

**M E M O R A N D U M**

<b>To:</b>	<b>All ISASA Members</b>
<b>Date:</b>	<b>5 May 2020</b>
<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Re-Opening Independent Schools</b>

In a letter, dated 2 May 2020, to the National Alliance of Independent School Associations (NAISA) – of which ISASA is a member – the Director-General of Basic Education, Mr Mathanzima Mveli, has provisionally touched on the possible early re-opening of independent schools following the Minister of Basic Education's briefing on 30 April 2020. This letter dealt with the meeting held on 21 April 2020 between him and NAISA, during which the response of independent schools to the National State of Disaster was discussed, as well as considerations of how independent schools could re-open while the COVID-19 health crisis has yet to be resolved in the country.

Following its meeting with the Director-General, NAISA made written submissions to the Department of Basic Education, on 24 April 2020, outlining how independent school associations and their member schools would attempt to mitigate the spread of the virus when schools re-open and, furthermore, presented a synopsis on how independent schools would phase-in grades differently to the recommendations outlined in the draft Department of Education Curriculum Recovery Plan.

In his 2 May 2020 correspondence, the Director-General indicated that independent schools would further have to submit a written proposal indicating how they intend to comply with the:

- COVID-19 Essential Requirements;
- contents of Government Gazette (GG) 479, entitled, "COVID-19 Occupational Health and Safety Measures in Workplaces Covid-19 (C19 OHS), 2020" (which outlines the obligations of employers before resuming operations); and
- any other relevant Regulations.

Only once NAISA has submitted the written representation to the Department of Education, will the Basic Education Minister be able to consider the submission and respond definitively on the position of independent schools.

NAISA is preparing this submission as a matter of urgency.

**ISASA therefore interprets the Director-General's letter to mean that no independent school may open until the Minister of Basic Education has responded to and approved NAISA's request that independent schools be allowed to re-open as soon as they are able to meet the operational conditions, as promulgated in the abovementioned documents.**

## Quality Values Diversity

**Executive Director:** Lebogang Montjane

**Executive Committee:** G Forsman (Chair) G Brown D Geral D M Hunter L Montjane B Heidmann M Boden N Khoele A Jammine

NPC Reg. No. 1999/019655/08 • PBO Reg. No. 9300 00674

Considering the time it may take (understandably given the current circumstances) to receive a response from the Minister, ISASA takes the view that, in the interim, it would be practical for schools to prepare for re-opening as stipulated by the Minister at her press conference on 30 April 2020. Namely that:

- School Management Teams may return to work on **11 May 2020**.
- Teachers, General Administrative and Support Staff may return to work on **18 May 2020**.
- Grade 12 and 7 pupils may return to school on **1 June 2020**, provided that schools are instituting COVID-19 compliant protocols.

**As soon as ISASA receives further information from the Department of Basic Education on the outcome of the NAISA submission, it will advise members. In the interim, we encourage all schools to start planning for re-opening and re-admitting pupils by 1 June 2020. In order to ensure compliance with the applicable legal requirements, referred to above, it may be necessary for schools to re-open in a phased manner. This could, for example, entail particular grades attending school on alternate days to reduce the number of learners at school each day. It may also entail a hybrid of face-to-face and remote teaching. Schools are advised to consider such measures aimed at ensuring compliance with the applicable requirements, and at ensuring the health and safety of learners and staff, and plan accordingly.**