

Covid-19 positive learners allowed to write matric exams

The Basic Education Department has reviewed its Covid-19 exam protocols to allow learners who test positive for the Coronavirus to sit for their final matric examinations.



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The DBE previously issued a set of guidelines, which indicated that learners who were Covid-19 positive would not be allowed to enter the exam centre.

Following a petition by parents and learners who called for a review of the protocols, the DBE in consultation with the Health Department concluded an agreement on Wednesday evening and conceded to the request.

The about turn came just a day before more than 1 million learners - 1,058,699 candidates will sit for their final National Senior Certificate (NSC) exams.

The two departments jointly considered the requests and deliberated on the practical implications.

It was agreed that candidates who test positive, and deemed fit to write the examination will be allowed to write albeit at a different venue and under secure conditions that are in compliance with the examination regulations.

The departments will work jointly to ensure that candidates who have been confirmed to be positive are given an opportunity to sit for the exams while ensuring that safety is observed.

“We welcome the intervention by the Department of Health given that a learner that tests positive becomes the responsibility of the Department of Health and no longer an education issue.

“The initial protocol of the Department of Basic Education was widely consulted and endorsed by the Department of Health, but this change in the protocol is very helpful because it will give all learners an opportunity to write their examinations,” said Basic Education Minister Angie Motshekga.

In light of the changes, the Minister cautioned that the concessions did not mean that people should now be complacent in terms of the safety measures aimed at preventing the spread of Covid-19.

“It also needs to be noted that learners who are screened at the entrance of the examination venue and display a temperature higher than 38°C will be allowed to write the examination in an isolation venue at the school.

“These learners will be immediately taken to the isolation venue and after the examination they will not be allowed to socialise with other learners, but will be taken to a health centre for further medical attention,” said the department.

With Thursday being the first day for the matric exams, Minister Motshekga accompanied by Gauteng Education MEC Panyaza Lesufi will monitor the start of the NSC Examinations in Soweto.

The Minister will in addition to monitoring the start of matric examinations, receive a significant donation of ICT equipment destined for schools from the Motsepe Foundation. Patrice Motsepe and Dr Precious Moloi-Motsepe will also accompany the Minister.

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