2020, to assist in ensuring compliance with the health, safety and social distancing requirements and to assist in the distribution of learning material and the roll-out of the daily school feeding programme for all</li> </ul>

		qualifying learners.
Week 3	11 – 14 August 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Grade 7 learners will return to school on 11 August 2020.</li> <li>Grade 7 officials (and teacher support staff) will return to school on 11 August 2020.</li> <li>The principal and the School Management Team (as required) will be in attendance at school.</li> <li>Officials, who are at school, will assist in ensuring compliance with the health, safety and social distancing requirements and to assist in the distribution of learning material and the roll-out of the daily school feeding programme for all qualifying learners.</li> </ul>
Week 4	17 – 21 August 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All officials will report for duty on 17 August 2020 to prepare for the return of learners in the remaining grades.</li> <li>Grade 7; Grade 12; and Schools of Skill: Year 4 learners and officials will already be at school.</li> <li>Officials who are already at school will assist in ensuring compliance with the health, safety and social distancing requirements and to assist in the distribution of learning material and the roll-out of the daily school feeding programme for all qualifying learners.</li> </ul>
Week 5	24 August 2020	<p>(a) Learners in the following grades, years or schools will return to school on 24 August 2020:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Grade R; Grade 1; Grade 2; Grade 3; Grade 4; and Grade 6;</li> <li>Grade 9; Grade 10; and Grade 11;</li> <li>Schools of Skill: Year 1; Year 2; and Year 3;</li> <li>Schools with Learners with Severe and Profound Intellectual Disabilities (“LSPID”): Year 1; Year 2; and Year 3;</li> <li>Schools for Learners with Severe Intellectual Disabilities (“SID”): Grade R; Grade 1; Grade 2; Grade 3; and final year (Occupational); and</li> <li>Schools with autistic learners: Junior group (below 13 years); Senior Group (13 years and above); and final year (18 years and above).</li> </ul> <p>(b) The school must ensure compliance with the health, safety and social distancing requirements in accommodating this group of learners.</p>
Week 6	31 August 2020	<p>Learners in the following grades or schools will return to school on 31 August 2020:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Grade 5 and Grade 8; and</li> <li>Schools for Learners with Severe Intellectual Disabilities (“SID”): Grade 4 and Grade 5.</li> </ul>

(2) Despite sub-direction (1) in relation to the arrangements after the school break, the phased return of learners and officials to school will be in accordance with direction 5 (1) (a).

(3) Upon the return of learners and officials to school after the school break, the school must comply with the social distancing and timetable models, as contemplated in direction 15 of the Directions.

(4) Despite the arrangements set out in sub-direction (1), all public schools that have been permitted, in terms of direction 7, on or before 27 July 2020, to deviate from the phased return to school, may continue with the deviation, without providing further notification to the Head of Department.

(5) All public schools that have not applied, before 27 July 2020, for deviation from the phased return to school, must apply in terms of direction 7 for deviation.

(6) Although the schools are on break, all officials are considered to be on duty and may be required to assist with official duties as and when required or determined by the principal and the School Management Team.

(7) All officials must report to school on 17 August 2020.

(8) The principal and the School Management Team must determine and implement a rotational leave plan to ensure that the principal and each member of the School Management Team, respectively, are allowed at least a five day break during the first three weeks of the break.

(9) The School Management Team must use the first week of the break, which is from 27 to 31 July 2020, to make all the necessary arrangements for the return of the respective grades, as contemplated in sub-direction (1).

(10) All officials responsible for the education of the respective grades that are returning to school, must return to school as contemplated in sub-direction (1) or as otherwise determined by the School Management Team.

(11) The Head of Department must ensure that the national school nutrition programme is made accessible to every qualifying learner.

(12) The Head of Department, or a person duly authorised by him or her, must make reasonable arrangements with schools to ensure that the provision of learning material, therapeutic support and continued teaching to learners occur during the school break.

[Direction 5A inserted by GN 411 of 2 August 2020.]

**6. School attendance.**—(1) A parent, caregiver or a designated family member may choose not to send a learner to school for reasons that may include—

- (a) any medical condition of the learner, including comorbidities;
- (b) anxiety and fear related to COVID-19, concern for family members that are over the age of 60 or concern for family members with comorbidities;
- (c) a preference for the learner receiving learning and teaching instruction through the online or virtual platforms provided by an independent institution which is not related to the school that the child is registered at;
- (d) a preference for the learner receiving learning and teaching instruction through the online or virtual platforms provided by the school; or
- (e) an application for home education and deregistration of a learner from the school.

