

Navrae
Enquiries **Dr Thereza Bothma**
IMibuzo

Telefoon
Telephone **(021) 467 2208**
IFoni

Faks
Fax **(021) 467 9388**
IFeksi

Verwysing
Reference **20091119-0058**
ISalathiso **13/12/8/81**



Wes-Kaap Onderwysdepartement
Western Cape Education Department
ISebe leMfundo leNtshona Koloni

Minute: 0010/2009

SCHOOL SANITATION GUIDELINES

1. Motivation

Adequate, well-maintained school toilets and hand-washing facilities play a critical role in promoting health and preventing the spread of intestinal parasites and other diseases.

According to the World Health Organisation, 80% of illnesses are caused by poor water and sanitation. This includes diarrhoea, cholera, typhoid, worms, eye infections and skin diseases. 1.5 million children suffer from diarrhoea every year and this is the leading cause of death in children under 5 years old.

2. Setting basic standards

This means that in order to protect the health of our primary school learners:

- All schools should have **sufficient toilets** and **hand washing facilities** to meet learner's needs.
- The toilets and washbasins must be in **working** order (and regular maintenance is needed to prevent flooding, blockages and breakages).
- The toilets, taps and all surfaces should be **clean** and hygienic.
- Learners need access to **toilet paper** so that they don't have to use newspaper, stones or plastic bags or wipe their hands on the walls.
- Learners need clean water and **soap** to wash their hands after using the toilet.
- Female toilets need bins and a **sanitary towel disposal service**.
- Every effort should be made to ensure the **personal safety** and privacy of learners using the toilet facilities.
- All schools must make provision for learners with **special needs**.

3. Roles and responsibilities

The School

All members of the school community need to act together as a team to maintain the school environment and make sure that water and sanitation facilities at the school are working optimally. School leadership (principal, educators and prefects) should lead by example and play an active role in monitoring and motivating learners to take pride in their school environment.

3.1 Learners

Have the right to clean, working toilets, but they also have the responsibility to use toilets correctly and leave them in clean, working order.

3.2 Educators

- Educators must teach learners about basic health and hygiene as an integral part of the curriculum.
- They must teach learners (especially those not familiar with flush toilets) how to use the toilets and hand-washing basins correctly. This includes the following key messages:
 - Use only toilet paper to wipe your bum.
 - Don't throw stones, plastic bags, newspaper, condoms, sanitary pads or any other solid objects into the toilet because they will block toilets and cause flooding.
 - Report any blockages, damage or flooding to your toilet monitor/cleaner/teacher.
 - Flush the toilet after use.
 - Leave the toilet as clean as you would like to find it.
 - Wash your hands with soap and water *after* using the toilet and *before* eating. Do not use a dirty towel or cloth to dry your hands.
 - Save water. Turn off dripping taps after use.
- Girls must be taught to dispose of tampons and sanitary pads in the bins provided.

3.3 School governing body

- The South African Schools Act holds the School Governing Body responsible for the maintenance of the school buildings and grounds including the toilets.
- The SGB and the school management team must make sure that sufficient funds are available so that the school does not run out of toilet paper, soap and detergents.
- SGB must also make sure that sanitary bins are available in the girls toilets and that the bins are emptied - at least once a week for primary schools and at least twice a week for secondary schools - by a professional sanitary disposal service. (A list of approved suppliers is available from WCED Operational Support.)
- The SGB and school management team must put systems in place to monitor the toilets regularly and ensure that they are maintained in healthy, working order.
- The SGB must allocate funds for cleaning staff and / or organize volunteers to ensure the toilets are kept clean.

3.4 Cleaning and maintenance staff

- Cleaning and maintenance staff is responsible for the cleaning and day-to-day maintenance of the toilet facilities.
- Any problems must be reported to the principal or sanitation committee so that urgent repairs can be completed as soon as possible.
- Those responsible for cleaning the toilets must be properly equipped with gloves and overalls.

Government support services

Schools can also draw on the following government departments for additional support:

3.5 WCED Operational Support

The Directorate: Operational Support (previously called “Physical Resources Planning”) provides schools with technical advice and support; approves emergency repairs and plans scheduled maintenance in collaboration with the EDO’s.

3.6 Department of Public Works

Public Works is commissioned by WCED Operational Support to implement scheduled maintenance.

3.7 Provincial Health

Provincial Environmental Health Practitioners assist schools by monitoring, investigating and advising on all environmental conditions that might have an adverse affect on learners and teachers health and will report problems to the relevant authorities.

3.8 City Health

City Health’s Environmental Health Practitioners:

- monitor the standard of hygiene at schools including sanitation services, food preparation, etc
- liaise with the Principal and Governing Body when observed standards are unsatisfactory.
- report serious problems of a structural and infrastructural nature to PGWC Environmental Health for further action
- carry out Health Promotion awareness programmes at schools and
- respond to and investigate complaints related to public health.

4. Maintenance

Circular 175/2000 clearly describes the different divisions of maintenance. The school needs to put systems in place and take responsibility for day-to-day maintenance so that problems are addressed before they pose a serious risk to learners’ health and safety.

