

24 April 2020

To Staff and Families of Future Nation Schools

1. Introduction

As the country prepares to enter Level 4 of the nation-wide lockdown and based on available information from Government, I would like to share with you some insight on what we know in the education sector and our plans as Future Nation Schools of how we are going to operate under the various nation-wide lockdown scenarios.

It is important to emphasize that these plans are based on available information and various assumptions that we have made. This is our best endeavour to provide our community including teachers, parents, students and service providers with what we consider to be important information at this stage. Consequently, some sections of our plans may change as further information becomes available.

The situation of lockdown under the different levels is going to be with us for as long as the vaccine is not available. According to experts, it is going to take about 12-18 months for a COVID-19 vaccine to be found. This means that we will all have to get used to some form of regulation and restriction for the foreseeable future.

2. Re-opening of schools and the remainder of 2020 school calendar

We will await the announcement by the government on the re-opening of schools, including the phased-in timetable of different school grades. We will then communicate our plans as Future Nation Schools accordingly.

3. Nationwide lockdown risk alert levels

The following lockdown risk alert levels were announced by President Cyril Ramaphosa on the 23rd of April 2020;



[@PresidencyZA](https://twitter.com/PresidencyZA) | www.stateofthenation.gov.za

Summary of alert levels



ALERT LEVEL 5	ALERT LEVEL 4	ALERT LEVEL 3	ALERT LEVEL 2	ALERT LEVEL 1
 OBJECTIVE				
Drastic measures to contain the spread of the virus and save lives.	Extreme precautions to limit community transmission and outbreaks, while allowing some activity to resume.	Restrictions on many activities, including at workplaces and socially, to address a high risk of transmission.	Physical distancing and restrictions on leisure and social activities to prevent a resurgence of the virus.	Most normal activity can resume, with precautions and health guidelines followed at all times. Population prepared for an increase in alert levels if necessary.

According to the statement by President Cyril Ramaphosa, it is important to note that even though South Africa will be moving from Level 5 to Level 4 with effect from 1st May, there will be a national level and separate levels for each province, district and metro.

We understand that the Department of Basic Education will recommend to the National Command Council their determination of the COVID-19 risk alert levels for the basic education system and location of schools based on their geographic locations and the risk assessment. This will provide us with information about the risk-alert level apply to our Lyndhurst and Fleurhof campuses. Hopefully both campuses will be on the same risk-alert level to ensure consistency of our plans, but we will be ready to adapt. Based on this information, we will ensure compliance with the rules, regulations and guidelines applicable to each of our campuses. We will await the announcement by the Minister of Basic Education in this regard.

4. Lockdown regulations – what we know

Some of the key regulations which are relevant to us as an independent school operator include the following:

- Schools are closed until further notice;
- Public gatherings of more than 100 people are prohibited;
- Anyone who generates or communicates fake news is guilty of a crime;
- Anyone who violates the regulations will be fined or imprisoned;
- No person confirmed or suspected of having contracted the COVID-19 virus may refuse medical examination, treatment, isolation or quarantine;
- At the nationwide Level 4 restrictions, movement is still restricted, subject to some relaxation as determined by the National Command Council for each sector, geographic location and other criteria;
- It is an offence to sell alcohol.

5. Guidelines and rules on social distancing, screening, testing and tracing

We expect that the Department of Basic Education will soon announce rules and guidelines pertaining:

- Scholar transport in the context of social distancing and sanitisation;
- Screening, testing and tracing of students and all staff;
- Social distancing at schools during arrival, learning and teaching, class transitions, school breaks, etc.;
- Wearing of masks at schools by students, teachers and all other staff members;
- Sanitisation and cleaning of buildings including classrooms, toilets, common areas, furniture and equipment;
- Managing sick students and staff.

We will communicate these guidelines and rules as soon as they are available.