(2) (a) A parent, caregiver or a designated family member who chooses not to send a learner to school for any of the reasons contemplated in sub-direction (1) (a), (b) or (c) must apply, through the school that the learner attends, in terms of section 4 of the South African Schools Act, to the Head of Department, or a person duly authorised by him or her, for the full or partial exemption of a learner from compulsory school attendance for the duration of national state of disaster.

(b) The application contemplated in paragraph (a)—

- (i) must be on a form substantially similar to Annexure E1, stating the reasons for the application for exemption, which should include evidence



of a medical condition, in instances where the reason relate to a medical condition or comorbidity;

- (ii) must be accompanied by a form substantially similar to Annexure E2, declaring the commitment for taking responsibility for the learners continued learning at home, which outlines the conditions that need to be adhered to by the parent, caregiver or a designated family member; and
- (iii) may be subject to conditions.

(c) The Head of Department, or a person duly authorised by him or her, must make arrangements with the schools, to ensure that the school consults with parents, caregivers or designated family members to receive the learning material for learners who are granted full or partial exemption from attending school, to ensure that continued learning takes place.

(d) A parent, caregiver or a designated family member who chooses not to send a learner to school must ensure that teaching and learning material are collected or accessed, as per arrangement with the school, to ensure that continued learning takes place.

(3) A parent, caregiver or a designated family member who chooses not to send a learner to school for the reason contemplated in sub-direction (1) (d), is not required to apply for exemption from compulsory school attendance.

(4) (a) A parent, caregiver or a designated family member who chooses to deregister their child from the school and apply for a learner to be enrolled for home education, as contemplated in in sub-direction (1) (e), must comply with the legal requirements for the provision of home education, as contemplated in section 51 of the South African Schools Act.

(Editorial Note: Wording as per original *Government Gazette*.)

(b) A learner who is deregistered from a school will have to reapply for admission and adhere to the admission requirements if they wish to return to a public school.

(5) Where a learner is self-isolated or quarantined due to being in contact with a person who has tested positive or is displaying symptoms of COVID-19, or is isolated following testing positive for COVID-19—

- (a) the parent, caregiver or a designated family member must inform the school as soon as possible of the learner's condition; and
- (b) the school must inform the Head of Department of the incident through the district office.

(6) Where a learner tested positive for COVID-19 through the processes at the school and the school is aware of the results, the school must, as soon as possible—

- (a) inform the parent, caregiver or a designated family member of the of the learner's condition and—
  - (i) request them to fetch the learner from school;
  - (ii) advise them to refer the learner to a medical practitioner; and
  - (iii) advise them keep the learner self-isolated or quarantined at home; and

(Editorial Note: Wording as per original *Government Gazette*.)

- (b) inform the Head of Department of the incident through the district office.

(7) The application process for exemption as contemplated in direction 6 also apply to learners registered at a school but who fall outside compulsory school attendance as regulated in section 3 of the South African Schools Act.

(8) Learners who have already applied for the full or partial exemption from compulsory school attendance for any of the reasons contemplated in sub-direction (1), must not re-apply for exemption.

(9) The principal of the school, or the person duly authorised by him or her, must, with the consent of a parent, caregiver or a designated family member make arrangements for a learner who is registered at the school to receive psychosocial support services, where required.

[Direction 6 substituted by GN 411 of 2 August 2020.]

**6A. Administering application for exemption.**—(1) Where a parent, caregiver or a designated family member of a learner applied to the Head of Department, or a person duly authorised by him or her, for full or partial exemption of the learner from compulsory school attendance, as contemplated in direction 6, the Head of Department must exempt the learner, as contemplated in direction 6, if he or she is satisfied that—

- (a) the exemption is in the interest of the learner;
- (b) the parent, caregiver or a designated family member will take responsibility to oversee the learning of the learner at home; and
- (c) the parent, caregiver or a designated family member will comply with any reasonable conditions set by the Head of Department for the full or partial exemption.

(2) Where a parent, caregiver or a designated family member of a learner has applied for exemption of a learner from compulsory school attendance, as contemplated in direction 6, the learner is exempted from attending school until such time as the Head of Department has considered and responded to the application for exemption.

(3) The Head of Department must consider and finalise the application for exemption within 30 days of receipt of the application.

(4) Subject to sub-direction (5), the Head of Department may withdraw the exemption referred to in sub-direction (1).

