education
MPUMALANGA PROVINCE
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

Government Boulevard, Riverside Park
Ikhamanga Building
Tel: 013 766 5552 /5349/ 5115
https://mpueducation.mpg.gov.za
Mpumalanga Department of Education
@Mpueducation

TO NEWS EDITORS AND JOURNALIST

FROM THE MPUMALANGA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

22 OCTOBER 2026

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

MPUMALANGA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION URGES SCHOOL COMMUNITIES TO STAY SAFE AND HYDRATED DURING EL NINO HEATWAVE

The Mpumalanga Department of Education has noted the severe heatwave, named El Niño, affecting the province as per the latest alert issued by the South African Weather Service (SAWS).

As the 2026 National Senior Certificate and end-of-year examinations are underway, the Department wishes to assure learners, parents and all school communities that the safety of learners, educators and non-teaching staff remains our top priority.

The Department urges all learners, educators and non-teaching staff to remain hydrated and to take extra precautions during this period of extreme heat.

We appeal to parents, guardians and school principals to monitor weather updates from SAWS closely and to implement all precautionary measures as advised.

Examinations will continue as scheduled, and all necessary measures must be taken to ensure that no learner is disadvantaged by the extreme weather conditions.

The following practical guidance must be observed by all schools during the examination period:

1. FOR SCHOOL PRINCIPALS AND CHIEF INVIGILATORS:

- Ensure examination venues are well-ventilated, cool and safe. Open windows and doors early in the morning to allow airflow, where security permits.
- Where possible, use the coolest classrooms or halls for examinations and avoid venues with direct afternoon sun.
- Allow learners to bring clear, transparent water bottles into the examination venue as per examination regulations.
- Examination sessions should start strictly on time to avoid learners waiting in the sun. Learners must be allowed to wait in shaded areas before being admitted.
- Have a first aid kit and basic health support available at the examination centre. Report any heat-related illness immediately to the Circuit or District Office.

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2. FOR LEARNERS WRITING EXAMINATIONS:

- Drink water regularly before and after the examination. Stay hydrated even if you are not feeling thirsty.
- Avoid energy drinks, excessive caffeine and sugary drinks.
- Wear light, breathable layers where possible. Matric learners must still adhere to examination dress code, but may bring a cap/hat to use outside the venue.
- Eat a light meal before the exam and do not write on an empty stomach.
- If you feel dizzy, excessively tired, nauseous or experience a headache during an exam, quietly alert the invigilator immediately.

3. FOR EDUCATORS AND INVIGILATORS:

- Be vigilant for signs of heat exhaustion and heatstroke in learners.
- Allow regular, supervised water breaks for invigilation teams.
- Limit any outdoor invigilation duties and outdoor activities for learners who have finished writing.
- Monitor learners in the holding and waiting areas and ensure they are not exposed to direct sunlight for long periods.

4. FOR PARENTS AND GUARDIANS:

- Ensure your child leaves home with sufficient drinking water, a hat and sunscreen.
- Ensure they have had enough rest, as heat and dehydration worsen fatigue.
- Learners with chronic conditions such as asthma, epilepsy, diabetes or heart conditions are at higher risk – please inform the principal/invigilator and ensure medication is at hand.
- Encourage your child to remain indoors and in shaded areas after completing their paper.

The Department will continue to monitor the weather updates and advise schools accordingly. Principals must not hesitate to escalate any emergency to their Circuit and District Managers.

We wish all our learners, especially the Class of 2026, the best during their examinations. Let us work together to keep them safe and hydrated.

Issued by the Mpumalanga Department of Education

Enquiries:
Gerald Sambo at 081 526 7802