

FAX COVER SHEET

To: ALL DISTRICT DIRECTORS
CIRCUIT MANAGERS
HEADS OF LEARNER SOCIAL SUPPORT PROGRAMMES

Organization / Department: ALL DISTRICT OFFICES

Fax Number: ALL DISTRICTS OFFICES;
086 572 8113; 086 565 9382; 086 662 0154

Tel Number: 21

Number of pages: 21

Dear Sir / Madam

Subject: CIRCULAR 76/2016 IMPLEMENTATION OF THE NATIONAL SCHOOL SAFETY FRAMEWORK


Message:

Attached hereto is Circular 76/2016. Please bring it to the attention of all schools for action.

SENDER:

File Ref Number: L5.3.R
Initials and Surname: B. BABUSENG
Directorate: LEARNER SOCIAL SUPPORT PROGRAMMES
Sub-Directorate: SCHOOL SAFETY
Tel Number: 053 839 6620
Fax Number: 0866600124
E-mail: brendababuseng@ncpg.gov.za
Date:

APPROVED:

Initials and Surname: 
Signature: R. BONOKWANE
Rank: ACTING CES
Date: 31 OCTOBER 2016



I.K. Nkomo Education House

156 Barkly Road
Homestead
Kimberley 8301

Private Bag X5029
Kimberley 8300
Republic of South Africa

Tel: 053 839 6500
Fax: 053 839 6580/1
Web: ncdoe.ncpg.gov.za

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Enquiries: N.V Mlambo Izquierdo-Rodriguez

Reference: LS.3.R

Date: 1 October 2016

**TO: ALL CHIEF DIRECTORS
ALL DISTRICT DIRECTORS
ALL CIRCUIT MANAGERS
ALL SCHOOL SAFETY OFFICIALS
ALL SCHOOL PRINCIPALS**

CIRCULAR 76 / 2016: IMPLEMENTATION OF THE NATIONAL SCHOOL SAFETY FRAMEWORK (NSSF)

School-based crime and violence forms a barrier to effective learning and teaching. Therefore, addressing safety issues in schools will not only assist in gaining a better understanding of this phenomenon but it will also enhance academic performance of learners enabling them to realize their full potential.

The surge in incidents that pose a risk at the health and safety of the school community are a serious cause of concern and requires serious intervention. An increasing number of schools are reporting serious incidents ranging from drug and substance abuse and possession by learners, bullying and intimidation, physical assault, verbal abuse and ill-treatment of learners as well as break-ins, which result in theft and vandalism as well as arson.

The South African Constitution recognizes the right to education and freedom from violence and therefore it is the responsibility of the Department of Education, and therefore schools, to ensure learner and educator safety.

In an attempt to achieve this, the School Safety Unit of the Northern Cape Department of Education in partnership with the Centre for Justice Crime Prevention has conducted various capacity building workshops in schools across the province in an attempt to empower schools to take responsibility for the safety of their institutions and to create safe, caring, child-friendly schools. These programmes aimed to assist schools to identify their safety threats and then design plans, using the resources that are at their disposal, to address these threats.



Furthermore, the South African Schools Act 84 of 1996, as amended in the Regulations of Safety Measures in Public Schools, 2001 and 2006 requires schools to put certain systems and procedures in place in order to enhance the safety of learners, educators and other staff members.

Despite all these efforts made to assist schools to create safe environments for teaching and learning and therefore protect time spend on task, schools continue to disregard minimum legislative standards for safe schools. As a result, there is an increase in the prevalence of incidents of crime and violence in schools which disrupts teaching and learning time as well as poses a danger to the lives of members of the school community. Furthermore, many Principals and School Management Teams fail to adequately manage the schools facilities and as a result various safety hazards / threats exist in schools which may lead to injury, disease and loss of life. This contravenes the Occupational Health and Safety Act, as amended and exposes the school and the Department to great risks in regards to litigation.

The Department of Basic Education commissioned the mandatory implementation of the National School Safety Framework in all provinces. The National School Safety Framework is a management tool that aims to assist schools to identify, record and respond to incidences of school based crime and violence. It recognises the existing capacity and resources within each of the schools and prepares the schools to develop an intervention based on this. It is designed so that it complements normal schooling duties and activities as it aims to integrate school safety into the daily activities of the school and contribute to the development of the school community.

