

Schools to reopen on 8 June

Schools will reopen on 8 June 2020 for grade 7 and 12 learners to allow for the orientation and training of teachers.



Image source: Getty Images

The Council of Education Ministers (CEM) took a decision to continue to reopen schools on 1 June 2020, but with School Management Teams (SMT), teachers and non-teaching staff only arriving to prepare for the arrival of learners.

“Provincial and district officials should ensure that health, safety, and social distancing requirements, are strictly adhered to when teachers arrive. This whole coming week must be used for the proper orientation and training of teachers, the mopping and ramping of all supply chain matters, and final touches to the readiness of each facility for the arrival of learners,” said the Basic Education Department (DBE).

The department had initially planned to kick start its phased reopening from 1 June 2020 provided that health, safety, and social distancing requirements are in place.

Following meetings over the weekend with various stakeholders in the education sector, the department said reports indicated that a substantial number of schools would not be ready to reopen.

In its assessment on the state of readiness for the reopening of schools, the CEM received a report from the consortium of service providers coordinated by the National Education Collaboration Trust on the external evaluation and monitoring of the state of readiness. Rand Water, as an Implementing Agent delivering water to 3,500 schools, also presented its report.

“The Heads of Education Departments Committee (HEDCOM), also presented its technical report. All three reports converged on the fact that a substantial number of schools would not be ready for the reopening tomorrow, albeit tremendous progress had been made by most provinces, which overall reflected 80% state of readiness,” said the DBE in a statement.

According to the department, the CEM was concerned that in some provinces personal protective equipment for learners in particular had not been received and some schools had not been made ready for the arrival of teachers and learners.

CEM then took decisions, which have since been shared with teacher unions, school governing body associations, independent schools' associations, the SA Human Rights Commission, Principals Association, South African National Association for Specialized Education, and other stakeholders.

With the late change on the postponed reopening, the DBE said it received reports that some learners in boarding schools have already arrived at schools.

“We urge the schools to continue with orientation of the learners in terms of the health and safety procedures that should be in place,” said the DBE.

Basic Education Minister Angie Motshekga will hold a media briefing on Monday at 11am at Sunrise View, Rustenburg on the reopening of schools.

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