

**2022 BACK TO SCHOOL CAMPAIGN**

 **KEY MESSAGES**

**BRIEF:**

Learners across the country will report for the start of the new school year between 12 and 17 January 2022. Many learners will attend school for the first time, while others will return to further their education.

Since 1994, government has prioritised education as a means to transform the lives of young South Africans for the better. Our interventions have led to continuous improvements in our education system as reflected in the steady increase in the overall matric pass rate.

Over the coming year learners will require support from their parents, caregivers and educators in order to excel. We call on families to assist learners by providing support systems; it is essential that we encourage learners and instil in them the importance of education.

|  **KEY MESSAGES** | **SUPPORTING STATEMENTS** |
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| ***Education opens doors and can change lives.*** | * Government is ready to receive millions of learners for the 2022 academic year.
* We are committed to every learner receiving the best possible education.
* Our schools and educators are ready to start learning from day one.
* The required infrastructure and learning materials are in place for the new school year.
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| ***Necessary precautions are in place for both learners and educators.***  | * The safety of learners, educators and support staff is our priority and all the necessary health and safety measures are in place for the 2022 academic year.
* We have provided all public schools with standard operating procedures to ensure a safe learning and working environment.
* We will also continue to emphasise on the use of personal protective equipment and ensure the availability of water and sanitation services.
* Vaccination remains our best defence and we urge all learners aged 12 and older to vaccinate as soon as possible.
* Vaccines offer protection against COVID-19 and reduce the risk of serious illness, hospitalisation and death.
* Parents and guardians are urged to ensure that their children are transported in safe and reliable transport, which meets the specifications of the national school transport policy.
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| ***Soon millions of learners will return to school to begin the 2022 school year.***  | * Young people are not immune to the virus and the new variant of COVID-19, which is present in South Africa is more transmissible.
* Wearing of masks remains mandatory, and all learners, teachers and other school staff must continue to do so.
* When at school continue to observe physical distancing and observe all safety protocols, even when interacting with your friends, teachers or anyone else.
* During breaks continue to social distance, do not sit together with your friends or gather in large groups.
* Do not share devices such as computers, laptops or phones.
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| ***Together we can make our schools safer for all.***  | * Government has developed a protocol to ensure schools follow a standardised procedure when addressing allegations of sexual violence and harassment.
* This protocol aims to assist schools to act appropriately and timeously in investigating allegations of sexual violence and harassment.
* It provides guidelines on how schools should treat victims of sexual violence and harassment.
* It also provides guidelines on how to deal with those who are alleged to have committed such acts.
* Government calls on everyone to play their part to ensure the safety of learners and educators in schools.
* Any form of sexual violence, harassment or bullying has no place in our schools.
* We call on all sectors of society to oppose any form of violence committed against learners, educators and relevant stakeholders in schools.
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| ***The role of parents in education is vital.*** | * Don’t stand back! Get involved in your child’s schooling and make a difference.
* Wherever possible parents should try to be actively involved in activities at school, including school governance structures.
* Parents are encouraged to have regular discussions with their children about their schooling activities.
* Parents are encouraged to cultivate a healthy, open and cooperative relationship with their children's teachers.
* Parents must encourage children to remain in school so that they may reap the benefits of education and rewards of being educated.
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| ***Teachers are the backbone of our education system.*** | * Government is confident that our teachers will continue to work hard to ensure the best possible education for our learners.
* Teachers often go beyond the call of duty; they are secondary nurturers and counsellors of our children.
* Government applauds all teachers for their hard work and continuous dedication to this noble profession.
* The efforts of teachers in both educating and keeping our children safe have not gone unnoticed.
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