(5) The Head of Department may not withdraw the registration until he or she—

- (a) has informed the parent, in writing, of his or her intention to do so and the reasons therefor;
- (b) has granted the parent an opportunity to make representations to him or her in relation to such decision; and
- (c) has duly considered any such representations received.

(6) A parent, caregiver or a designated family member who is aggrieved by the decision of the Head of Department to withdraw an exemption of a learner from compulsory school attendance in terms of sub-direction (4), may lodge an appeal, in writing, to the Member of the Executive Council against the decision to withdraw the exemption.

[Direction 6A inserted by GN 411 of 2 August 2020.]

**6B. Registration status of learner and marking of attendance register.**—(1) In the event that a learner is granted an exemption from compulsory school attendance, as contemplated in direction 6, or is unable to attend school as contemplated in direction 5 (7)—

- (a) nothing in these Directions purports to alter the registration status of a learner at the specific school where the learner is registered; and
- (b) the learner continues to be registered with their school.

(2) A school must maintain accurate daily attendance registers of learners.

(3) A learner must be marked absent in the attendance register when the learner is not physically present at school.

(4) The school must maintain records of—

(a) all learners who are unable to attend school for reasons contemplated in direction 5 (7); and

(b) all exemptions granted in terms of direction 6.

[Direction 6B inserted by GN 411 of 2 August 2020.]

**7. Application for deviation from phased return of learners and officials to school.**—(1) A school may be permitted to deviate from the phased return to school in respect of specific grades or dates, as contemplated in direction 5 (1): Provided that such school complies with the minimum health, safety and social distancing measures and requirements on COVID-19, referred to in section 5 of the DBE Standard Operating Procedures and the DBE Guidelines and, in the case of a public school, also has all the COVID-19 essentials in place and the principal and chairperson of the governing body or school board or their delegated official notifies the Head of Department—

(a) on a form substantially similar to Annexure A, of its intended deviation from the phased return to school; and

(b) on a form substantially similar to Annexure B, of the timetable to be followed with the intended phased return to school.

(2) The notification contemplated in sub-direction (1) must be accompanied by a signed declaration by the principal and chairperson of the governing body or school board or their delegated official—

(a) on a form substantially similar to Annexure C1, in the case of public schools; or

(b) on a form substantially similar to Annexure C2, in the case of independent schools, confirming that the school complies with the minimum health, safety and social distancing measures and requirements on COVID-19, referred to in section 5 of the DBE Standard Operating Procedures and the DBE Guidelines.

(3) A school may proceed with the deviation from the phased return to school once the notification and declaration, as contemplated in sub-directions (1) and (2), have been submitted to the Head of Department: Provided that the Provincial Department of Education reserves the right to conduct an inspection, once the deviation of the phased return to school has commenced, to verify the school's compliance with the measures and requirements, as confirmed in terms of sub-direction (2).

(4) If a school is found not to have complied with the measures and requirements, as confirmed in terms of sub-direction (2), the deviation from the phased return to school may be revoked and the school may be closed, as contemplated in section 16 (4) of the South African Schools Act, until such time as the school complies with such measures and requirements.

(5) The principal or chairperson of the governing body or school board or their delegated official may appeal, in writing, within seven days from the date of notification of a decision to revoke the deviation of the phased return to school, to the MEC responsible for education in the province.

(6) The MEC responsible for education must, within seven days of receipt of an appeal, as contemplated in sub-direction (5), inform the school, in writing, of his or her decision and the reasons for the decision.

(7) If a school has already applied for deviation from the phased return to school in terms of the withdrawn directions, such application serves as notification of the school's intended deviation from the phased return to school in terms of these directions.

(8) Despite sub-direction (7), a school with a pending application for deviation from the phased return to school must submit to the Head of Department—

- (a) on a form substantially similar to Annexure B, a timetable of the intended phased return to school; and
- (b) a declaration by the principal and chairperson of the governing body or school board or their delegated official—
  - (i) on a form substantially similar to Annexure C1, in the case of public schools; or
  - (ii) on a form substantially similar to Annexure C2, in the case of independent schools, confirming that the school complies with the minimum health, safety and social distancing measures and requirements on COVID-19, referred to in section 5 of the DBE Standard Operating Procedures and the DBE Guidelines.

**8. Learners with special educational needs.**—(1) In addition to the guidelines developed for schools with specific categories of learners with disabilities, all schools with learners with special educational needs, as contemplated in the South African Schools Act, must comply with all directions and circulars regarding the re-opening of schools.

(2) In relation to autistic learners, schools must comply with the *Guidelines for Schools for Autistic Learners*, accessible on the website of the Department of Basic Education, through the following link: <https://www.education.gov.za/>.

(3) In relation to learners who are blind, partially sighted or deaf, all schools must comply with the guidelines for schools catering for such learners, as issued by the Department of Basic Education, accessible on the website of the Department of Basic Education, through the following link: <https://www.education.gov.za/>.

(4) Officials who are unable to practise social distancing from learners with special education needs must be provided by the Provincial Department of Education with appropriate personal protective equipment, including protective clothing, where such provision is necessary.

(5) Officials appointed to carry out symptom screening, in accordance with direction 13, in schools for deaf learners, must be able to communicate using South African Sign Language. Where this is not possible, a sign language interpreter must be available to ensure proper communication with the learners.

(6) Written communication for blind learners, as well as those who are both deaf and blind, must be through Braille.

(7) The Provincial Department of Education must, at a minimum, provide the following personal protective equipment to learners with visual and hearing impairments:

- (a) Face shields must be provided to blind learners;
- (b) cloth face masks must be provided to low vision learners, teachers and support staff; and
- (c) face shields must be provided to teachers, support staff and learners in schools for the Deaf.

(8) Where a learner with disabilities does not return to school for any of the reasons referred to in direction 5 (7), the Head of Department must make all reasonable efforts to ensure that the learner is provided with appropriate learning and teaching support material, assistive devices and therapeutic support.

**9. Opening of hostels.**—(1) A hostel may be permitted to open: Provided that it complies with the minimum health, safety and social distancing measures and

requirements on COVID-19, referred to in section 5 of the DBE Standard Operating Procedures and the DBE Guidelines and, in the case of a public school, also has all the COVID-19 essentials in place and the principal or chairperson of the governing body or school board or their delegated official notifies the Head of Department on a form substantially similar to Annexure D.

(2) The notification contemplated in sub-direction (1) must be accompanied by signed declaration by the principal and chairperson of the governing body or school board or their delegated official—

- (a) on a form substantially similar to Annexure D1, in the case of public schools; or
- (b) on a form substantially similar to Annexure D2, in the case of independent schools, confirming that the hostel complies with the minimum health, safety and social distancing measures and requirements on COVID-19, referred to in section 5 of the DBE Standard Operating Procedures and the DBE Guidelines and, in the case of a public school, has all the COVID-19 essentials in place.

(3) Hostels may open once the notification and declaration, as contemplated in sub-directions (1) and (2) have been submitted to the Head of Department: Provided that the Provincial Department of Education reserves the right to conduct an inspection, once the hostels have opened to verify the hostel's compliance with the measures and requirements, as confirmed in terms of sub-direction (2).

(4) If a hostel is found not to have complied with the measures and requirements, as confirmed in terms of sub-direction (2)—

- (a) the hostel will be closed until such time as the hostel complies with these measures and requirements;
- (b) no learners will be allowed on the premises of the hostel; and
- (c) the principal or chairperson of the governing body or school board or their delegated official must, as soon as reasonably possible—
  - (i) inform the parents, caregiver or designated family member of the learners that the hostel will be closed;
  - (ii) request the parents, caregiver or designated family member of the learners to fetch the learners from the hostel; and
  - (iii) make arrangements with the parents, caregiver or designated family member of the learners to ensure the provision of learning material and continued teaching to learners.

(5) The principal or chairperson of the governing body or school board or their delegated official may appeal to the MEC responsible for education in the province, in writing, within seven days from the date of notification of a decision, in terms of sub-direction (4), to close the hostel.

(6) The MEC responsible for education must, within seven days of receipt of an appeal, as contemplated in sub-direction (5), inform the hostel, in writing, of his or her decision and the reasons for the decision.

(7) The Provincial Department of Education must assist in the provision of any additional human resource capacity that is reasonably necessary for the operation of hostels.

**10. May/June and November/December examinations.**—(1) The May/June 2020 examination for candidates who registered for the Senior Certificate and the National Senior Certificate will be administered in November/December 2020.

(2) The November/December 2020 National Senior Certificate examinations will be administered as planned, subject to the alignment of the timetable to the 2020 revised school calendar.

**11. Issuing of permits and certificates.**—(1) Officials who have to commute to and from work on a daily basis, to perform an essential or permitted service during the applicable Alert Level, are permitted to move between provinces, metropolitan areas and districts if they have a permit on a form that is substantially similar to Form 2, attached to Annexure A of the Regulations.

