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Enquiries: Circuit Manager

Circular 0044/2020

Expiry date: 31 December 2020

To: Deputy Directors-General, Chief Directors, Directors (Head Office and district offices), Circuit Managers, Principals and Chairpersons of governing bodies

Short summary: *Learners who have not attended school since 01 June 2020.*

Subject: Learners who have not attended school since 01 June 2020

1. This circular serves to clarify the procedure for dealing with instances where learners have not attended school since 01 June 2020.
2. The letter from the Head of Education to principals (reference number: COVID-19/20200803/01), dated 03 August 2020, clarifies that parents must apply for exemption from compulsory school attendance to ensure that the learner remains registered at the school.
3. Principals are hereby requested to follow up and report the reasons for learners who have not returned to school since 01 June 2020 **via CEMIS by 25 November 2020.**
4. To see the list of learners who have not attended school and to submit the reasons for that, go to: **CEMIS/Absenteeism/Screening/Learners Not Screened.**
5. Paragraph 55 of the Western Cape Education Department (WCED) Policy on Learner Attendance, 2010, states that, *"if a learner is absent from school for 10 consecutive school days a principal must make reasonable attempts to ascertain from the learner's parent or guardian whether the learner has been withdrawn from the school."*
6. It must be noted that in terms of the regulations published as Directions by the Department of Basic Education under the Disaster Management Act, 2002 (Act 57 of 2002), due to the COVID-19 pandemic, parents had the option to apply for an exemption from compulsory school attendance (for learners with or without

comorbidities), home education or virtual/online learning in order to avoid the learner being deregistered from the school.

7. If the learner has been withdrawn, or there is no application for exemption, or no valid reason for absence is given, or the principal is unable to contact the parent or the learner, the principal must cancel the learner's record in the class register on grounds of "continuous absence".
8. **Schools MUST make every effort to contact parent(s) or learner(s) and the principal must ensure that the school keeps evidence and/or a record of these attempts in case of a legal dispute.**
9. This evidence could include a list of telephone calls and details of the calls, copies of emails and letters or any other form of communication with the parent.
10. In an instance where a learner was not deregistered, did not attend school yet the parent still requests a report on the progression or promotion of the learner, the case must be dealt with in terms of the guidelines for completion of School-Based Assessment and progression and promotion issued by the WCED.
11. All queries in respect of the above can be directed to the relevant circuit manager in each circuit.
12. Kindly bring the contents of this circular to the attention of all concerned.

SIGNED: BK SCHREUDER

HEAD: EDUCATION

DATE: 2020-11-18