

Cogta outlines new mask regulations in schools

Faces masks and coverings are now mandatory in South Africa, however, according to the new regulations, schools should not turn away learners for not wearing them.



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On Sunday, President Cyril Ramaphosa introduced some amended lockdown rules with immediate effect, as the number of Covid-19 infections rise in South Africa.

Among these is a re-ban on the sale, dispensing and distribution of alcohol, as well as the reinstating of a curfew between 9pm and 4am.

Also, masks are now compulsory and those failing to comply will face arrest.

The Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs (Cogta) gazetted the amended government regulations following the President's address to the nation.

According to the department, the principal, owner or manager of an Early Childhood Development (ECD) centre must take all reasonable steps in ensuring that there are sufficient cloth facemasks, homemade or other appropriate items that cover

the nose and mouth.

COGTA said these must be provided to learners who may not have.

Should a learner arrive without wearing a mask at an educational institution, they must be supplied with one if possible, the department advised.

"If the school or ECD centre cannot provide such a learner with an appropriate item that covers the nose and mouth, the learner must be isolated and his or her parent, guardian or caregiver must be contacted without delay to bring the item for the learner," the department said.

Alternatively, a school or ECD centre should arrange safe transport for the learner to go back home to pick it up.

A 12-year-old from KwaZulu-Natal was raped in June after the school sent her home to go fetch her face mask, which she had forgotten.

Last month, the Basic Education Minister, Angie Motshekga, released a statement condemning this terrible act and commended the swift action by Donnybrook police in apprehending the 17-year-old suspect.

Meanwhile, COGTA said employers must provide every employee with masks in the workplace.

"An employer may not allow any employee to perform any duties or enter the employment premises if the employee is not wearing a cloth face mask, homemade item, or another appropriate item that covers the nose and mouth while performing his or her duties."

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