

NSFAS will no longer communicate via SMS

The National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS) has announced it will no longer communicate directly with students via SMS during the 2019 academic year.



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The decision, said NSFAS in a statement on Thursday, was effective immediately.

The student financial aid scheme said it has also advised students to only use the myNSFAS online self-service portal to view application status or any other information relating to funding.

The move came after the scheme was over the past two weeks targeted in phishing email and text message scams that aim to compromise personal data.

“NSFAS identified scams in which fraudsters lure students into providing confidential information via a link to a site controlled by the attackers. The email or text message scam is designed to look like it is a regular message issued by the NSFAS contact centre,” said the scheme in the statement.

NSFAS said the unidentified attackers are posing as NSFAS representatives and sending out emails requesting applicants and progressing students to update their account information by clicking on an embedded link.

"We would like to warn all the applicants, students and parents to be aware of these fraudsters and take extra care when dealing with their personal information online or over the phone. Any SMS messaging regarding funding received following this message will be from fraudsters and not NSFAS," the scheme said.

NSFAS administrator Dr Randall Carolissen said the scheme was seeing an increase in fraudulent activities, possibly due to the increase in the number of applications for 2019.

"We advise every student that NSFAS will never ask for your account details, password, PIN or OTP over the phone or via email," he said.

"Henceforth, NSFAS will only communicate with applicants and progressing students via the myNSFAS Online Self-Service Portal or via the NSFAS Contact Centre. Call Centre Agents will ensure that suitable precautions are being taken and key security questions are asked to positively identify the person contacted and to build trust.

Other official notices will be published on the NSFAS official website www.nsfas.org.za or the official Twitter page [@mynsfas](https://twitter.com/mynsfas)," NSFAS said.

NSFAS is working with the law enforcement agencies to investigate the matter.

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