(2) A permit referred to in sub-direction (1) may be issued by the Head of Department or a delegated official or, in the case of a school, by a principal or a person delegated by him or her.

(3) Learners who are required to move between provinces to commute to and from school on a daily basis must be issued with a certificate on a form that is substantially similar to Form 3A, attached to Annexure A of the Regulations.

(4) A certificate referred to in sub-direction (3) may be issued by a principal or a person delegated by him or her.

(5) The issuing of permits and certificates referred to in sub-directions (1) and (3) must be done in compliance with the Regulations.

**12. General safety measures at schools, hostels and offices for duration of national state of disaster.**—(1) The Provincial Department of Education is responsible for the procurement of personal protective equipment and other COVID-19 essentials for officials and learners and for the provision thereof to public schools and hostels.

(1A) To ensure the sufficient supply of cloth face masks, in compliance with regulation 5 (3) (c) of the Regulations, the principal of a public school, must request the Provincial Department of Education, in writing, through the district office, to procure cloth face masks required by a public school.

[Direction 12 (1A) inserted by GN 411 of 2 August 2020.]

(1B) The District Director must process the request by the principal timeously and forward it to the Provincial Department of Education, without delay.

[Direction 12 (1B) inserted by GN 411 of 2 August 2020.]

(1C) The Provincial Department of Education must ensure that the procurement of cloth face masks is finalised and that the cloth face masks are delivered to public schools timeously.

[Direction 12 (1C) inserted by GN 411 of 2 August 2020.]

(2) All schools and offices must develop a workplace plan, as contemplated in regulation 16 (6) (b) and Annexure E to the Regulations.

(3) A school must send out a notice to all parents informing them that they must not send learners to school if the learners have any of the observable symptoms associated with COVID-19, including fever, cough, sore throat, redness of eyes and shortness of breath or difficulty in breathing, body aches, loss of smell or loss of taste, nausea, vomiting, diarrhoea, fatigue or weakness.

(4) Every school, hostel and office must implement the health and safety measures as contained in these directions, the Regulations, section 5 of the DBE Standard Operating Procedures and the DBE Guidelines.

**13. Symptom screening.**—(1) All persons entering any school premises, hostel or office must be screened at the entrance.

(2) Screening must be conducted—

- (a) by the persons who have either been identified by the school or by the Head of Department; and
  - (b) in accordance with the Department of Health Protocols and section 5 of the DBE Standard Operating Procedures and the DBE Guidelines;
- (3) All persons who conduct screening must receive the relevant training.

(4) Any person who has any COVID-19 symptoms must immediately report such symptoms to the compliance officer of the school, hostel or office or any person designated by him or her.

(5) If a person presents with the symptoms referred to in direction 12 (3), or informs the compliance officer or designated official of these symptoms, the school, hostel or office must—

- (a) not permit the person to enter the premises; or
- (b) if the person is already on the premises of a school, hostel or office—
  - (i) immediately isolate the person, and require that person or, in the case of a learner, advise the parent or guardian, to make arrangements to be transported in a manner that does not place any other person or members of the public at risk, either to be self-isolated or to go for a medical examination or testing;
  - (ii) assess the risk of transmission, disinfect the area and any official's or learner's workstation or sleeping quarters, in the case of a hostel;
  - (iii) refer those persons who may be at risk for screening; and
  - (iv) take any other appropriate measure to prevent possible transmission.

(6) If there is evidence that any official contracted COVID-19 as a result of occupational exposure, the school must lodge a claim for compensation in terms of the Compensation for Occupational Injuries and Diseases Act, 1993 (Act No. 130 of 1993) in accordance with Notice No. 193, published on 3 March 2020, if applicable.

(7) If any person has been diagnosed with COVID-19 and isolated in accordance with the Department of Health Guidelines, a school, hostel or office may only allow the return of such person to the school, hostel or office on condition that he or she has undergone a medical evaluation confirming his or her fitness to return.

(8) The Minister, in consultation with the Minister of Health, will regularly review the DBE Standard Operating Procedures and DBE Guidelines to ensure that health, safety and social distancing measures are consistent with the current and best practices.

**14. Sanitizers, disinfectants and masks.**—(1) For the purposes of these directions, a hand sanitizer must be one that contains at least 70% alcohol and complies with the recommendations of the Department of Health.