The Framework will assist schools and the department with the following:

- Provide a framework that will enable schools to understand and comply with minimum legislative and policy requirements of a safe and caring school.
- Assist schools and the department, through the application of the tool, to set up systems to identify, record and respond to incidents of school-based crime and violence including physical and sexual violence, discrimination, drug abuse as well as dealing with unsafe spots in the school.
- Capacitate schools to monitor and evaluate performance and impact of interventions on crime and violence in school over time.
- Provide the schools with the means to develop well-informed safety action plans that draws on support from a range of partners both internal and external to the school

It is important to emphasize that, through this tool, schools get an opportunity to make an assessment of their own, unique situation and identify the challenges that pose a threat to their safety. It is through this assessment that they can plan appropriately and put measures in place to address these, themselves. This method opposes the view that the answers to the safety hassles experienced by schools lies with the Northern Cape Department of Education. In this way schools can take responsibility for what happens on the school premises.



PROCESS OF IMPLEMENTATION

A. Mandatory Minimum Safety Requirements for all schools

The **mandatory, non-negotiable minimum safety requirements** listed below must be put in place at all schools (ECD, ABET, LSEN, GET, FET) so as to ensure the successful implementation of the National School Safety Framework, facilitate compliance with DBE prescribed safety standards and therefore enhance the safety of learners and educators. Principals, with the assistance of School Management Teams must ensure that the following are in place.

1. **All schools must establish a School Safety Committee and ensure that it is functional.** The committee should meet at least once a quarter and discuss the identified safety issues of the school and plan interventions.
2. **All schools should develop, implement and enforce minimum school-level policies.** (namely Comprehensive Safety Policy addressing all safety issues e.g. access control, early release procedure, drug and substances, dangerous objects, searches, seizures and drug – testing, transport and water safety, supervision, first aid, fire-fighting, organisation of school activities etc; Emergency Evacuation Procedure and Emergency Plan; Drug and Substance Abuse Policy).
3. **All schools should conduct a Safety Audits to determine their threats / risks.** This must be undertaken annually
4. **Safety Plans, highlighting all safety challenges / risks identified as well as planned interventions to address these challenges / risks, should be formulated, adopted, submitted and revised annually.**
5. **All schools should formulate or review and adopt Codes of Conduct for Learners, signed off by the School Governing Body.** This should include graded offences and consequences / sanctions.
6. All schools are required to develop an **incident reporting and recording system / method** where members of the school community can report incidents. This system must be used consistently and reviewed regularly.
7. All schools should establish **Referral Systems** and keep them functional
8. There should be **constant engagement with community** structures and forums to discuss safety issues affecting the school.

B. SCHOOL-BASED IMPLEMENTATION OF NSSF

The Department of Education, both at provincial and national, has capacitated schools to create safe environments for teaching and learning. Therefore, all schools that have been trained in the National School Safety Framework are required to implement this management tool at their respective schools with immediate effect. School Principals are required to ensure that their schools comply in this respect and Circuit Managers and School Safety Officials are required to monitor this process.

Below are the steps that should be followed when the National School Safety Framework is implemented:

STEP	ACTION	PERSON RESPONSIBLE
1	Administer the School Safety Diagnostic Tool (NSSF, p39-42 or <i>Refer to attachment</i>)	SMT, SGB
2	Administer the School Safety Audit (NSSF, p43-44 or <i>Refer to attachment</i>)	School Safety Committee (SSC)
3	Administer the Educator Survey to determine safety challenges expressed by educators (all educators should participate) (NSSF p56-61)	School Safety Committee (SSC)
4	Administer the Learner Survey: Safety Spots to identify unsafe areas and unsafe acts in the school (At least 10% sample of population – NSSF, p65-66)	Educators
5	Administer the Learner Survey relevant to issues revealed by Safety Spot Survey (At least 10% sample of learner population – NSSF p68-77)	Educators
6	Develop a School Safety Action Plan to address the issues identified in Steps 1-5 above (<i>Refer to attachment</i>)	SSC, SMT, SGB
7	Incorporate School Safety Action Plan in School Improvement Plan.	SSC, SMT
8	Implement School Safety Action Plan. Monitor and review plan	SMT, SSC

C. ROLL OUT OF NSSF TRAINING IN NEWLY IDENTIFIED SCHOOLS

The Department, through the district and provincial offices, will continue to train newly identified schools in the National School Safety Framework. School principals and Circuit Managers are urged to ensure that representatives from the School Governing Body, School Safety Committees and School Management Team attend this important training.

