

Reference: 20210611-3742  
Enquiries: B Walters

To: Principals, Teachers and Staff at public schools

(For information: Governing Bodies)  
(For information: Independent Schools)

Dear Colleagues

### **RISING INFECTION RATES**

Last week, the Western Cape Department of Health announced that the Western Cape is entering a third wave of COVID-19 infections.

The increase in infections is being driven by cluster events, such as funerals, weddings and sports events. In the education sector, we have seen similar trends.

The rate of learner infections has increased over the past few weeks, with 170 new learner infections reported in the past week across the province. Many of these infections are driven by cluster events, where learners socialise outside of school hours. At these events, be it a birthday party or an afternoon braai, learners are not adhering to the golden rules of safety.

It is a clear warning that we cannot let down our guard in terms of adhering to safety protocols and behaviours, both within and outside our schools. By not adhering to these protocols, our learners are putting themselves, their families and friends at risk.

It is therefore critical that we continue to emphasise to all our educators, staff and learners, regardless of their age, that they must continue to behave in a responsible manner.

While we are appealing to parents to take responsibility too in ensuring that they monitor their children's behaviour and limit their children's participation in large social events, we are also asking schools to discuss this with learners as well.

Please emphasise the following golden rules:

- Always wear a mask.
- Maintain social distancing.
- Avoid large gatherings where there is poor ventilation.
- Wash hands regularly.

Schools are reminded that anyone diagnosed with COVID-19 should adhere to the full ten-day isolation period and that anyone who is/was in close contact with a positive case to isolate for a full ten-day period as well.

The fact is that we are entering the third wave, and the very thought of contracting or further spreading this virus should put everyone on alert. Our learners need to understand that the short-term benefits of a social event, be it a party, close contact sports event or a large family gathering, could have dire consequences. It can result in the further disruption of schooling and missing of class lessons, assessment tasks and examinations. They could put other family members at risk.

Please, also discuss the role that our learners can play in assisting with the drive to register our over 60-year-olds for vaccination. Learners, particularly our older ones, can assist in helping the older generation to register online. Registering online can be daunting to many if not accustomed to it, however, our tech-savvy younger generation could assist within minutes. They can play an important part in increasing registrations.

Thank you for continuing to adhere to the safety protocols. It has become the “new norm” for our schools, but it will certainly bring great joy to many of us when we no longer see a classroom full of learners with masks. This day will come if we all work together in the vaccine drive.

I believe the efforts made by our schools in adhering to safety protocols has contributed to minimal multiple infections within schools. I am appealing to all of you to ensure that the behaviour seen at schools be extended beyond the school gate.

Let's work together in the efforts to conquer Covid-19.

Kind regards



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**HEAD: EDUCATION**  
**DATE: 14 JUNE 2021**