

THE SETTLERS HIGH SCHOOL



COVID-19 UPDATE



7 June 2020

Dear Parents and Learners

COVID-19 UPDATE #1

We trust that our Settlers family is staying safe and managing the difficulties in adjusting to the “new normal” at home, at school and at work.

It is the school’s duty to keep all our learners, parents and staff informed of any developments regarding Covid-19 cases, as well as the measures taken to ensure the safety of all concerned. Therefore, we will be publishing regular updates when needed to ensure transparency, as well as provide you with factual information. In this way, we hope that we will be able to avoid rumours or any panic that could result from irresponsible and sensationalist media reports. We also hope that we can provide the necessary clarity in order to avoid stigmatization of this worldwide disease, while still maintaining the required confidentiality as stipulated in the POPI act, as well as Privacy Health Laws.

I. CONFIRMED POSITIVE CASES

At this stage, we have had three staff members and one learner who tested positive for Covid-19 since the school opened on 18 May:

STAFF:

- Case 1: This case has resulted in a full recovery after the required quarantine period. This case was diagnosed early in May.
- Case 2: As you are aware, Mrs Gallie is currently in hospital as a result of contracting Covid-19. This case is not treated as confidential and anonymous, as she requested that we inform all our staff, learners and parents of her diagnosis.
- Case 3: This staff member has already been at home for one week as part of the minimum 14-day quarantine period and is currently displaying mild symptoms.

LEARNERS:

- Case 1: One learner has tested positive this weekend, but the learner has not been at school since Tuesday (while awaiting test results).

A second learner was also tested, and the result came back negative.

In all of the above cases, we have followed all the protocols stipulated by the Western Cape Education Department. The school has employed an external company to deep clean the affected areas each time a case had arisen. This is over and above the daily sanitizing of the building – including desks and other surfaces. Bathrooms are also sanitized multiple times per day.

Should you require more detail regarding the protocols to be followed in schools, you are welcome to visit the WCED website (<https://wcedonline.westerncape.gov.za>), click on *Back to School* and then view *Addendum L: Managing Covid-19 cases in schools*.

Please turn over page

2. NEWS re MRS GALLIE:

Mrs Gallie is very ill at the moment and we request that she is kept in everyone's prayers. We thank all members of the Settlers family for their love and support during this past week. Mrs Gallie is currently unable to respond to the multitude of messages she received, but she is aware of all of them.

3. RETURN TO SCHOOL DATES

Currently, only the Grade 12 learners are at school and we have no final indication regarding dates for the return of other grades. For this reason, we have only been communicating with the Grade 12s regarding the safety protocols, school times, uniform, timetable, academic support and all other detailed information required. Please be assured that we will send out timeous and detailed communication as soon as schools are permitted to phase in the next grade(s).

4. ACADEMIC MAINTENANCE

At this stage, we have already published 7 *Academic Maintenance Plans* since learners received their reports on 17 March 2020. These plans provide a weekly breakdown of the work to be completed in all subjects for all grades. Each subject provides links to a Google Classroom where the video lessons, worksheets and activities are posted. Staff members have been hard at work to develop quality material in such a way that data costs can be kept to a minimum.

Learners are reminded that they can only access these Google Classrooms by using their school email accounts. We are very concerned that there are still a number of learners who are not staying up to date with the academic work. Please contact the school or your child's class educator if you have any difficulty accessing the work.

The *Academic Maintenance Plans* are emailed to all parents and learners. Please contact the school if you have not received these emails, or if your contact details must be updated on our system. You can also view them on the Coronavirus Hub on our website (www.settlers.org.za).

Finally, it is important to recognise the seriousness of the public health challenge facing our community, *and* be mindful that reacting from a place of panic and fear is usually unhelpful, especially in the long-term. Looking after our wellbeing in times like this can help to reduce stress, and is crucial in enabling us to still take calm and effective action in the midst of this global crisis. When many things feel uncertain or out of our control, one of the most effective ways we can manage stress and anxiety is to use these tips to **focus on the actions that are in our control**:

1. Take the necessary and recommended precautions, without getting caught up in unhelpful behaviours.
2. Maintaining regular schedules and routines is a good way to keep anxiety at bay and feel normal. Even if some changes need to be made, maintaining the overall routine is helpful.
3. Do not completely isolate yourself from other people. **Remember that physical distancing does not need to mean social disconnection.**
4. Stay physically active—be outdoors if you can. Maintaining physical activity and spending time in fresh air can help to keep anxiety down.
5. Limit screen time. Too much time on the phone or computer, on social media or websites, can lead to less activity and more anxiety.

Kind regards



L HALL & H SMUTS
Deputy Principals