



I(a) – WCED Guideline: Exemption from public school attendance

Branch: Institution Development and Coordination	I(a) – WCED Guideline: Exemption from public school attendance	
I – WCED Guideline	Issued: 3 July 2020	To be reviewed as and when necessary

Approved by the Head of Department:



BK Schreuder

Date: 3 July 2020

I(a) – WCED GUIDELINE: EXEMPTION FROM PUBLIC SCHOOL ATTENDANCE

1. Purpose

To provide guidance to principals and School Management Teams of the Western Cape Education Department (WCED) on how to manage learners whose parents/guardians do not wish to send their child to school for the foreseeable future, whether due to comorbidities or not.

2. New directions

On 23 June 2020, the Department of Basic Education released new Directions in Government Notice 343, published in *Government Gazette* No. 43465, in terms of Regulation 4(3) of the Regulations made under the Disaster Management Act, 2002 (Act 57 of 2002).

If a parent/guardian of a learner in a public school chooses not to send their child to school for the foreseeable future, then they must apply to the Head of Department, who, in terms of section 4 of the South African Schools Act, 1996 (Act 84 of 1996), may exempt a learner temporarily and conditionally from compulsory school attendance, if it is in the best interests of the learner. We will assess the situation from time to time and will inform parents timeously via the school when this concession will end.

This guideline therefore replaces the guideline sent previously as *WCED Guideline I: Managing learners with comorbidities*.

The following options are made available to parents/guardians should they wish not to send their child to school:

- Option 1:** Application to exempt a learner **with comorbidities** temporarily from compulsory school attendance.
- Option 2:** Application to exempt a learner (who does not have comorbidities) temporarily and conditionally from compulsory school attendance.
- Option 3:** Deregistration of a learner and application for home education.

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

3.1 **Meaning of comorbidities**

There are many definitions of comorbidities. For the purpose of this guideline, a comorbidity is deemed to be other chronic health conditions or a concurrent illness which could make the illness worse in co-occurrence with COVID-19. A list of comorbidities can be found in Annexure A.

3.2 **Steps to be taken**

3.2.1 A parent/guardian must apply to the Head of Department for exemption from compulsory school attendance after consultation with the principal.

3.2.2 Previously, the WCED released WCED Guideline I: Managing learners with comorbidities (<https://wcedonline.westerncape.gov.za/back-school>). Parents/guardians could apply for a concession due to a comorbidity related to the COVID-19 pandemic. The application was sent directly to the principal.

3.2.3 This process no longer applies. A parent/guardian must now apply to the Head of Department for exemption from compulsory school attendance.

3.2.4 In order to apply, the parent/guardian must complete and submit the following documents:

- Annexure B(1) stating the reasons for their application for exemption.
- A medical history report from the medical practitioner attending to their child's condition.
- The parent/guardian must commit to taking responsibility for their child's learning at home by completing Annexure C, which outlines the conditions that need to be adhered to by the parent/guardian concerned.

3.2.5 The parent/guardian must submit a copy of Annexure B(1), the medical report and Annexure C to the principal.

3.2.6 The principal must keep a copy of the application and submit the application documents to the Head of Department via the following email addresses:

- Sigamoney.Naicker@westerncape.gov.za
- (cc) iLhaam.Manan@westerncape.gov.za

3.3 **Responsibilities of the parent/guardian**

3.3.1 The parent/guardian must accept and agree (Annexure C) to take responsibility to oversee their child's learning at home.

3.3.2 This includes:

- creating a conducive environment for their child to learn at home;
- accepting the responsibility to oversee the daily learning of their 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 on a daily basis; and
- ensuring that all work and assignments are collected and delivered at school, as required and agreed to by the school.

3.3.3 The parent/guardian must accept that if the above conditions are not met, the exemption from compulsory school attendance can be withdrawn.

3.3.4 The parent/guardian must accept that when the concession ends, their child must return to school. If the child or the learner is then absent from school for more than 10 days without a valid reason, the learner will be deregistered.

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

3.4 **Responsibility of the school**

3.4.1 Teachers must prepare work for such learners on a daily or weekly basis and make it available to the parent/guardian or learner.

3.4.2 Teachers must receive the completed work or assignments, mark it and return it to the learner.

3.4.3 Teachers must engage with the parent/guardian in relation to making arrangements for the necessary assessments.

4. **Option 2: Application to exempt a learner (who does not have comorbidities) temporarily and conditionally from compulsory school attendance**

4.1 **Reasons for exemption**

The parent/guardian's reasons for applying for temporary and conditional exemption of a learner from compulsory school attendance must be clearly motivated in Annexure B(2).

4.2 **Steps to be taken**

4.2.1 A parent/guardian must apply to the Head of Department for exemption from compulsory school attendance after consultation with the principal.

4.2.2 The parent/guardian must complete the following:

- Annexure B(2) and state the reasons for their application for exemption.
- The parent/guardian must commit to taking responsibility for their child's learning at home by completing Annexure C, which outlines the **conditions** that need to be adhered to by the parent/guardian concerned.

4.2.3 The parent/guardian must submit a copy of Annexure B(2) and Annexure C to the principal.

4.2.4 The principal must keep a copy of the application and submit the application documents to the Head of Department via:
Schooling.exemption@westerncape.gov.za

4.3 **Responsibilities of the parent/guardian**

4.3.1 The parent/guardian must accept and agree (Annexure C) to take responsibility to oversee their child's learning at home.

4.3.2 This includes:

- creating a conducive environment for their child to learn at home;
- accepting the responsibility to oversee the daily learning of their 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 on a daily basis; and
- ensuring that all work and assignments are collected and delivered at school, as required and agreed to by the school.

- 4.3.3 The parent/guardian must accept that if the above conditions are not met, the exemption from compulsory school attendance can be withdrawn.
- 4.3.4 The parent/guardian must accept that when the concession ends, their child must return to school. If the child or the learner is then absent from school for more than 10 days without a valid reason, the learner will be deregistered.
- 4.3.5 If a parent/guardian does not agree to the responsibilities above, the learner must return to school.

4.4 **Responsibility of the school**

- 4.4.1 Teachers must prepare work for such learners on a daily or weekly basis and make it available to the parent/guardian or learner.
- 4.4.2 Teachers must receive the completed work or assignments, mark it and return it to the learner.
- 4.4.3 Teachers must engage with the parent/guardian in relation to making arrangements for the necessary assessments.

5. **Option 3: Deregistration of a learner and application for home education**

- 5.1 Should a parent/guardian 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 South African Schools Act, 1996 (Act 84 of 1996).
- 5.2 The *Policy on Home Education, 2018*, the requirements and duties of parents, and the application form can be found at:
<https://wcedonline.westerncape.gov.za/home-education>
- 5.3 A learner who is deregistered from a school will have to reapply for admission and adhere to admission requirements should they wish to return to a public school.

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