



## basic education

Department:  
Basic Education  
**REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA**

Private Bag X895, Pretoria, 0001, Sol Plaatjie House, 222 Struben Street, Pretoria, 0002, South Africa  
Tel.: (012) 357 3000, Fax: (012) 323 0601, [www.education.gov.za](http://www.education.gov.za)

### **TO HEADS OF PROVINCIAL EDUCATION DEPARTMENTS**

### **DISTRICT DIRECTORS**

### **CIRCUIT MANAGERS**

### **SCHOOL PRINCIPALS**

### **SCHOOL GOVERNING BODIES**

### **TEACHER UNIONS**

### **SCHOOL GOVERNING BODY ASSOCIATIONS**

### **CIRCULAR S2 OF 2026: RESURGENCE OF THE MEASLES OUTBREAK IN SOUTH AFRICA AND GUIDANCE TO SCHOOLS AND SCHOOL COMMUNITIES**

1. On 13 March 2026, the National Institute of Communicable Diseases (NICD) released its national surveillance report indicating that it has detected an increase in Measles cases countrywide.
2. Measles is a highly contagious disease caused by a virus, spreading easily through contact especially in congested spaces (such as creches, schools and churches) and in gatherings. Importantly, Measles is completely preventable through vaccination.
3. Patients with Measles typically present with fever and with a rash. The rash looks like small, red, flat spots over the body. The rash does not form blisters, nor is it itchy or painful. Other signs include cough, conjunctivitis (red eyes) and coryza (running nose). Most cases recover fully. Complications of Measles can include diarrhoea, dehydration, brain infection (encephalitis), blindness and death. Complications are more serious in children under 2 years of age and those who are malnourished.
4. According to the latest published report (on 13 March 2026, from 29 December 2025 to 08 March 2026, there were 556 laboratory-confirmed measles cases nationally. Measles cases continue to be reported across seven (7) provinces, with the exception of KwaZulu-Natal and North West. Approximately 62.1% of the cases are among children aged 1–14 years. The highest number of cases has been recorded in the Western Cape.
5. The risk of Measles and its spread continues to remain high despite the availability of measures to prevent it. Schools and Provincial Education Departments (PEDs) should continue to ensure that all children aged 1-15 years of age and not previously vaccinated during the catch-up campaigns are vaccinated. The measles

vaccine is available free of charge in all public health facilities. Vaccination remains an important intervention to keep schools as safe spaces for learners and staff alike.

6. As previously advised, a number of communicable diseases have recently been reported in South Africa. By definition, communicable diseases are illnesses that spread from one person to another or from an animal to a person, or from a surface or a food. As a result, the following are common preventive measures that schools can put in place to curb their spread:
  - Washing of hands frequently with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, or using alcohol-based hand sanitisers.
  - Maintaining good ventilation by opening doors, windows and/or using fans for air circulation.
  - Surfaces that are touched frequently should consistently be cleaned thoroughly.
  - **Encourage learners who are sick/ not feeling well not to come to school and rather seek health care.**
7. More information on Measles and other communicable diseases can be accessed from the following website <https://www.nicd.ac.za/diseases-a-z-index/#tab13> or your local health facility or provider.
8. Please bring the contents of this Circular to the attention of all schools. PEDs should work closely with the Department of Health in ensuring that the vaccination status of all children is up-to-date.
9. Let us continue working together to keep our schools safe spaces for all staff, learners, parents and visitors.

Yours sincerely



**MR HM MWELI**  
**DIRECTOR-GENERAL**  
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