



**OFFICE OF THE HEAD OF DEPARTMENT**

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**MEMORANDUM**

**TO :** DEPUTY DIRECTOR GENERALS  
CHIEF DIRECTORS  
HEAD OFFICE DIRECTORS  
DISTRICT DIRECTORS  
EDUCATION DEVELOPMENT OFFICERS  
PRINCIPALS OF SCHOOLS  
SCHOOL GOVERNING BODIES

**FROM :** ACTING HEAD OF DEPARTMENT

**SUBJECT :** EASTERN CAPE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
CONCERN WITH THE PREVALENCE OF FOOD  
RELATED FOOD POISONING AND RELATED  
DEATHS

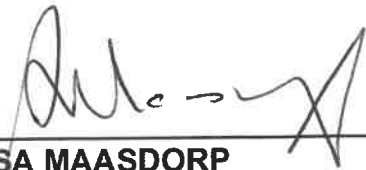
**DATE :** 29 OCTOBER 2024

1. The Eastern Cape Department of Education has noted with concern the continuous reports across the Province and Nationally of food contamination and food related deaths in the communities.
2. These occurrences have caused great concern to the Department and the stance has been taken to ensure that schools implement the food safety policy guidelines as captured in the National School Nutrition Programme Revised Guidelines (2018).
3. All suspected food contamination and related illness or mortality must be escalated through the District and Provincial communication channels.
4. Not only do these incidents disrupt teaching as they often occur during school hours but it has also been observed that these items are bought by learners from local shops in the vicinity of the schools.
5. Although some media reports have incorrectly attributed the food poisoning incidents to the National School Nutrition Programme, no evidence has been found in this regard.

EASTERN CAPE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION CONCERN WITH THE PREVALENCE OF FOOD RELATED FOOD POISONING AND RELATED DEATHS

6. Each of the Districts are provided with direct support to schools to ensure compliance with the National School Nutrition Programme which addresses identifying and addressing incidents of food contamination and food borne disease.
7. Schools should ensure that they engage the National School Nutrition Monitors in the district who is a linkage between the Department of Education, the Department of Health for medical support and the Local Government Officials that will investigate the causal factors of a suspected incident and implement local government regulations to prevent future occurrence.
8. The Department places great emphasis on the wellness of learners and it is by this virtue that all principals are instructed to ensure that vendors within the premises of schools meet the required accreditation for the preparation and serving of food or snack items.
9. The School Governing Body, the Senior Management Team (SMT) within the schools as well as the greater community of stakeholders and parents are invited to draw closer to the learners and monitor them and alert officials of any suspected food poisoning.
10. Lastly, school Principals, Education Development Officers (EDOs) and School Governing Bodies (SGBs) are requested to engage local vendors that are within the vicinity of the school to communicate the concerns surrounding the recurrence of food poisoning illness and deaths.
11. Working together will ensure that learners are safe and their consumption is monitored.
12. The Department conveys condolences to the families of the children who have passed away because of consuming poisoned food items.

Yours in quality education.

  
SA MAASDORP  
ACTING HEAD OF DEPARTMENT

29/10/2024  
DATE