- (2) Every school, hostel and office must ensure that there are—
- (a) easily accessible, sufficient quantities of hand sanitizers, based on the number of learners, educators or officials or other persons who access the school, hostel or office, at the entrance of, and in, the workplace or sleeping quarters, which the persons are required to use; and
  - (b) facilities for washing of hands with soap and clean water.
- (3) Every school, hostel or office must take proper measures to ensure that—
- (a) all work surfaces and equipment are cleaned before school or work begins, or after school or work ends;
  - (b) classrooms, sleeping quarters and water and sanitation facilities are cleaned at least once a day by appointed cleaners; and

- (c) surfaces that are touched frequently by many people (railings, lunch tables, sports equipment, door and window handles, toys, teaching and learning aids, etc.) are cleaned more frequently.

(4) Every Provincial Department of Education must—

- (a) provide each official and learner at public schools, with two cloth face masks or face shields; and

[Para. (a) substituted by GN 411 of 2 August 2020.]

- (b) require learners and any other person entering the school premises, hostel or office to wear a cloth face mask, a homemade item that covers the nose and mouth or another appropriate item to cover the nose and mouth.

**15. Social distancing and timetable models.**—(1) Every school, hostel or office must comply with the social distancing requirement of at least 1.5 meters, as prescribed in the Regulations.

(2) In order to ensure compliance with health, safety, and social distancing requirements, school facilities must operate at 50% or less of their capacity at any given time.

(3) Subject to sub-direction (4), schools may consider and apply any of following available timetable models suitable for their context and functionality—

- (a) Daily and weekly rotation;
- (b) bi-weekly rotation;
- (c) platooning or shifts;
- (d) traditional and daily; or
- (e) a hybrid of the latter.

(4) Subject to direction 7 (1), schools with large enough facilities to comply with health, safety, and social distancing requirements—

- (a) are exempted from sub-direction (2); and
- (b) do not have to change their traditional and daily timetable models, and may continue to operate in accordance with those timetable models.

**16. Curriculum trimming and re-organisation.**—(1) In order to accommodate the teaching time lost as a result of the national state of disaster and the adjustment of timetables, the curriculum, as articulated in the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement, has been reviewed by the Minister in accordance with section 3 (4) (l) of the National Education Policy Act, 1996 (Act No. 27 of 1996), which empowers the Minister to determine national policy for curriculum frameworks, core syllabuses and education programmes.

(2) The revised content phase map, which contains a broad overview of the curriculum content, including skills, knowledge, attitudes and values learners would be exposed to over a three year period, as well as the revised annual teaching plans and curriculum support guidelines, are accessible on the website of the Department of Basic Education, through the following link:

<https://www.education.gov.za/Home/RecoveryPlan2020.aspx>.

**17. Annual financial statements.**—(1) Where the annual financial statements of a school were not submitted at the end of March 2020, the governing body of a public school must draw and submit annual financial statements by 31 July 2020.



(2) A governing body of a public school must submit to the Head of Department, within four months of the re-opening of schools, as contemplated in these directions, a copy of the annual financial statements, audited or examined, as the case may be.

**18. Withdrawal of directions.**—The Directions regarding the re-opening of schools and measures to address, prevent and combat the spread of COVID-19 in the Department of Basic Education, all Provincial Education Departments, all education district offices and all schools in the Republic of South Africa, as published under Government Notice No. 302, in *Government Gazette* No. 43372 of 29 May 2020 and amended by the Directions published under Government Notice No. 304, in *Government Gazette* No. 43381 of 1 June 2020, are hereby withdrawn.

**19. Short title and commencement.**—These directions are called the Directions regarding the re-opening of schools and measures to address, prevent and combat the spread of COVID-19 in the National Department of Basic Education, and Provincial Departments of Education, and all schools in the Republic of South Africa, and come into operation on the date of publication thereof in the *Government Gazette*.

**ANNEXURE A**  
**NOTIFICATION OF DEVIATION FROM PHASED RETURN TO SCHOOL**

[Notification in terms of direction 7 (1) (a).]

*(Complete school particulars and attach Annexure B and Annexure C1 or C2)*

*(To be completed by the principal, chairperson of the governing body or school board, or their delegated official)*

I, ..... (Name and surname),  
the principal/chairperson of the governing body or school board/their delegated official (*delete whichever is not applicable*), of:

..... (Name of school),  
hereby notify the Head of Department of our decision to deviate from the phased return to school, as contemplated in direction 7 (1) of the Directions.

**Indicate whether the school intends opening an existing hostel, as well as the school: Yes/No**  
**(circle the applicable answer)**

**School particulars**

Province:	
District:	
Circuit:	
Name of School:	

EMIS Number:	
Principal's Name and Surname:	
Tel/Cell No:	
E-mail Address:	
Highest Grade:	
Lowest Grade:	
Number of learners:	

Signed at ..... on this ..... day of ..... 2020.

