



Media Release: National lockdown – Message from the Western Cape Education Department

Statement by Brian Schreuder – Head of Department – The Western Cape Education Department

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On Monday evening, President Cyril Ramaphosa announced that South Africa will enter a nationwide lockdown for 21 days with effect from midnight on Thursday, 26 March 2020.

The Western Cape Education Department (WCED) has engaged with the National Department of Basic Education on the lockdown's effect on the public schooling system. Currently, the date for the reopening of schools is uncertain. This does not, however, mean that learning will not continue.

Millions of learners across the country will be on lockdown and we need every parent to do their bit to ensure that our learners remain focused and stimulated. I am aware of the many holiday programmes or learning opportunities communicated to parents by teachers from various schools. This is greatly appreciated.

The WCED is engaging with our colleagues in curriculum, as well as, from other provinces to collate programmes that will benefit every learner across this province. The timetables for and information on these programmes will be communicated once ready, but in the interim I would like to appeal to every parent to prioritise reading as a daily activity in your homes.

We are planning for all eventualities – including home-based quality teaching and learning, using a variety of mechanisms including digital web-based resources, radio and televised broadcasts and catch-up programmes for when schools reopen. The WCED's ePortal has already been updated for home learning. We encourage parents and learners to visit this site: <https://wcedportal.co.za/>.

There are also a variety of examination papers for various grades available on our website for download: <https://wcedonline.westerncape.gov.za/exam-papers>.

I encourage parents to continue to pay school fees, as many teachers employed by of our governing bodies rely on the payment of these fees for their salaries. We are aware that many families will suffer income losses during this period and remind them that there is an option to apply for fee exemption when schools return. This is important to do, as it will enable schools to apply for fee compensation.

The WCED has arranged security at 450 schools across the province. Schools were asked to ensure that alarm systems and other essential security features were tested before schools closed last week. We ask that communities remain vigilant and report any suspicious behaviour in and around our schools to the police as soon as possible. SAPS is on high alert in this time.

We ask that parents and communities look after our children. They are vulnerable during periods of uncertainty such as this. They need to be motivated and kept stimulated and secure in their homes. We ask communities to also be alert to issues of abuse and violence within homes and to report this to the authorities.

I would like to wish everyone a safe and secure three weeks at home. May you heed the call of the President and stay indoors. We need to stop the spread as far as possible, so that we can continue to ensure quality education for every child, in every classroom, in every school in this province.

