

**SAPA Office: Nthabi Legote**

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**"Together we lead - Sihola ma sisonke"**

**2020.05.15**

**Our Ref: T. Hlongwane**

Dear SAPA Gauteng member

**1. COVID 19 MATTERS**

It gives me great privilege and honor to write to you during this difficult time in our country's history. Indeed there is no sector that has not been affected by the COVID 19 pandemic. Education, in particular, is hardest hit. I wish to bring to your attention that SAPA has your best interest at heart and will continue to serve you and ensure that your interests are represented.

I am pleased to inform you that SAPA National received the invitation from the Minister of Basic Education to be part of the National Consultative Forum which includes Unions in the education sector, SAPA and SGB associations. Subsequently, SAPA national President, Mr. David De Korte, decided to form a team of SAPA provincial Presidents to form part of the delegation that represented SAPA in the National Consultative Forum so that all provincial perspectives can be brought to the attention of DBE. I, accordingly, represent SAPA Gauteng in this Forum.

So far we have had 3 meetings. The last meeting was on Monday 11 May 2020. The next meeting will be on Sunday 17 May 2020 ahead of the Press briefing on Monday 18 May 2020. It is important to note that the involvement of the National Consultative Forum has been very helpful. In the first meeting which happened on Sunday 26 April, the initial plan of the Department, which was presented to us on this day, was to reopen schools for educators on the 4<sup>th</sup> of May 2020 and grade 7 and 12 learners on the 6 of May 2020. However after consultations with the National Consultative Forum, which felt that the plan was done in a haste, the Department was advised that the safety of both staff and learners could not be compromised. Therefore a set of conditions were given which needed to be met before both staff and learners could return to school.

These included all schools meeting minimum sanitation levels (water and toilets), PPEs for both staff and learners, sanitizers and the disinfection of schools. The department agreed to meet the preconditions and new dates were set which were announced by the Minister during the press briefing which happened on Thursday 30 April 2020 ie 4 May 2020 return of office based staff, 11 May 2020 return of SMT and PS staff, 18 May 2020 return of teachers, 01 June 2020 return of grade 7 and grade 12 learners. However following further consultations, in the meeting held on Monday 11 May 2020, it was established that all provinces would not meet some of these dates. Therefore each province was allowed to resume work as and when the conditions are met. Therefore in Gauteng we were told as principals and deputies to be on high alert from 13 May 2020 that any time we shall be called to receive the PPEs.

Some districts have also started to email permits template to be completed by principals for SMTs and PS staff in anticipation of their return soon. Please note that these permits must be completed and be returned back to the districts in soft copy for signature. If you have not yet received these permits please enquire with your circuit manager.

As SAPA we reiterate that the safety of the staff and learners cannot be compromised. Please adhere to memo 29 Of 2020 and return to work once you have received the call for PPEs delivery. The date of learners to return on 1 June has not changed yet unless the Minister makes a different announcement on Monday 18 May 2020 in her press briefing. That's the date we are working towards.

A form to apply for special leave for staff members with underlying conditions will be sent to you in due course. Please circulate to your staff members. They may choose to send to you or return it directly to HR, District office. All approved leave will have substitutes appointed. This will be a lot of work and delays may occur in getting some leave approved and substitute appointed.

In the meantime continue to use whatever platform to reach out to learners be it WhatsApp groups, Microsoft teams or Zoom. This will assist you to even plead a case for parents to continue paying school fees.

## **2. SAPA MATTERS**

In a SAPA National executive meeting held on Friday 8 May 2020, a decision was taken to cancel the provincial conferences 2020 and the Kimberley national conference 2020 due to COVID 19. The new dates for 2021 conferences will be given later in the year. We are aware that some members had already paid for the May SAPA Gauteng Conference. We shall refund you accordingly on request or transfer the money to future events. In Gauteng, depending on the alert level in September, the secretaries' day may be cancelled as well. But we have not taken that decision yet. We shall keep you posted with developments.

The Istanbul Cultural experience trip that was due to happen in September has also been cancelled. If you had paid the deposit please contact Nthabi. However the August 2021 ICP conference in Canada has not been cancelled. Therefore the SAPA Gauteng trip via the USA is still valid. The trip proposal has been attached for those who did not receive it. Please continue with the payment. Our treasurer, Mr Willie de Wet is working on the project. He is highly experienced in organizing these trips following a successful trip to China last year and many others before that.

We have a number of our members who have not yet paid the 2020 membership fee. With the 2020 Conference cancelled, we really need all the financial support we can get. We therefore request that you complete the membership form and make the payment and email it back to Nthabi. The 2020 membership form has been attached.

Please note that Nthabi is back in the office so she will be able to process your membership renewal. We are in contact with the South African Depression and anxiety group via SABC's Sam Marshall who are willing to help SAPA members for free where there is a need. We shall email you the details once we have finalized the logistics.

We wish you all the best as we try to salvage the academic year under difficult circumstances. Please if you need help do not hesitate to call us. Our numbers and emails are indicated above.

Regards

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T. Hlongwane  
SAPA Gauteng Acting President