4.1 Day-to-day maintenance

- Day-to-day maintenance aims to prevent damage and reduce maintenance costs by attending to problems as soon as they appear, while they are still small and manageable. This type of maintenance is the school’s responsibility and includes:
- teaching learners to take pride in their school and encouraging them to take care of their school environment by: using toilets correctly, closing dripping taps (see 2.2).
- cleaning the toilets after each break and at the end of the school day.
- scrubbing the floors, toilets, washbasins and urinals with disinfectants every day
- keeping sand away from the cisterns and flushing mechanisms.
- inspecting the toilets at the end of each day.
- ensuring that toilet doors are kept closed at all times to prevent plastic bags and other foreign objects being blown inside the toilets.
- inspecting taps and flushing mechanisms regularly
- repairing damaged washers, taps, cisterns and flushing mechanisms as soon as possible to prevent further damage.
- .closing dripping taps.

- turning off taps at urinals after school hours to save water. (But make sure you don't cut off the water supply to the cisterns (toilets) and washbasins.)
- reporting problems to the toilet monitor, prefect or sanitation committee.
- Ensuring sanitary bins are made available in the girl's toilets and emptied regularly by an approved sanitary disposal service (see 2.3 above). There should be sanitary bins in at least two of the cubicles in each toilet blocks to ensure privacy.
- Ensuring learners have access to clean water and soap to wash their hands after using the toilet. Soap can be made available in the toilets or handed out in the classroom.
- Ensuring learners have access to toilet paper (to avoid blockages). This can be made available in the toilets or handed out in the classroom.
- Note that toilet facilities connected to septic tank systems require special care with regard to disposal of foreign objects, sanitary towels and the type of disinfectants used need to be septic tank friendly.

4.2 Ensuring the safety and privacy of learners

- If improperly supervised, school toilets can be monopolized by gangs and school bullies and become centres of violence, sexual abuse, drinking, smoking and drug abuse.
- Learners who are too intimidated to enter the toilets may resort to 'holding it in' or using the outside environment to the detriment of their own health and that of other learners.
- It is the responsibility of the school to ensure that the toilets are properly supervised and monitored by the school staff or by nominated learners and that abuses are reported and managed.

4.3 In an emergency

Take immediate action (urgent repairs)

- Burst pipes, vandalism, blocked toilets and sewers can lead to health problems or a crisis situation if they are not dealt with immediately.
- It is the school's responsibility to take immediate action. For example: turn off the water supply; call the plumber or call **WCED Operational Support Unit: Maintenance Division (021 – 467 2132), for advice and support.**

Emergency repairs

- Emergency repairs will be carried out to alleviate a crisis situation where a natural disaster or serious structural defect poses a real threat to learners' health or safety.
- WCED will attend to emergency repairs on a **priority basis** - if funds are available.

4.4 Scheduled maintenance

Scheduled maintenance refers to larger repairs that are scheduled by WCED Operational Support and implemented by the Department of Public Works. This includes:

- Replacing water and sewerage systems
- Repair and upgrading of larger structural problems.
- Upgrading of wall panels, electricity & toilet systems.

- Building additional toilets
- Replacing/changing of flushing systems in toilets
- Renovation of toilets to accommodate learners with special needs
- Renovation / additional toilets to accommodate Grade R learners

5. Funding

- Public ordinary schools are responsible for the maintenance of school facilities including the toilets and washbasins and must provide sufficiently for this in their budget.
- The funds for day-to-day maintenance and urgent repairs is partly provided for by WCED under the Norms and Standards budget allocation to schools, but this amount must be supplemented with additional funds that schools generate themselves.
- Additional funding is required to cover the costs of sanitary bins, toilet paper, soap and disinfectants.

6. Monitoring

- Each school must develop its own system to monitor the state of the toilets.
- Each School Governing Body must establish a sanitation team / committee that concentrates solely on the well-being of the toilets. This should include representatives from the school governing body, teaching and cleaning staff.
- This team should ensure that the toilets are inspected every day and report any problems to the principal and School Governing Body.
- Learners should be encouraged to participate by establishing a system of toilet monitors. Incentives should be used to promote good practice.
- Parents and teachers should also be encouraged to visit the learners' toilets on an *ad hoc* basis and to share their findings with the principal/sanitation committee.

7. Trouble shooting

Not enough toilets

If there are not enough toilets to cope with the number of learners:

- Platooning (setting up a roster so that different grades use the toilets at different times) may help reduce the number of learners using the toilets at the same time.
- Contact WCED Operational Support (Physical Resources) for assistance.

Blocked toilets

- Educate learners on how to use the toilets correctly
- Ensure sanitary bins are provided and that learners know how to use them.
- Ensure toilet paper is provided so that learners don't resort to using sticks, stones, newspaper or plastic packets.
- Don't use toilets that are already blocked. Toilets that are blocked should be closed off from use and reported to the school sanitation committee or toilet monitors who should take immediate action to ensure the blockage is cleared as soon as possible.

Broken toilets

Damaged toilet seats, cisterns, flushing mechanisms, taps and washers are the schools responsibility and should be repaired as soon as possible.

Learners with special needs

Apply to WCED Operational Support for **scheduled maintenance**. They will assess the need to refurbish existing toilets to accommodate learners with special needs