

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



Reference: COVID-19/20200703/02
Enquiries: BK Schreuder

Dear Principals of all Public Schools

(For information: School Governing Bodies)
(For information: Independent Schools)

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

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 with a child in a public school does not wish 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 interest of the learner. The time period of this concession will be assessed from time to time. Parents will be informed timeously via the school when this concession will end.

This guideline therefore **replaces** the guideline sent previously as *Western Cape Education Department (WCED) Guideline I: Managing learners with comorbidities*.

The following options are available to parents/guardians should they wish to not 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 **without comorbidities** temporarily and conditionally from compulsory school attendance.

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

WCED Guideline I(a) provides guidance on how to manage the three options above.

Please, also see attached:

- Annexure A – A list of learner risk factors,
- Annexure B (1) – Application for exemption of a learner **due** to a comorbidity,
- Annexure B (2) – Application for exemption of a learner **without** a comorbidity,
- Annexure C – Parent acceptance form,

- Annexure D – Letter to parents from the Head of Department.

WCED Guideline I(a) outlines the responsibilities of parents/guardians and the responsibilities that schools have in supporting learners' education at home, should their application be successful.

Should a parent/guardian wish to deregister their child from the school and apply for a learner to receive education at the learner's home, 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).

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>.

Please ensure that every parent/guardian receives a copy of my letter to parents/guardians in connection with the above.

Please assist any parent/guardian wishing to apply for Option 1 or 2 with the necessary forms and support.

The school will be required to send the necessary applications to the following addresses:

Applications for exemption of a learner **due to a comorbidity** must be sent to:

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

Applications for exemption of a learner **without a comorbidity** must be sent to:

- Schooling.exemption@westerncape.gov.za

Yours sincerely



BK SCHREUDER
HEAD: EDUCATION
DATE: 3 JULY 2020



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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Annexure I (A)

LEARNER RISK FACTORS FOR SEVERE COVID-19: COMORBIDITIES
Interim indicators (pending DBE confirmation)

The list of Comorbidities, Risk Factors and Definitions are:

Risk Factor	Detail	Definition
Cardiovascular Disease	Moderate/ Severe Hypertension	Moderate hypertension: systolic BP 160-179mmHg and/or diastolic BP 100-109 mmHg. Severe hypertension: systolic BP \geq 180 mmHg and/or diastolic BP \geq 110 mmHg.
	Congestive cardiac failure or other serious cardiovascular disease	Confirmed clinical diagnosis of congestive cardiac failure or other serious cardiovascular disease
	Cerebrovascular disease, including stroke and transient ischaemic attack	Confirmed clinical diagnosis of cerebrovascular disease.
Respiratory Disease	Pulmonary Tuberculosis – untreated or in early treatment	People who have not completed the intensive phase or first two months of treatment in line with the National Department of Health Standard Treatment Guidelines.
	Moderate to severe asthma	Asthma which requires treatment with high dose inhaled corticosteroids plus a second controller (and/or systemic corticosteroids) to prevent it from becoming 'uncontrolled' or which remains 'uncontrolled' despite this therapy.
	Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD)	Confirmed clinical diagnosis of COPD

Risk Factor	Detail	Definition
	Other severe chronic lung pathology, including cystic fibrosis and bronchiectasis	Confirmed clinical diagnosis – irrespective of severity.
Kidney Disease	Chronic Kidney Disease	eGFR < 45
Pregnancy	Third trimester pregnancy	Estimated to be further than week 27 of pregnancy
Immunosuppression	Poorly controlled type II Diabetes Mellitus	HBA1c ≥7.5% within last 6 months
	Cancer undergoing active treatment	Currently undergoing chemotherapy and/or radiotherapy
	Human Immunodeficiency Virus with advanced immunosuppression	HIV positive persons with CD4 count <200 cells/mm ³ who are ART-naïve or who initiated ART within last 3 months
	Chronic immunosuppressant use	Chronic use of corticosteroids of >20mg prednisone per day or equivalent, methotrexate, biologicals or other immunosuppressants.
	Transplant	On chronic immunosuppressants
Primary Immunodeficiencies	Diagnosed Primary Immunodeficiency	On chronic immuno-globulin treatment.
Metabolic syndrome	Severe obesity	Body mass index (MBI) of 40 and higher



Annexure B (1) - Application for exemption of a learner not to attend school due to a comorbidity

To be completed by the parent/legal guardian

(COMORBIDITY APPLICATION)

I, _____ (**name and surname**), the parent/legal guardian (*delete whichever is not applicable*), hereby wish to apply to the Head of Department to exempt my child temporarily from compulsory school attendance, in terms of section 4 of the South African Schools Act, 1996 (Act 84 of 1996), for the foreseeable future, due to one or more comorbidities.

_____ (**Name of learner**)

_____ (**CEMIS No.**)

_____ (**Grade**)

_____ (**Name of School**)

I do so, and take full responsibility, to oversee the learning of my child at home as indicated in the signed agreement (Annexure C).



Annexure B(2) – Application for exemption of a learner without a comorbidity from school attendance

(NO COMORBIDITY)

I, _____ (name and surname),
the parent/legal guardian (*delete whichever is not applicable*), hereby wish to apply to
the Head of Department to exempt my child temporarily and conditionally from
compulsory school attendance, in terms of section 4 of the South African Schools Act,
1996 (Act 84 of 1996), for the foreseeable future.

_____ (name of learner)

_____ (CEMIS No.)

_____ (Grade)

_____ (name of school)

I hereby take full responsibility for collecting and returning work at the school and
overseeing the learning of my child at home as indicated in the signed agreement
(Annexure C).

Annexure C

Dear Principal

PARENT ACCEPTANCE FORM: TO ADHERE TO CONDITIONS FOR EXEMPTION FROM COMPULSORY SCHOOL ATTENDANCE

I, _____ (name of parent/guardian),

parent/guardian of _____ (name of learner)

from _____ (name of school)

hereby accept the conditions for exemption from compulsory school attendance for the foreseeable future.

These conditions include:

1. That I accept and agree that I will take responsibility to oversee the learning of my child at home, which includes:
 - a) creating a conducive environment for my child to learn at home;
 - b) accepting the responsibility to oversee the daily learning of my child at home, including the daily work and assessments;
 - c) accepting the responsibility of ensuring that my child is informed of what work must be learned and what work must be completed on a daily basis; and
 - d) ensuring that all work and assignments are collected and delivered at school, as required and agreed to by the school.
2. That I accept that if the above conditions are not met, the exemption from compulsory school attendance can be withdrawn.
3. That I accept that when the concession ends, my child must return to school. If my child or the learner is then absent from school for more than 10 days without a valid reason, the learner will be deregistered.

I acknowledge that since my child is still an enrolled learner of the school and receives regular input and support from their teachers, I, as the parent/guardian, remain responsible for the continued payment of school fees.

I understand that if I am unable to accept these conditions and the responsibilities associated with it, then my child should continue to attend school.

Signature: _____

Date: _____