

TO NEWS EDITORS AND JOURNALISTS

FROM THE MPUMALANGA DEPARTMENT

11 APRIL 2025

MEC DLAMINI URGES PARENTS TO REPORT SEXUAL MISCONDUCT IN SCHOOLS

The MEC for the Mpumalanga Department of Education, Ms. Cathy Dlamini, urges parents, teachers and communities to report incidents of sexual harassment or inappropriate relationships between teachers and learners to law enforcement authorities and to the Department of Education.

“Remaining silent or concealing such incidents undermines our collective efforts to address these serious violations. It allows perpetrators to escape accountability and inflicts further harm on the victims. Together, we must create a safe, respectful, and supportive learning environment for all our children.” she emphasized

This call comes in response to South Africa’s intensified fight against the abuse of women and children, and reports of such incidents beginning to surface.

MEC Dlamini further reminded educators of their professional responsibility to uphold the highest ethical standards and to strictly adhere to the educators’ Code of Conduct.

She warned that any form of harassment or misconduct towards learners will not be tolerated by the Department.

During the 2024 academic year, the Department recorded three cases of inappropriate sexual relationships and four cases of sexual assault involving learners.

Even a single case of harassment is one too many.

The Department is also concerned that there may be cases which have not been reported, particularly in instances where perpetrators attempt to silence families through financial settlements.

MEC Dlamini urged parents to prioritise the safety, dignity, and well-being of their children above any personal or financial interests.

Sexual relationships between educators and learners are strictly prohibited, regardless of an educator's role—whether school-based or office-based.

In accordance with Section 17(1) of the Employment of Educators Act (EEA), educators can be charged with misconduct for any disgraceful, improper, or unbecoming behaviour, including acts of sexual harassment or abuse.

To address these , the Department of Basic Education developed a comprehensive protocol for the management and reporting of sexual offences in educational institutions.

This protocol outlines standard operating procedures for reporting, investigating, and managing such cases, and provides clear guidance to schools on how to ensure a safe, nurturing, and responsive environment for learners.

Schools are strongly encouraged to provide regular training to learners on these protocols to ensure that they are aware of their rights and know how to respond and report misconduct effectively.

In partnership with the South African Police Service (SAPS), the Department is rolling out an Integrated School Safety Programme.

This initiative aims to equip learners with knowledge and skills to combat gender-based violence and sexual harassment.

The Department calls on parents, guardians, school principals, and staff to act swiftly and report any suspicions or allegations of sexual misconduct. Timely reporting is essential to ensure that proper action is taken, and justice is served.

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