



OFFICE OF THE HEAD OF DEPARTMENT

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TO: DISTRICT DIRECTORS

CLUSTER CHIEF DIRECTORS

ALL PRINCIPALS

ALL LABOUR UNIONS

ALL SGB ASSOCIATIONS

FROM: HEAD OF DEPARTMENT

SUBJECT: OPENING AND CLOSING OF SCHOOLS DURING COVID -19 INFECTIONS

DATE: 24 AUGUST 2021

1. This memo should be read in conjunction with the Departmental Instruction Note No 48 of 2020 on the Management and Reporting of Covid 19 Flare-Ups at schools (November 2020) and DBE Standard Operating Procedure for the containment and management of Covid 19 for schools and school communities (September 2020).
2. It has come to the attention of the Department that clarity regarding the opening and closure of schools during the Covid-19 infections is needed and this has led to a situation in which schools implement different procedures.
3. You are referred to the DBE – SOPs , Section 18 on Closure of Schools which states that “Closure presents a disruption to the delivery of education and is not warranted if:
 - a single individual with suspected or confirmed COVID-19 has been in the same classroom for less than two (2) days; or
 - a single individual with confirmed COVID-19 has been at school for two (2) days or less while infectious.
 - In these cases, direct/close contacts need to be identified and managed appropriately. Environmental cleaning and disinfection of the area can be done while school activities continue.



- Following the recognition of a cluster of cases (when over 25% of the class are suspected or confirmed to have COVID-19), it may be appropriate to temporarily close a class, a grade, or a section of the school to quarantine and/or isolate. Two (2) days are sufficient for environmental cleaning. Careful consideration should be made to determine if the aims of containment can be achieved without closure.
 - Closure of an entire school is an extreme measure that should be carefully considered and can only be made by **the Head of Department** in discussion with DoH representative, prior to implementation. “
4. The above is further confirmed by the latest data released by DoH that the life span of the corona virus is nine (9) hours and therefore, **it is NOT necessary** that a school should close nine (9) hours after the virus was detected.
 5. Circuit Managers are implored to bring contents of this communication to the attention of all schools without delay.

Yours faithfully,

DR N MBUDE
HEAD OF DEPARTMENT

24/08/21
DATE