



OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT GENERAL

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INSTRUCTION NOTE 49

**TO: ALL DDGs
ALL SMS MEMBERS
ALL OFFICE BASED AND SCHOOL BASED EMPLOYEES
SCHOOL GOVERNING BODIES
ORGANISED LABOUR**

FROM: SUPERINTENDENT-GENERAL

DATE: 1 DECEMBER 2020

**RE: COVID-19 MANAGEMENT IN THE WORKPLACE UNDER LOCKDOWN
ALERT LEVEL 1**

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This instruction comes as a response to the national call by the Minister of Health to all public and private entities/ organizations/ institutions/ offices to observe and practice the current health protocols meant to mitigate the spread of COVID-19 second wave, especially in the Eastern Cape, which has become the epi-centre of this virus. This is a drastic attempt by Government to monitor and manage the implementation of the precautionary measures put in place for all citizens of South Africa, and to contain the deadly COVID-19 virus that has taken lives of more than 21 477 people nationally.
- 1.2 This instruction note should be read in conjunction with all COVID-19 Regulations based on the Disaster Management Act, all DPSA and DBE Regulations and Circulars on COVID-19, and all other Instruction Notes issued by ECDoE on the subject of mitigating the impact of COVID-19.

- 1.3 The South African President went further to declare a 5-days COVID-19 Mourning period from the 25-29th of November 2020 in remembrance of all those who lost lives due to COVID-19 and were victims of Gender Based Violence.
- 1.4 The Department has over the past few weeks observed a very worrying, aggressive resurgence of COVID-19 infections (second wave) in schools and offices. A number of learners and employees have been reported to be COVID-19 positive, and of more concern are the number of deaths that continue incessantly to be reported, day-in and day-out.
- 1.5 The Department is committed to working collaboratively with all stakeholders, other Government Departments and organs of civil society in the quest to unleash an army that will work towards the destruction of the virus in order to save lives.

2. PURPOSE

- 2.1 The purpose of this Instruction Note:
 - (a) is to re-emphasize the importance of all Departmental employees, Learners, and Stakeholders in education to realize that COVID-19 is still prevalent, and requires all of us to work together as a team, if the fight against it, is to be won.
 - (b) In all of our endeavours to fight the virus, guidance from and collaboration with Department of Health is important, while at the same time, we as individuals continue with life/behaviour practices that improve our health and protect lives.
 - (c) School Governing Bodies (SGBs), School Principals, School Management Teams (SMTs) and parents are encouraged to work closely with local Departments of Health, Local Municipalities, JOCS and other relevant stakeholders for more assistance.

3. EXPECTED INDIVIDUAL BEHAVIOUR

- 3.1 Extra caution should be taken by all employees and learners in all education sites/ institutions (Head Office, Education Institutes, Districts and Schools) to ensure that the workplace environment is safe, healthy and sound, by adhering to the following:
 - (a) Washing of hands frequently,
 - (b) Sanitise frequently,
 - (c) Wear cloth masks at all times,
 - (d) Avoid touching, hugging and any other form of physical contact,
 - (e) Keep social distance of not less than 1,5m from others at all times,
 - (f) Keep your workplace and environment clean at all times,
 - (g) Cover with your arm/elbow whenever you cough or sneeze,
 - (h) No visitors to offices, schools or classrooms,
 - (i) Engage in healthy eating habits and exercise regularly to keep your body healthy.
 - (j) The department must continue to play its part in providing for health and safe working and learning environment in all its facilities.

- (k) The state of sanitation and running water must not be compromised and whenever such are not functioning or in poor state SGBs, SMTs and Senior Management must take the most appropriate measures to address the situation.
- (l) All managers at all levels must report cases of COVID 19 to their Wellness Offices for further advice and action.
- (m) Use the COVID Alert SA app to protect yourself, your loved ones and your community. Start using this privacy preserving app today. Add your phone to the fight. Download the COVID Alert SA app now.

4. ACCESS TO DEPARTMENTAL PREMISES, INCLUDING SCHOOLS

- 4.1 Tightening of access to education premises/ sites must be implemented by all managers without exceptions.
- 4.2 Screening protocols that are currently in place must be strictly observed and practiced. The following is still very significant in this regard:
 - (a) The wearing of masks at all times;
 - (b) Taking of body temperature at entry points daily;
 - (c) Carrying of permits by all employees (Chief Directors/ District Directors to ensure that employees within own Chief Directorates/ Districts and CMCs have work permit letters, and to be produced when needed at entry points);
 - (d) No visitors are allowed to schools and Departmental offices, except through prior arrangement with the Principal/ CMC Head/ District Director or HOD, in the case of a School/ CMC/ District or Head Office respectively.
 - (e) Where a visitor has to visit the premises, the designated official stated above must issue a permit valid for the duration of the visit only. All such visitors will be subjected to screening and valid identification.

5. SOCIAL DISTANCE MANAGEMENT

- 5.1 All year end functions are suspended.
- 5.2 All meetings are to be conducted virtually; no face-to-face meetings are to take place.
- 5.3 In line with Instruction Note 26, Chief Directors and District Directors must apply rotation of staff in order to observe social distancing.
- 5.4 In deciding on staff rotation the Occupational Health System (OHS) representative and available shop stewards or site stewards in the Chief Directorate or District or CMC or School must be consulted and be allowed to make contributions
- 5.5 All managers must ensure that they work together with OHS Representatives in their various workplaces (offices and schools) in ensuring that social distancing is observed, and where it is impossible to do so, rotation must be implemented.

6. MANAGEMENT OF COVID-19 CONFIRMED AND/OR SUSPECTED CASES

- 6.1 In line with Instruction Note 36, managers and employees must work with Employee Wellness Service in getting the way forward.
- 6.2 If an employee presents him or herself at work with similar symptoms consistent with COVID-19 e.g. coughing, dry throat, sweats, fatigue etc., the employee must be advised to consult with a doctor immediately. Leave measures shall be applicable in this regard.
- 6.3 Inform employees when they are not to come to work as a result of any symptoms that may be associated with COVID-19, that sick leave will have to be taken.

7. FUNCTIONALITY OF OHS COMMITTEES

- 7.1 All OHS Committees at all levels must meet regularly to continue to observe, coordinate, monitor, assess and come up with innovative means of ensuring that at all times health and safety measures are in place and are complied with.
- 7.2 OHS Committees must ensure that precautionary measures and health protocols on COVID-19 are always observed and adhered to in all workplaces.
- 7.3 The Directorates on Employee Wellness, School Health, Inclusive Education and Integrated School Health Programmes should work collaboratively to ensure for the provision of psychosocial support interventions whenever needed.
- 7.4 The stated Units must ensure that more advocacy and training programmes are conducted on the COVID-19 virus, including the reorientation of employees and learners.
- 7.5 OHS Committees must take a center stage in ensuring that employees, managers and visitors adhere to these minimum health measures at all times.
- 7.6 All COVID-19 positive cases must be reported to Employee Health and Wellness every Monday. Employee Health and Wellness must provide the necessary template to be filled.
- 7.7 Each District must identify a relevant contact person that will receive and keep the information on COVID-19 cases for both learners and educators' information.

The contents of this Instruction Note must be brought to the attention of all managers, employees, learners, SGBs and Unions with immediate effect.

Regards,



TS KOJANA
SUPERINTENDENT-GENERAL

01/12/20
DATE