

Annexure D

Dear Parent/Guardian

Letter to Parents/Guardians: Exemption from Public School Attendance

South Africa is experiencing challenging times amidst the global Corona Virus pandemic.

Where the State has decided that schools should reopen to enable teaching and learning, the Western Cape Education Department (WCED) has put measures in place for all schools to implement stringent health and safety protocols. We request all governing bodies to assist the principal and senior management team to ensure strict adherence to these measures intended to create as safe an environment as possible for all learners and teachers.

We realise that some parents are anxious about compulsory school attendance at this time, despite all the reassurances given by medical specialists. It is imperative that especially the Grade 12s get maximum learning opportunities in the time available as they prepare for the National Senior Certificate Examination. The Department of Basic Education has, through directions, created an enabling environment for parents wishing to seek exemption for their children from compulsory school attendance.

The Head of Department may, in terms of section 4 of the South African Schools Act (SASA), 1996 (Act 84 of 1996), exempt a learner from compulsory school attendance, if it is in the best interest of a learner.

On 23 June 2020, the Department of Basic Education released new directions in Government Notice 343 (*Government Gazette* No. 43365) in terms of Regulation 4(3) under the Disaster Management Act, 2002 (Act 57 of 2002).

Section 6 of the directions indicates that a parent must apply to the Head of Education for such an exemption.

The following options are available to parents should they wish not to send their child to school. These are explained in **WCED Guideline I (a) - Exemption from public school attendance** and are also available on the WCED website: <https://wcedonline.westerncape.gov.za/back-school>.

Option 1: Application to exempt a learner **with comorbidities**, temporarily, from compulsory school attendance.

Option 2: Application to exempt a learner **without comorbidities**, temporarily and conditionally, from compulsory school attendance.

Option 3: Deregistration of a learner and application for Home Education.

This letter serves to offer you as a parent/guardian the option to apply to keep your child at home for the foreseeable future and oversee his/her learning at home.

The WCED will inform parents timeously via the school when this concession will end.

If you wish to make use of **Option 1 or Option 2**, you must please do the following:

1. Complete the attached application form (Annexure B (1) for learners **with comorbidities** or Annexure B (2) for a learner **without comorbidities**).
2. Provide the school with a medical history report from the medical practitioner attending to your child's condition. This is only applicable to those applying, using Annexure B (1).
3. Complete the attached parent acceptance form (Annexure C).
4. The parent must submit a copy of Annexure B (1 or 2), the medical report (applicable to Annexure B (1) and Annexure C to the principal.

The conditions in Annexure C include the following:

1. The parent/guardian must accept and agree (Annexure C) that they will take the responsibility to oversee the learning of their child at home.
2. These responsibilities include:
 - Creating a conducive environment for his/her child to learn at home.
 - Accepting the responsibility to oversee the daily learning of his/her child at home, including the daily work and assessments.
 - Accepting the responsibility of ensuring that they are informed of what work must be learned and what work must be completed daily.
 - Ensuring that all work and assignments are collected and delivered at school, as required, and agreed to by the school.
3. The parent/guardian must accept that if the above conditions are not met, this exemption can be withdrawn.
4. The parent/guardian must accept that when the concession ends, their child must return to school. If the child is then absent from school for more than 10 days without a valid reason, the child will be deregistered.

5. If a parent/guardian does not agree to the responsibilities above, the learner must return to school.

As your child is still an enrolled learner of the school and receives regular input and support from their teachers, you, as the parent/guardian, remain responsible for the continued payment of school fees.

If you, as a parent/guardian, are unable to accept these conditions and the responsibilities associated with it, then your child should continue to attend school.

Option 3: Deregister from the school and apply for Home Education.

Should a parent wish to deregister their child and apply for a learner to receive education at the learner's home (Home Education), he or she must comply with the legal requirements for the provision of home education, as contemplated in section 51 of the SASA, 1996 (Act 84 of 1996).

The *Policy on Home Education, 2018*, the requirements and duties of parents and the application form can be accessed, using the following link:

<https://wcedonline.westerncape.gov.za/home-education>.

A learner that is deregistered from a school will have to apply for admission and adhere to admission requirements should they wish to choose to return to a public school again.

We understand the fear and anxiety of all currently and are seeking to enable education in a safe environment for all learners and teachers. To this end, the WCED has prepared a set of 14 guidelines on how to manage Covid-19 in schools. These guidelines can be viewed and downloaded at <https://wcedonline.westerncape.gov.za/back-school>.

We appeal to everyone to assist us by adhering to health and safety protocols in our schools.

We hope that you and your family remain safe.

Yours sincerely



BK SCHREUDER
HEAD: EDUCATION
DATE: 3 JULY 2020