Schools are also reminded that all schools, even those that have not been trained yet in the NSSF, are required to ensure that they adhere to the minimum safety requirements in point 'A' above.



D. CLARIFICATION OF ROLES IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE NSSF

School principal

Principals are responsible for establishing and maintaining a safe, secure, and orderly school environment and must therefore:

- Exhibit appropriate leadership for learners and school personnel;
- Ensure proper supervision of learners and staff;
- Develop, support, and evaluate (as a member of the SGB) a consistent school-level safety plan, policies and guidelines to address general safety matters, crisis management, codes of conduct for learners, and other relevant policies or guidelines;
- Report all criminal acts as provided for by the law;
- Ensure that school personnel are trained in a variety of strategies for dealing with learners' specific needs;
- Monitor and evaluate (as a member of the SGB) the School Safety Plan, as well as projects and/or programmes implemented to prevent crime and violence; and
- Cooperate with local law enforcement and human services agencies to promote Safe, Caring and Child-friendly Schools.

Teachers and support staff

All school personnel have a responsibility to assist in maintaining safe, secure and child-friendly schools. To this end, all personnel, regardless of specific job assignment, are required to:

- Assist in the development and implementation of the School Safety Plan according to delegated roles and responsibilities;
- Carry out all job-related responsibilities that impact learner safety;
- Serve as positive role models;
- Provide supervision for all learners under their care; and
- Report all misdemeanors.

In addition to the above responsibilities, educators should:

- Maintain a classroom environment that is safe, secure, and orderly;
- Empower learners with skills needed to meet expected standards of behaviour;
- Monitor and evaluate the safety procedures as outlined in the School Safety Plan;
- Participate in school safety training;
- Implement strategies to address the diverse needs of all learners in relation to school safety;
- Provide and enforce appropriate disciplinary consequences for disruptive learners (Code of Conduct); and
- Cooperate with social services agencies and law enforcement (SAPS) or private security agencies to promote safe, caring and child friendly schools that will meet the needs of all learners.

Learners

- Learners must adhere to a Code of Conduct to ensure appropriate behaviour at all times.



Parents/guardians

- Parents must adhere to the South African Schools Act (SASA) provisions.

Stakeholders

- Stakeholders comprise mainly the South African Police Service (SAPS), the departments of Health and Social Development, non-governmental organisations and agencies, community-based organisations, business, and parents. It is imperative that all relevant stakeholders be drawn in to ensure that schools are safe and secure.

In conclusion, the National School Safety Framework is a Department of Basic Education programme commissioned by the Minister of Education so as to affirm the Department's commitment to the rights of all children in South Africa, and to realize the vision set out in the National Development Plan, as well as ensure safe and equitable access to quality education for children throughout South Africa. The province, including districts and schools, is therefore compelled to play its part and report regularly on progress made towards achieving this vision.

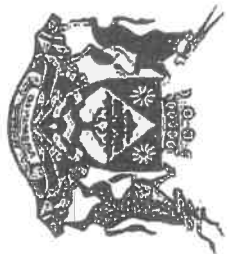
Safety is everybody's responsibility and therefore all members of the school community have a role to play in creating safe learning spaces. The safety of learners and educators is an essential precondition in establishing conducive environments where effective teaching and learning can take place and learners thrive and reach their true potential. Schools are therefore urged to support the Department in working together, steadfastly, towards attaining the National School Safety Framework vision which is – 'All schools in South Africa are safe, caring environments where all members of the school body, including learners, educators, support staff and parents, are and feel safe at all times'.



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G.T PHARASI

SUPERINTENDENT GENERAL: NORTHERN CAPE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION





The School Safety Diagnostic Tool

This tool will help to determine how prepared the school is to implement the Framework. The committee responsible for school safety should participate in this activity!

