

Reference: 20210621-3883
Enquiries: B Walters

To: Principals, Teachers, Staff and Governing Bodies at public schools

(For information: Independent schools)

Dear Colleagues

COVID-19 VACCINATION OF EDUCATORS AND STAFF

The Western Cape Education Department (WCED) is delighted that the National Government has secured additional doses of the Johnson & Johnson (J&J) single dose COVID-19 vaccine for the education sector, including independent schools. These doses have now been approved and are earmarked for rollout on 25 June 2021 in the Western Cape.

The announcement has brought great joy to the education sector as we celebrate the news that the rollout has been **expanded** to include all educators and non-teaching staff at public and independent schools, as well as all district and Head Office staff at the WCED. As communicated on 08 June 2021, the vaccination drive was initially limited to educators and school-based staff over the age of 40 years at public schools only. However, **there is now no age limit.**

This is an exciting and much welcomed development.

The Western Cape Department of Health (WCDoH), in collaboration with the WCED, intends to roll out the vaccination programme from Friday, 25 June 2021. The vaccines are being transported to the Western Cape, and there will be a two-day distribution period.

Given that public schools have already registered the staff members who have consented to the vaccine, the majority of the work to prepare for this rollout has been concluded. The WCED will, however, liaise with independent schools to conclude arrangements for their vaccination

process. A process will be put in place for Head Office and District Office staff to indicate their consent. Details of the former will be communicated within the next two days.

The following persons are included, as communicated by DBE:

- All WCED remunerated staff (Educators, non-teaching staff at schools and officials working in Head Office and District offices).
- All Governing Body remunerated staff (Educators and non-teaching staff at schools)
- All food handlers.
- All Grade R practitioners at public and independent schools remunerated by the Governing Body or the WCED.
- All drivers that are Governing Body remunerated.
- All independent school staff.
- Contracted staff who provide security, cleaning or other functions at schools.

Teacher assistants employed by schools for teachers that have comorbidities are not included.

The WCED therefore requests that schools upload these details and confirm the names of those staff members who have consented onto CEMIS, as before, as well as any additional staff, specifically those under 40 who may not have been included in the first process due to their age cohort being initially excluded.

Schools must please submit these **details by Tuesday, 22 June 2021 at 17:00.**

It must be noted, however, that the following persons do not qualify to be vaccinated:

- **any person who has contracted COVID-19 in the past 30 days;**
- **any person who has been vaccinated using another vaccine (Pfizer or J&J, under Sisonke);**
or
- **any person who has received a flu vaccine in the past 14 days.**

Schools must please still register the details of those staff members who are unable to attend due to having contracted COVID-19 in the past 30 days or having recently received the flu vaccine, as they will have the opportunity to be vaccinated until 08 July 2021. Any official who is not vaccinated by 08 July 2021 will become part of the normal sequence of vaccinations (age focused) as announced by the National Department of Health.

District offices will begin contacting schools this week, informing them of their school's vaccination schedule. The school's vaccination schedule will also be available and can be printed from CEMIS. Staff are to arrange for transport themselves but are asked to please assist others who do not have the means to do so. This is a collective effort and I am sure I can count on your cooperation and compassion as we all work towards making this exciting development

a success. It is important for us to ensure that all safety protocols are followed when using such transport.

On Saturday, 19 June 2021, the Department of Basic Education announced that the vaccine rollout will mean an end to concessions for educators with comorbidities at schools, whether they have chosen to receive the vaccine or not. These details and timeframes are yet to be announced; and therefore, the existing policies still apply. We will communicate further on these once official details have been disseminated.

The WCED is aware that the vaccination programme will have an impact on the normal administration that takes place at the end of the term. This announcement is, however, a stark reminder that this is an opportunity that we cannot miss as a sector. I, therefore, encourage you to please make use of it. I have sat through many discussions with the WCDoH and I have every confidence in the vaccine and its ability to help us beat Covid-19. I for one, am very thankful to be given this opportunity.

I am also confident that it will have a positive impact on the education sector. This is not only a major step towards recovery, but also a step towards improving the safety of our educators and staff and the provision of better learning opportunities for our learners.

I would like to appeal to all of you to take up this opportunity for the sake of all our children.

#Let'sDoThis

Kind regards

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Brent Walters", with a horizontal line underneath.

BRENT WALTERS
HEAD: EDUCATION
DATE: 21 JUNE 2021