



WESTERN CAPE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT

Provincial Government of the Western Cape

ANNEXURE B

MAKING OUR SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT SAFE

Background

The Western Cape Education Department opened its Call Centre on 9 March 2000 in response to learners', parents' and teachers' need for immediate, online communication regarding safety, crime, abuse and a variety of school-related issues.

Safe Schools Division

Safe Schools strives to create centres of excellence with strong community links, quality learning and teaching, and effective management and governance, and, in so doing, combat the root causes of crime and violence.

Information

The Safe Schools Call Centre

- Operates on a **toll-free telephone number: 0800 45 46 47**
- Provides immediate, **free**, online communication to learners, parents and teachers needing help, guidance or information on education-related issues
- Is open from Monday to Friday, from 07:00 to 16:00, and is situated on the 2nd floor of the WCED Head Office
- Provides a service in the three official languages of the Western Province: Afrikaans, English and Xhosa
- Serves as a co-ordinating centre from which referrals are made to appropriate agencies and from which vital information is disseminated to relevant parties
- Links with an extensive network of service providers who support the work of the Call Centre

Current Operations

Callers receive online debriefing during crisis calls. In non-crisis calls, callers are directed, where necessary, to the counselling agencies of the Western Cape Education Department, non-governmental agencies and community-based organisations.

School communities are encouraged to telephone the toll-free line **0800 45 46 47** with regard to the following:

An Emergency or Crisis

Call Centre agents respond to these calls immediately. When applicable, they will contact the South African Police Services or other emergency services.

The Call Centre will ensure that schools receive assistance when confronted by gang presence on school premises, gang intimidation, gang shootings and gang killings.

The Call Centre will provide assistance in the event of any traumatic incidents, for example, deaths resulting from accidents, suicides, hijackings, missing persons, bomb scares and weapons on school premises.

School Crime

The Call Centre responds to all incidents of school crime by offering advice on the procedures that need to be followed and by informing the relevant authorities.

- Property-related crime at schools, for example, burglaries, arson, theft, robbery and vandalism
- Physical assault, for example, stabbings, fighting, and minor injuries (accidental or intentional)

Abuse

Child abuse in communities and in educational institutions is a serious problem. All abuse calls are handled sensitively. Initial counselling, or guidance on the *Abuse No More Protocol*, is given where necessary. The Call Centre responds to the following forms of abuse:

- Physical or emotional abuse
- Child neglect
- Sexual abuse and rape
- Sexual harassment
- Corporal punishment
- Substance abuse
- Racial discrimination
- Child trafficking
- Teenage runaways

General Queries

The Call Centre provides information or advice on the following:

- Teenage pregnancies and abortion
- HIV/AIDS
- School governing body matters, such as suspensions, expulsions, trespassing, behavioural problems, school fees, registration of learners, school uniform and compulsory school attendance

Service Providers

The Call Centre networks with a wide range of service providers: Inter- and intra-dependents, non-governmental organisations, community-based organisations and faith-based organisations. These organisations contribute to Safe Schools' efforts to create a safe learning environment at our schools. Their time, commitment and support are much appreciated.

Any organisation able to provide a service that could be useful to the Safe Schools Call Centre is invited to contact us at the following e-mail address:
Saferschool@pgwc.gov.za

Make our school environment safe. Help us by reporting all incidents of school violence, vandalism, crime and abuse to the Safe Schools Call Centre at toll-free telephone number 0800 45 46 47.

You are not alone. We are here for you.