.....

Principal

Date:



.....

Chairperson of the governing body/school board

Date:

**ANNEXURE B  
INTENDED TIMETABLE PER GRADE FOR THE PHASED RETURN TO  
SCHOOL**

[Direction 7 (1) (b).]

*(To be attached to Annexure A)*

Grade	Date of Return	Conditions of Return (e.g. alternating attendance)


Signed at ..... on this ..... day of ..... 2020.

.....

Principal

Date:



.....

Chairperson of the governing body/school board

Date:

**ANNEXURE C1  
DECLARATION CONFIRMING COMPLIANCE OF PUBLIC SCHOOL**

[Declaration in terms of direction 7 (2) (a).]

*(To be completed and attached to Annexure A, in respect of a public school)*

*(To be completed by the principal, chairperson of the governing body, or their delegated official)*

I, ..... (Name and surname), the principal/chairperson of the governing body or their delegated official (*delete whichever is not applicable*), of ..... (Name of school), hereby declare that the school, has complied with the health, safety and social distancing measures for COVID-19, set out in section 5 of the DBE Standard Operating Procedures and the DBE Guidelines and has all the COVID-19 essentials in place.

I further acknowledge that it is the responsibility of the school governing body, and the principal to take all reasonable steps to comply with the health, safety and social distancing measures for COVID-19, as set out in section 5 of the DBE Standard Operating Procedures and the DBE Guidelines including ensuring that all the COVID-19 essentials are in place.

Signed at ..... on this ..... day of ..... 2020.

.....

Principal

Date:



.....

Chairperson of the governing body/school board

Date:

**ANNEXURE C2  
DECLARATION CONFIRMING COMPLIANCE OF INDEPENDENT SCHOOL**

[Declaration in terms of direction 7 (2) (b).]

*(To be completed and attached to Annexure A, in respect of independent schools)*

*(To be completed by the principal, chairperson of school board, or their delegated official)*

I, ..... (Name and surname), the principal/chairperson of the school board/their delegated official (*delete whichever is not applicable*), of ..... (Name of school), hereby declare that the school has complied with the health, safety and social distancing measures for COVID-19, set out in section 5 of the DBE Standard Operating Procedures and the DBE Guidelines.

I further acknowledge that it is the responsibility of the principal and the school board to take all reasonable steps to comply with the health, safety and social distancing measures for COVID-19, set out in section 5 of the DBE Standard Operating Procedures and the DBE Guidelines.

I further accept that any civil liability that may arise from the school's decision to re-open and the manner in which it operates following such re-opening, shall fall exclusively on the school and that the relevant Department of Basic Education and Provincial Departments of Education shall bear no liability in this regard.

Signed at ..... on this ..... day of ..... 2020.

.....

Principal

Date:



.....

Chairperson of the governing body/school board

Date:

**ANNEXURE D**  
**NOTIFICATION OF OPENING OF HOSTEL(S)**

[Notification in terms of direction 9 (1).]

*(Complete school particulars and attach Annexure D1 or D2)*

*(To be completed by the principal, chairperson of the school governing body or board, or their delegated official)*

I, ..... (Name and surname), the principal/chairperson of the school governing body or board/delegated official (*delete whichever is not applicable*), of:

..... (Name of school),

hereby notify the Head of Department of its decision to re-open the hostel(s), as contemplated in direction 9 (1) of the Directions.

**School and hostel particulars**

Province:	
District:	
Circuit:	

Name of School and hostel(s):	
EMIS Number:	
Principal's Name and Surname:	
Tel/Cell No:	
E-mail Address:	
Highest Grade:	
Lowest Grade:	
Number of learners:	

Signed at ..... on this ..... day of ..... 2020.

.....

Principal

Date:



.....

Chairperson of the governing body/school board

Date:

**ANNEXURE D1  
DECLARATION CONFIRMING COMPLIANCE OF PUBLIC SCHOOL  
HOSTEL(S)**

[Declaration in terms of direction 9 (2) (a).]

*(To be completed and attached to Annexure D, in respect of public schools)*

*(To be completed by the principal, chairperson of the governing body, or their delegated official)*

I, ..... (Name and surname), the principal/chairperson of the governing body or school board/their delegated official (*delete whichever is not applicable*), of ..... (Name of school), hereby declare that the hostel(s) has/have complied with the health, safety and social distancing measures for COVID-19, set out in the DBE Standard Operating Procedures and the DBE Guidelines and has/have all the COVID-19 essentials in place.