6. Rules applicable across all operations and businesses

- All industries including the education sector are encouraged to adopt a work-from-home strategy where possible, and all staff who can work remotely must be allowed to do so.
- Workers above the age of 60, as well as workers with comorbidities identified by the Department of Health should be offered a work-from-home option.
- There should be workplace protocols in place that would include disease surveillance and prevention of the spread of infection.
- All employers to screen staff on a daily basis for symptoms of COVID-19, including a symptom check as well as temperature assessment.
- All employees to use a cloth mask especially where social distancing is not possible.
- Work environment to have sanitisers available or hand washing facilities with soap.
- Stringent social distancing measures should be implemented in the workplace.

7. Future Nation School plans

i. Health and safety during COVID-19

The safety, health and well-being of our staff and students is paramount. We are finalising our plans to ensure that we maintain the highest standard of work, learning and teaching protocols to avoid the spread of COVID-19 infection and ensure compliance with rules, regulations and guidelines set by the government.

Our plans and procedures will include:

- Screening and testing procedures before arrival at our premises;
- Work-from-home procedures for staff permitted to work from home;
- Disease surveillance and prevention procedures;
- Procedures for arrival at our premises;
- Use of mask procedures;
- Sanitisation, hand-washing and hygiene procedures;
- Stringent social distancing measures and procedures.

We will issue a detail communication in advance of the opening of our schools with regards to the above.

ii. Orientation, training and information

Before the start of contact learning and teaching, we will launch and undertake an orientation and training programme for all our teachers, non-academic staff and students on our health and safety protocols.

The orientation and training programme will include:

- a training manual and an information brochure which will be posted on our digital platforms;
- posters, pamphlets and signage to direct teachers, students and non-teaching staff on actions to follow;
- information on medical assistance, emergency numbers and psycho-social support services.

iii. Learning and teaching

Whilst we continue with emergency remote learning during the current lockdown, our management and teachers have already put together a comprehensive plan to ensure that as we gradually resume contact schooling at our campuses, we can catch-up on lost time.

We will re-align curriculum coverage for the rest of the year taking into account the various scenarios, our risk alert level and details of when schools in our geographic area will resume. We are humbled and grateful for the support that we have received from our parents and teachers during this challenging time.

We will continue to ask for your support because conditions throughout the country will not go back to normal for some time. We expect social distancing to continue for at least the rest of the year. The social distancing rules, regulations and other guidelines will have implications for the structure of classrooms, the number of students in a class, the teacher contact times, etc.

In order to ensure the completion of the curriculum during this year, we will have to make certain changes including;

- Increasing teaching time and hours;
- Reducing times for extramural activities;
- More separation of start and finishing times for different grades and classes throughout the day;
- Re-alignment of assessments including tests, assignments, projects and examinations.

iv. School buildings, furniture and resources

We are finalising our plans for the configuration of our classrooms, offices and common areas to ensure compliance with the social distancing rules and guidelines based on the available information and scenarios.

8. Conclusion

I would like to sincerely thank all of our staff, our parents and our students for the support and understanding during this challenging time.

With the support of our teachers, parents and students we are confident that Future Nation Schools and Sifiso Learning Group will be adequately prepared to respond to the orderly resumption of contact schooling.

I would like to quote from the address by our president on 23 April 2020 in which he said;

'This is a crucial moment in our struggle against the coronavirus.

It is a time for caution.

It is a time to act responsibly.

It is a time for patience.

There is no person who doesn't want to return to work.

There is no company that does not want to re-open.

There is no student who does not want to return to their studies.

Yet, we are all called upon, at some time in our lives, to make great sacrifices for our own future and for the future of others.

There are times when we must endure hardship and difficulty, so that we can enjoy freedom and prosperity into the future.

During the past five weeks, we have demonstrated to the entire world what a nation can achieve with courage, determination and solidarity.

We must not give up now.

I am asking you to stay strong.

I am asking you to remain united.

Stay home, stay safe.'

Best regards

**Sizwe Nxasana
CEO and Founder**