

Mask on: Health clarifies the wearing of masks by children at school

The Department of Health says it would like to bring to the public's attention an error in a media statement issued on Wednesday regarding the removal of face mask wearing by children at school.



Image source: August de Richelieu from [Pexels](#)

“The department would also like to bring to the public attention of the confusion created by unfortunate and regrettable human error in the media statement issued yesterday about the removal of face mask wearing by children at school. This is not part of the gazetted health regulations, and is therefore retracted to avoid any misunderstanding of the regulations.

“Therefore, children like other people are expected to continue complying with the provisions of Regulation 16A on face masks in the classrooms and general indoor gatherings, unlike outdoors in playgrounds and sports fields,” said the department in a statement on Thursday.

Health Minister, Dr Joe Phaahla, on Wednesday announced a three-month extension for public comments on health regulations relating to the management of Covid-19. The comments relate to the Surveillance and Control of Notifiable Medical Conditions; Public Measures in Points of Entry; Management of Human Remains and Environmental Health by three months. The extension was with effect from 5 May 2022. The new closing date for submission of comments is 5 July 2022.

In Wednesday's statement, the department said the extension was in line with statutory requirements and would afford the department sufficient time to go through and consider all comments and representations on the regulations.

These regulations mainly focus on wearing of face masks, gatherings and persons entering the country.

On Thursday, the department said it has been receiving a lot of feedback from the public since announcing the extension of public consultation process together with the introduction of limited health regulations meant to manage the spread of Covid-19 pandemic and future notifiable medical conditions.

"We would like to urge all South Africans to continue to share their feedback because we believe it will assist the process as we move forward to finalise the regulations."

The department said face masks are an effective non-pharmaceutical intervention against the spread of the Covid-19 virus, and it is more relevant now as the number of Covid-19 positive cases is rising once again.

It reminded the public that vaccination services against Covid-19 remains available and accessible, and to mitigate the impact of the anticipated 5th wave and emerging variants.

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