I further acknowledge that it is the responsibility of the school governing body, the principal and/or the school board to take all reasonable steps to comply with the health, safety and social

distancing measures for COVID-19, set out in the DBE Standard Operating Procedures and the DBE Guidelines.

Signed at ..... on this ..... day of ..... 2020.

.....

Principal

Date:



.....

Chairperson of the governing body/school board

Date:

**ANNEXURE D2**  
**DECLARATION CONFIRMING COMPLIANCE OF INDEPENDENT SCHOOL**  
**HOSTEL(S)**

[Declaration in terms of direction 9 (2) (b).]

*(To be completed and attached to Annexure D, in respect of independent schools)*

*(To be completed by the principal, chairperson of the governing body, or their delegated official)*

I, ..... (Name and surname), the principal/chairperson of the school board/their delegated official (*delete whichever is not applicable*), of ..... (Name of school), hereby declare that the hostel(s) has/have complied with the health, safety and social distancing measures for COVID-19, set out in the DBE Standard Operating Procedures and the DBE Guidelines.

I further acknowledge that it is the responsibility of the principal and/or the school board to take all reasonable steps to comply with the health, safety and social distancing measures for COVID-19, set out in the DBE Standard Operating Procedures and the DBE Guidelines.

I further accept that any civil liability that may arise from the school's decision to re-open its hostel(s) and the manner in which the hostel(s) operate/s following such re-opening, shall fall exclusively on the school and that the relevant Department of Basic Education and Provincial Departments of Education shall bear no liability in this regard.

Signed at ..... on this ..... day of ..... 2020.

.....

Principal

Date:



.....

Chairperson of the governing body/school board

Date:

**ANNEXURE E1**  
**APPLICATION FOR EXEMPTION OF LEARNER TO ATTEND SCHOOL**

[Application in terms of direction 6 (1) (a), 6 (1) (b) and 6 (1) (c).]

[Annex. E1 added by GN 411 of 2 August 2020.]

*(To be completed by the parent/caregiver/designated family member)*

I, ..... (Name and surname), the parent, caregiver

or a designated family member (*delete whichever is not applicable*) of .....  
 (Name of learner) who is in Grade ..... at ..... (Name of school), hereby apply to the Head of Department to exempt the learner from compulsory school attendance, in terms of section 4 of the South African Schools Act, 1996 (Act No. 84 of 1996), for the period of the national state of disaster.

I do so, and take full responsibility, to oversee the learning of the learner at home as indicated in the signed agreement (Annexure E2). The reasons for my application for exemption are as follows:

Reason	Further Details
Underlying health condition and/or comorbidity of the learner or a close family member	
General concern over the risk of transmission of COVID-19	

In respect of a learner contemplated in direction 6 (1) (a): Evidence of medical condition of learner is **attached/not attached** (*please select*)

Signed at ..... on this ..... day of ..... 2020.

.....  
 Parent/Caregiver/Designated family member Full Name

Contact number: .....

**ANNEXURE E2**  
**PARENT ACCEPTANCE FORM: TO ADHERE TO CONDITIONS FOR EXEMPTION FROM COMPULSORY SCHOOL ATTENDANCE**

[Application in terms of direction 6 (1) (a), 6 (1) (b) and 6 (1) (c).]

[Annex. E2 added by GN 411 of 2 August 2020.]

*(To be completed by the parent/caregiver/designated family member)*

I, ..... (Name and surname), the parent, caregiver or a designated family member (*delete whichever is not applicable*) of ..... (Name of learner) who is in Grade ..... at ..... (Name of school), hereby accept the following conditions for the exemption of the learner from compulsory school attendance for the duration of national state of disaster:

- (1) I accept and agree that I will take responsibility—
  - (a) to oversee the daily learning of the learner at home, including the daily work and assessments;
  - (b) to ensure that the learner is informed of the work that must be learned and the work that must be completed on a daily basis; and
  - (c) to ensure that all work and assignments are collected or accessed and returned to school, in accordance with the arrangements made with the school.
- (2) I accept and agree that, if the conditions in this Annexure are not met, the exemption from compulsory school attendance may be withdrawn.
- (3) I accept and understand that, if I am unable to accept these conditions and the associated responsibilities, then the learner should continue to attend school.

Signed at ..... on this ..... day of ..... 2020.

.....  
 Parent/Caregiver/Designated family member Full Name

Contact number: .....

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