



Reference: COVID-19/20200724/01
Enquiries: BK Schreuder

TO: PRINCIPALS OF ALL PUBLIC SCHOOLS

(For information: School Governing Bodies)

(For information: Independent Schools)

Dear Principals

BREAK IN SCHOOLING

We have noted the announcement by President Ramaphosa regarding a break in the school calendar. I know that many of you have questions, that may yet remain unanswered, but I hope that the following provides some guidance on how to manage your schools in the weeks to come. I give this direction as I know that our schools must have some degree of clarity now, as schools break today.

On the 27th of July, as announced by President Ramaphosa, public schools will close for a four-week period and will re-open on 24 August 2020. There is not yet clarity as to which grades are all to return on 24 August.

The break in schooling over the next four weeks, however, does not apply to all grades, nor for all staff. In fact, the announcements have implied that teachers and non-teaching staff are on duty during this time. I wish to also give direction to these matters.

We have decided that all learners, teachers and non-teaching staff in the Western Cape will have a one-week break (27 July to 31 July). Staff are not required to be at school during this week. This includes all teaching and non-teaching public service staff.

Representatives of principals and/or SMTs must however continue to oversee certain functions at the school, such as the **NSNP**, which has been instructed to continue unabated, due to the dire need and hunger of learners in our communities. All health and safety protocols must be adhered to at all times, as had introduced early on when feeding recommenced in our schools.

Grade 12 learners, their teachers and non-teaching staff, as determined by the Principal for the purposes of ensuring the clean and safe running of the school, will return on 3 August. This might include teachers that the principal and SMTs require as needed to ensure teaching for ALL Grade 12 learners. Principals are to please ensure that all Grade 12 learners and their parents

are informed that ALL grade 12 learners must be at school every school day from the 3rd August. I will elaborate on this matter in a separate letter today.

Grade 7 learners and their teachers will have a 2 week break and will return on 12 August. The Department of Basic Education published the amended school calendar for 2020 on 11 June, which indicates that 10 August 2020 is a Public School Holiday, and 11 August a school holiday. In the absence of any Directions to the contrary, these holidays will remain. Thus Grade 7 learners will return on Wednesday, 12 August.

The return of other grades from 24 August 2020 will be communicated in due course when decisions are made by the National Department of Basic Education. We also await information regarding Special Needs Schools.

Teaching and non-teaching staff required at school when Grade 12 and Grade 7 learners are at school, must be at school. Other teachers and non-teaching staff are required to ensure support for ongoing learning during the break (other than in the week of 27 to 31 July, when we suggest they take a total break). This could happen from home or from school, as local requirements indicate.

All teaching and non-teaching public service staff must return to school from Monday, 17 August to prepare for additional grades the following week.

I would like to request that principals in our high schools ensure that our Grade 12 teachers get some rest during the period 27 July – 3 August 2020. These teachers have an enormous task ahead of them and deserve this time off to reenergize.

Teachers that are not teaching Grade 12 learners or Grade 7 learners, will remain on duty even if at home during weeks 2 and 3. They could be required by the principal, SMT or the Head of Department to perform functions as required. For example, support teaching of Grade 12s or Grade 7s, preparation of work for learners at home and oversight of feeding scheme etc.

Here is a summary breakdown of the 4 week break in the school calendar:

Week	Date	Grades and staff required to be present at schools
Week 1	27-31 July	All WCED schools closed for teaching and learning. Schools will remain open for feeding. Limited staff required to oversee school feeding and health and safety protocols.
Week 2	3-7 August	Grade 12 learners Grade 12 teachers (and teacher support) Principal/SMT (as required) Non-teaching staff to ensure the school meets health and safety measures and school feeding.

Week 3	12-14 August (10 August – public holiday. 11 August – school holiday)	Grade 7 learners Grade 7 teachers (and teacher support) Grade 12 learners Grade 12 teachers (and teacher support) Principal/SMT (as required) Non-teaching staff to ensure the school meets health and safety measures and school feeding.
Week 4	17-21 August	Grade 7 learners Grade 12 learners Principal and the SMT All teachers and all non-teaching staff.

As current Directions are still in place, schools that have applied for deviations to bring back other grades, may continue to do so if the SGB and school community is in agreement. This does not apply to the week of 27–31 July.

The National Department of Basic Education must still provide more clarity on how additional grades will be introduced from 24 August onwards.

We understand that as the break starts from Monday, 27 July, it leaves schools with very little time for preparation. However, we urge and request schools to give the necessary work to all learners that they can do at home during the break or to continue their learning by whichever means including the use of textbooks, workbooks, TV and radio broadcasts, digital learning and online learning.

Teaching and learning of Grade 12s

The National decision requires that all Grade 12 learners and teachers are physically at school every day from 3 August 2020 to 24 August 2020. They will be expected to attend school every day thereafter as well (except for formal school holidays), until they start their final National Senior Certificate examinations.

NSNP

As indicated by the President, the National School Nutrition Programme will continue to operate throughout this period, so that all learners or their parents can collect food directly from schools. Schools are thus required to provide the NSNP service.

This applies to all four weeks of the lockdown period. The continuous feeding of all learners is imperative. Last Friday's judgement in the North Gauteng High Court made it clear that all Provinces must roll out the NSNP to all eligible children without delay, regardless of whether learners have returned to school or not.

Learners that are normally recipients of the NSNP, and are not attending school, can go to their nearest feeding school on a daily basis to collect food. This traditionally applies to learners that are from commuter schools.

It is suggested that in such cases, learners or their parents/guardians must inform the school that they wish to access food at that venue.

In all instances, the relevant health and safety protocols must be in place, as communicated in WCED Guideline F: School Feeding. (<https://wcedonline.westerncape.gov.za/back-school>)

The further delivery of additional Covid-19 safety materials, such as sanitizer and cleaning materials, will continue during the break and schools are requested to ensure that someone is available to receive these deliveries if required.

All schools are also to ensure that safety and security equipment and safety measures are in good order and in place during this time and to make sure that communication with the local station or sector commander is in place. Please complete your pre-holiday checklist before closing. The WCED has put extra measures in place overnight for added security where deemed necessary.

I would like to extend my well wishes to all teachers to enjoy a well-deserved break. This has been a particularly stressful time for all employees and learners and I wish you all a safe and happy time off.

I am meeting with the Provincial Principals Forum this evening for clarification of any outstanding matters. I am sure they will give feedback to all principals of those discussions.

Thank you for your service and the hard work that has been put in over the past few months.

Yours sincerely



BK SCHREUDER
HEAD: EDUCATION
DATE: 24 JULY 2020