	Response	
	Yes	No
LEVEL 1 – PREVENTION: BE PREPARED		
Our school has a safety officer and or a School Safety Committee.		
Our school has a School Safety Policy.		
Our Learner Code of Conduct was developed and distributed to all learners.		
Our school has a Disciplinary Procedure.		
Our school has Emergency procedures and displays them – in line with OHSA		
Access into and out of our school is controlled.		
Our school has an early release procedure for learners.		
Our school has security measures in line with the Regulations for Safety Measures at Public Schools (SASA).		
Educators adhere to the South African Council of Educators Code of Conduct in line with Section 3.11		
Our school has been linked to a police station in line with the Partnership Protocol between the South African Police Service and the Department of Basic Education		

LEVEL 2 – RESPONDING: TAKE ACTION		Response	
		Yes	No
Our educators know what to do if policies in relation to school safety are not followed (e.g. if rules are broken).			
Our educators know what to do in an emergency (e.g. fire, bomb, disease, weather).			
We know what to do if there are illegal drugs at school.			
We know what to do if dangerous weapons are reported to us.			
We know what to do if theft, burglary or robberies occur.			
We know how to deal with bullying.			
We know what to do after a traumatic event.			
We consistently and fairly implement the agreed consequences when the Learner Code of Conduct is not adhered to			
We have a directory of services in our community that we can refer learners to.			

LEVEL 3 – CREATING A SAFE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT: TAKE CARE		Response	
		Yes	No
We have a network of services that come to the school to support us, e.g. the police, social workers, and DST.			
We know who to contact at our nearest police station if we need their support.			
We have established relationships with religious/faitn-based community structures that we can call to provide pastoral care.			
We refer troubled learners or learners in need to the appropriate services.			
We implement the life orientation curriculum.			
We encourage positive relationship building through demonstrating and encouraging appropriate behaviour.			

LEVEL 4 – EARLY WARNING SYS TEM: BE AWARE

	Response	
	Yes	No
We have conducted surveys to determine what threatens the safety of our educators and learners		
We record serious safety incidents such as gang activity, drugs, thefts, use of weapons, or injuries.		
We record incidents relating to interpersonal violence such as bullying, verbal abuse, physical violence and discrimination.		
We are able to refer reported incidents to the School Level Support Team.		
We are able to refer reported incidents to the District Level Support Team.		
Educators and learners know how and where to report threats and safety incidents.		
Educators know what to do if learners report incidents of threats to them.		
We have established a confidential system for learners to report incidents.		

Comments

Dept Official's Signature		Date	Safety Coordinator		
Head Name and Surname			Signature :		
Signature : Head Institution		Date	SSC Member		
Follow up Visit			Signature		

SUPPORTING EVIDENCE TO BE PRESENTED UPON REQUEST

EVIDENCE	YES	NO	To be developed and in place by when
School Safety Plan : Previous Year			
School Safety Plan : Current Year			
Code of Conduct for Learners			
Emergency / Crisis Intervention Plan / Evacuation Plan			
Linking of Schools to Local Police Station			
Names and contact details of School Safety Committee members			
Minutes of School Safety Committee Meetings (last 2 quarters)			
Access Control Register			
Copies of Policies:			
A Comprehensive School Safety Policy addressing the following:			
1. Access Control			
2. Drugs & Substance Abuse			
3. Violence including gender-based violence and Bullying			
List of Contact Details of Service Providers for learner referrals			
Proof of reporting procedures:			
1. Incident Register			
2. SASAMIS			
Copy of logbook entries (last 3 months)			
School based Violence Prevention Programmes implemented. (What and by whom?)			

CATEGORIES OF REPORTED CRIME AND VIOLENCE IN SCHOOLS

REPORTING PERIOD: _____

SCHOOL SAFETY AUDIT CHECKLIST

Name of School: _____

Date: _____

School Safety is the responsibility of everyone – staff, learners, parents, and the community. An audit is one tool that, if used effectively, can provide a snapshot of the school's level of safety and identify those areas that need improvement. This proactive process will help ensure that learners can maximise their learning potential within a safe and secure environment. It is recommended that the SGB and the School Safety Committee and relevant stakeholders conduct the school Safety audit.

