

Navrae  
Enquiries  
IMibuzo  
MR I.J. MORKEL

Telefoon  
Telephone  
IFoni  
(021) 467-2000

Faks  
Fax  
IFeksi  
(021) 467-2996

Verwysing  
Reference  
ISalathiso  
13/12/6/B  
20000728-0004



---

Wes-Kaap Onderwysdepartement

---

Western Cape Education Department

---

ISEbe leMfundo leNtshona Koloni

---

CIRCULAR 0112/2000

TO:

ALL CHIEF DIRECTORS, DIRECTORS (HEAD OFFICE), AREA AND CIRCUIT MANAGERS,  
SUBJECT ADVISERS AND HEADS OF ALL EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

### POLICY ON RELIGIOUS OR CULTURAL FESTIVAL DAYS IN SCHOOL TERMS

1. The Western Cape Education Department indicated in paragraph 3 of Circular 101/99, dated 13 September 1999, on the school calendar and public holidays in school terms of the year 2000, that the concession to celebrate a religious or cultural festival day that is not a public holiday has been withdrawn.
2. However, the attention of principals and governing bodies of schools is drawn to the fact that **National Policy for Designing School Calendars for Ordinary Public Schools in South Africa has been promulgated by the National Minister of Education in Government Gazette 20945, dated 1 March 2000**, in terms of which governing bodies of schools may apply to the Head of Department for the closure of the school for a maximum of two days per year for the purpose of the celebration of religious, sport or cultural days.
3. RELIGIOUS DAYS
  - 3.1 Under the aforementioned policy, the governing body of a school may exercise the right to close the school for a religious commemoration subject to the following conditions:
    - (i) The majority of pupils must be members of the religious group in question.
    - (ii) The school may close only for a maximum of TWO days per year for the purpose of religious days of commemoration.
    - (iii) If a maximum of two days per year is used for the purpose of religious days of commemoration, these days will be taken in lieu of the two days allocated for sport and culture as indicated in paragraph 4.

- (iv) Schools must prioritise their activities when making choices about the days on which the school will close.
- (v) The governing body of a school must apply in writing via the circuit manager to the area manager for closure and must provide the following particulars:
  - the size (percentage and number) of the religious majority at school;
  - the day/days being applied for;
  - how the school day(s) taken off for such observance will be made up.
- (vi) Schools that close on religious grounds must still maintain the approved number of school days for the province.

3.2 Governing bodies of schools must ensure that minority religious groups in the school are not disadvantaged in any way. Learners who belong to such minority groups in schools may be given permission to take two recognised religious days off from school. Learners who for religious reasons do not attend school on the two school days in question should be marked present. These learners should not be academically disadvantaged as a result of their absence: for example, examinations or tests should not be administered on the days that they are absent.

3.3 Educators who wish to observe a religious day falling on a school day are compelled to apply for vacation leave except where the school is closed as set out in paragraph 3.1.

#### 4. SPORT AND CULTURAL DAYS

4.1 A maximum of two days per year may be allocated to schools for this purpose. School governing bodies should apply to the area manager for approval to use such days for school sporting and cultural events.

4.2 Area offices must keep a record of the number of applications received, the names of the schools concerned, the reasons for such applications and the number of applications approved.

5. The above will apply with effect from the start of the 2001 school year.

6. Principals are requested to communicate the contents of this circular to all concerned.



B.P. O'CONNELL  
 HEAD: EDUCATION  
 DATE: 22/1/00