



education

MPUMALANGA PROVINCE
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

TO ALL MEDIA/NEWS EDITORS

15 FEBRUARY 2018

Say NO to School Based Violence

The Department has noted with concern the ongoing school based violence taking place in some parts of the province. Such unbecoming behaviors undermine the positive and noble idea within which schools were established, that is shaping the upcoming youth to become responsible citizens in the society.

Schools are gradually becoming battles of war where all unruly behavior is demonstrated at its largest degree. The recent stabbings that took place at Senzangakhona and KaMhola secondary schools within two months of the re-opening of schools resulting in two fatalities are a serious call for concern.

Vandalism, substance abuse, gangsterism, bullying, violence and other social ills are counterproductive to effective teaching and learning and thus defeating government's efforts to creating an enabling environment for learning and teaching in our schools.

The Department will be re-enforcing the Integrated School Safety Programme by engaging with other government departments such as Community Safety, Security and Liaison to stem the flow of this social ills. This effort will look into the strengthening of school safety committees and the signing in the school protocol by stakeholders.

The department also calls upon parents and communities in the province to avail themselves and participate in the programmes of the Department to ensure safety in our schools.

The MEC for Education, Mrs Reginah Mhaule said, "The involvement of the community in ensuring that safety at schools prevails is cardinal to the success of the Integrated School Safety Programme. The high levels of violence and crime in our communities has the potential



of spilling over to schools. These social ills rob our children the right to a brighter future and thus working together to get rid of this social nuisance is a priority.”

There is increasing concern that schools have become sites of widespread violence. Our schools have been constructed as a space within which children can come and learn in a safe and protected environment however, it appears that this is unfortunately not the case in the majority of schools.

The problem of school-based violence is not a new phenomenon. However, what is becoming evident is the increasingly serious nature of the context within which is taking place. The types of violence have shifted from cases of bullying to more serious forms of victimisation.

This is evident in the case of the recent random killing of two learners from Senzangakhona and Kamhola secondary schools by their fellow learners. Schools are generally seen as mechanisms to develop and reinforce positive citizens with pro-social attitudes and as sites where individuals are prepared for the role they are to play in society at large.

There is a strong correlation between the amount of education as well as academic success a learner achieves and their decision to choose crime or not. This therefore implies that, a lack of safety in our communities may serve to perpetuate crime and violence even in our schools

One can therefore argue that schools, teachers, community members and other community based organisation have the potential of playing a vital role in influencing or preventing the rates of violence in South African society.

What is also a major concern is how some of the community members participate in the school based violence by vandalizing and torching schools when embarking on service delivery protests. Communities however have the responsibility to ensure that their local schools are well taken care of, free from vandalism or worse even torching.

Such selfish and barbaric acts are a complete sign of pure lawlessness that should be denounced at the highest degree possible. Communities must work together with government through the integrated school safety programme in the fight against any form of school based violence by reporting the perpetrators to the police so that they face the full might of the law.

The element of bullying also has a negative impact on the academic performance of the learners who are victims of such. Some of the bullied learners go as far as committing suicide. No learner under any circumstances has the right to bully another learner inside or outside the school premises.

Communities must work together with the schools and other organisations within their space to fight against the scourge of bullying. All learners have equal rights to education and should not be denied that constitutional right due to any form of school based violence.

It is also evident by the number cases that are reported to the department that there are some educators who are still practicing corporal punishment, an act that was abolished long time ago. Corporal punishment constitutes a gross misconduct and everyone who is inflicting corporal punishment on any learners shall be brought to book.

We hereby make a clarion call to all our educators to cease from inflicting corporal punishment on our learners and use other alternatives to corporal punishment. Fighting against school based violence requires a collective effort, parents, communities and local based organisations can assist schools in ensuring that they become havens of learning and teaching by instilling public order in the local communities.

Issued by the Mpumalanga Department of Education

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