ELEMENTS OF SCHOOL SAFETY

	Yes	No	To be developed and in place by when?
ACCESS CONTROL			
1. Gates are secured with secure padlocks and chains after hours.			
2. Drug-free and dangerous weapon-free zone signs are posted.			
3. Signs are posted for visitors to report to the main office through a designated entrance.			
4. Access to bus loading area by other vehicles is restricted to loading/unloading.			
5. Vehicle access to play areas is restricted.			
6. Playground equipment has been secured.			
7. All areas of school buildings and grounds are accessible to patrolling security vehicles.			
8. Learner access to parking areas is restricted to arrival and dismissal times.			
9. High-risk areas (office, computer room, music room, workshops, laboratories, etc.) are protected by high security locks and an alarm system.			
10. Unused areas of the school can be closed off during after-school activities.			
11. If a classroom is vacant, pupils are restricted from entering the room alone.			
12. Visitors are required to sign in.			
13. There is only one clearly marked and designated entrance for visitors.			
14. Proper identification is required of vendors, repairmen, etc.			
15. Visitors are issued I.D. cards or badges.			
16. The hallways are properly lit for safety.			
17. Toilets are properly lit.			
18. Access to electrical panels is restricted.			
19. Mechanical rooms / workshops and other hazardous storage areas are kept locked.			
20. School files and records are maintained in locked, vandal-proof, fireproof containers or vaults.			

ELEMENTS OF SCHOOL SAFETY

	Yes	No	To be developed and in place by when?
RECORD KEEPING			
21. A record of fire inspections by the local fire department is maintained.			
22. Random searches and seizures are conducted on a regular basis.			
23. Multiple entries to the building are controlled and supervised.			
24. The school maintains a record of all maintenance on doors, windows, lockers, or other areas of the school.			
25. Visitors are issued I.D. cards or badges.			
SUPERVISION			
26. The hallways are properly lit for safety.			
27. Visual surveillance of parking lots from the main office.			
28. Staff members are assigned to bus loading/drop-off areas.			
29. Good visual surveillance of play equipment and areas is possible.			
HOUSE KEEPING			
30. Shrubs and foliage are trimmed to allow for good line of sight.			
31. All poisonous shrubs, trees, and foliage have been removed.			
32. Bus loading and drop-off zones are clearly defined.			
33. Access to bus loading area by other vehicles is restricted to loading/unloading.			
34. There are no broken window panes.			
35. There is burglar proofing at all windows in the administration block.			
36. Doors must be locked when classrooms are vacant.			
37. There is a central alarm system in the school.			
38. Pupils are required to have written permission to leave school during school hours.			
39. There are written regulations regarding access and control by school personnel using the building after school hours.			
40. Staff is required to walk around inside and outside the facility to check that all doors are secure and all windows are closed.			
41. Teachers are required to lock classrooms upon leaving after school.			
42. A record of fire inspections by the local fire department is maintained.			
43. The toilet walls are free of graffiti.			
44. Doors accessing internal courtyards are securely locked.			
45. Stairwells are properly lit.			
46. Exit signs are clearly visible and pointing in the correct direction.			
47. Switches and controls are properly located and protected.			
48. Directional lights are aimed at the buildings			
49. Access to electrical panels is restricted			

ELEMENTS OF SCHOOL SAFETY

CONTROL SHEET

	Yes	No	To be developed and in place by when?
50. Appointed staff supervises toilets – gender specific			
51. Friends, relatives or non-custodial parents are required to have written permission to pick learners.			
ADD OWN LIST			

Principal: _____

Date: _____

Safety Coordinator: _____

Date: _____

SCHOOL SAFETY ACTION PLAN

1. IDENTIFYING DETAILS

Name of the school: _____

District: _____

Number of Learners: _____

Number of Educators: _____

Physical Address: _____

Telephone number: _____

Name of Principal: _____

Name of Safety Officer: _____

Names of Safety Committee: _____

Date of Safety Plan: _____

2.6. STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS

Please identify the that you need to form to ensure that your school is safe

PARTNER

CONTACT DETAILS

PARTNER	CONTACT DETAILS

If the space is insufficient feel free to use additional pages and then attach them
Congratulations -- you have mapped out your pathway toward achieving school safety!