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To: Deputy Directors-General, Chief Directors, Directors (Head Office and district offices), Deputy Directors, Circuit Managers, Heads: ISLES Coordination and Advice, Head Office and district office officials, Principals, Educators and Education Support Staff

Short summary: *Guidelines for communication to all schools, provided by the Director-General of the Department of Basic Education (DBE) to assist principals in the management of school-based educator leave.*

**Subject: Guidelines for principals on the management of school-based educator leave**

1. In the sector audit, the Auditor-General of South Africa (AGSA) found that the management of school-based educator leave in provincial departments of education was ineffective. Specific AGSA findings included:
  - (a) educators take more sick leave days than allowed by their sick leave dispensation;
  - (b) educators are absent from schools without completing leave forms;
  - (c) educators are not completing daily attendance registers; and,
  - (d) there were instances where educators take extended leave due to ill-health, but do not access temporary incapacity leave as per the *Policy and Procedure on Incapacity Leave for Ill-health Retirement (PILIR)*, 2021.
2. As part of their management response to the AGSA, the DBE committed to providing guidelines on the management of leave of school-based educators. These guidelines target the principal as the manager accountable for this function at school level.
3. Chapter H of the *Personnel Administrative Measures (PAM)*, 2022, covers most of the leave provisions applicable to educators. Additional to this, the *PILIR*, which is a transversal policy for the public service, covers temporary and permanent incapacity. The guidelines, therefore, must be read in conjunction with the *PAM* and *PILIR*.

4. The guidelines do not amend existing regulations or introduce any new policy provisions or practice, nor are they meant to vary or amend the responsibilities of the principal as provided for in the approved job descriptions outlined in the *PAM* and relevant collective agreements.
5. Furthermore, the AGSA findings also point to the need to tighten the monitoring of the implementation of leave policy at school level by those responsible for monitoring of schools at circuit, district and Head Office level. The DBE, therefore, expects that this initiative will be complemented by the strengthened monitoring and support of schools and the implementation of consequence management in instances where principals and/or educators are found not to have complied.
6. In addition to the guidelines, which serves solely to provide additional guidance or reference material to facilitate the implementation of existing policies and regulations, the Directorate: Service Benefits offers a three day training course at the Cape Teaching and Leadership Institute targeting newly appointed principals as well as School Management Teams (SMTs) on, amongst others, the Management of Leave and Chronic Absenteeism. Six three-day training sessions are scheduled for 2024. Attending these training sessions will contribute positively towards ensuring stability in your school.
7. As requested by the Director-General of the DBE, the Western Cape Education Department (WCED) hereby distributes the attached guidelines to all schools in the department for the benefit of all principals. Relevant leave documents, forms and videos are also available to SMTs and other employees on the WCED website. The direct link is <https://wcedonline.westerncape.gov.za/directorate-service-benefits>

**SIGNED:** B WALTERS

**HEAD: EDUCATION**

**DATE:** 2024-03-08