



NATIONAL NEWS FLASH



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COVID -19 PANDEMIC DECLARED A NATIONAL DISASTER

President Cyril Ramaphosa addressed the nation on the scale and the speed at which the corona virus is spreading, and indicated that it was now clear that no country was immune from the disease or would be spared its severe impact.

The World Health Organisation has declared the coronavirus outbreak as a global pandemic. There are now more than 162 000 people who have tested positive for the coronavirus across the globe. The President declared a national state of disaster in terms of the Disaster Management Act.

IMPACT ON SCHOOLS

One of the measures Cabinet had decided on, was to minimize the risk of the spread of this virus by limiting contact amongst groups of people. Schools would therefore close on 18 March 2020 and resume on 14 April 2020. Ten (10) school days will be lost as a result of school closures. To compensate for lost days the June holidays will be cut short by a week. Once opened, the Department of Basic Education (DBE) encourages schools to extend tuition hours. It must be noted that this directive by the DBE affects all schools including independent or private schools. The Council of Education Ministers (CEM) has agreed on a number of steps to be taken to ensure that education is not compromised, and these include, inter alia that provinces, districts, circuits and schools have practical and comprehensive catch-up plans to be implemented.

Whilst we appreciate the extent of the threat that this disease presents, and accept the anxiety that it causes, NAPTOSA calls on members to be calm and not to be overwhelmed by fear and panic, and to be aware of fake and unverified news that may be spread by unscrupulous people to create further apprehension and alarm.

CALL FOR SUPPORT, COLLABORATION, SOLIDARITY AND UNDERSTANDING

NAPTOSA calls on all members to support the president's call for cooperation, collaboration and for a common action against this epidemic. The challenge we are all faced with requires solidarity, understanding and compassion. We need each other more than ever before. Those who have resources, those who are healthy, need to assist those who are in need and who are vulnerable. NAPTOSA supports the call to postpone or cancel all mass events of more than 100 people scheduled for March and April. We have a long winter ahead, which presents various possibilities. We thus ask our schools and teachers to plan ahead for the unknown turns the virus could take. Details of the July holidays will be communicated shortly.

BASIL MANUEL

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR