



# ISASA

Independent Schools Association of Southern Africa

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## MEMORANDUM

<b>To:</b>	<b>All South African ISASA members</b>
<b>From:</b>	<b>ISASA</b>
<b>Date:</b>	<b>15 March 2020</b>
<b>Subject:</b>	<b>National Disaster, Coronavirus and School Closures</b>

On Sunday, 15 March 2020, President Cyril Ramaphosa addressed the nation on measures to combat the Coronavirus (COVID-19) epidemic. One of the announced measures is the closure of schools from Wednesday, 18 March 2020 until after the Easter Weekend, Tuesday, 14 April 2020.

### **Does the President have the authority to close all schools?**

ISASA's view is that, in terms of the National Disaster Management Act, 57 of 2002, the President has the power to declare all schools closed, including independent schools.

### **What is ISASA's recommendation?**

Our recommendation is that schools should act decisively and close by *no later than* the required date of Wednesday, 18 March 2020. Schools can close earlier if they deem such a move prudent, given the circumstances that a national disaster has been declared, and have made the necessary arrangements and communicated clearly with their stakeholders.

### **What happens to four-term schools?**

The President has noted that public schools will endeavour to make up the lost tuition time by shortening the mid-year holidays. Four-term schools would be able to follow the state suggestions in this regard as their term dates do not differ greatly from those of public schools. ISASA will be consulting with Dr Carel Kriek, headmaster of Midstream College and coordinator of the Central Region four-term calendar, regarding calendar adjustments.

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# Quality Values Diversity

**Executive Director:** Lebogang Montjane

**Executive Committee:** G Forsman (Chair) G Brown D Geral D M Hunter L Montjane B Heidmann M Boden N Khoele A Jammie

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## **What happens to three-term schools?**

Three-term schools will have to make up lost teaching days by adjusting their own calendars appropriately, bearing in mind the minimum number of teaching days required in a year (197-200 days). Such adjustments should ideally be made collaboratively, to avoid a plethora of different dates, unique to each school, as this will cause unnecessary confusion. In consultation with Lisa Kaplan, headmistress of Kingsmead College and coordinator of the Central Region three-term calendar, ISASA will inform schools of the suggested adjustments to the Central Region three-term calendar.

## **Travel**

All non-essential travel should be suspended immediately. This includes all planned excursions.

Any pupil (or an immediate family member) who has recently travelled to a high- or medium-risk country or region, as defined in the President's address, and currently consisting of the European Union (Italy, Spain, Germany, Portugal), Iran, South Korea, The United States, United Kingdom or China, should be obliged to inform the school and comply with the government's requirements for testing and self-quarantine. They will also be required to provide a medical clearance certificate no less than 24 hours prior to their return to the school.

## **Access to Campuses**

ISASA understands that, while pupils will not be in school, it may be necessary for some staff members to be able to access the premises.

During school dismissals, schools may stay open for staff members (unless ill) while learners stay home. Keeping facilities open will allow some educators to develop and deliver lessons and materials remotely, thus maintaining continuity of teaching and learning.

However, wherever possible, we would recommend that staff work remotely, off-site resources permitting.

## **Remote Learning**

While schools are closed, educators can still plan for future learning. ISASA also recommends that all schools explore options for remote learning or flipped classrooms, in the event school closures are extended or future closures are declared.

ISASA will be adding some resources relating to how best to achieve this in the coming days. We are mindful of the added burden this will place on many of our schools, and also of the difficulty in providing such instruction to pupils, many of whom may not have stable internet access or the devices and data required to participate meaningfully in on-line classrooms. All input from membership on how these challenges could be addressed will be gratefully received, assessed and shared, where appropriate.

## **ISASA, SAHISA, SABISA and other meetings**

All association meetings, including those of constituent bodies and affiliate groups, as well as all regional meetings and ISASA Professional Development workshops, are suspended until further notice.

## **Conclusion**

ISASA joins the President in urging all citizens to remain calm, stay informed and take the necessary precautions to prevent the spread of the virus. We will keep members informed of any further developments.