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Circular: 0026/2025

Expiry date: 31 March 2027

To: Deputy Directors-General, Chief Directors, Directors, Circuit Managers, Heads: Management and Governance, Deputy Chief Education Specialists, District Deputy Directors, Heads of pre-primary schools and independent ECD schools, and Principals of ordinary public schools with Grade R classes

Short summary: *Information for all role players about relevant Grade R subsidy application procedures and other matters.*

Subject: Grade R subsidies and other related matters as of 01 April 2026

1. Grade R allocation

This circular refers to Grade R learners as defined in the South African Schools Act, 1996 (Act 84 of 1996), as amended, and therefore excludes the age 0–4 cohort of learners.

- 1.1 Allocations are calculated as per the *National Norms and Standards for School Funding*, as published in *Government Gazette* No. 30679 of 18 January 2008. The allocation letter (as referred to in point 6) includes a detailed breakdown of the specific allocation for the 2026/27 financial year, as well as provisional allocations for the following two financial years, i.e. 2027/28 and 2028/29.
- 1.2 The norms and standards (N&S) allocations for Grade R for the financial year: 01 April 2026 to 31 March 2027 are available on CEMIS and can be accessed in the following way:
 - (a) Log on to CEMIS.
 - (b) Click "Proceed", select the "Administration" option on the menu bar, then click on "Norms and Standards Allocation" and select "N&S 2026/27".
 - (c) Print the page.

1.3 Calculation of Grade R allocation

1.3.1 Approval has been granted to pay a subsidy to learners in the following age groups (in 2026), in approved classes at ordinary public schools, public Early Childhood Development (ECD) (pre-primary) schools, registered independent ECD centres, and independent ordinary schools with effect from 01 April 2026:

- (a) learners who are turning 5 before 30 June;
- (b) learners who are 5, turning 6; and
- (c) learners who are 6, turning 7, who have been retained in Grade R and will, therefore, not proceed to Grade 1 in the following year.

1.3.2 Schools will receive allocations within the following categories:

(a) Ordinary public and public ECD schools

N&S amount payable per Grade R learner, per year, including the minimum Grade R practitioner stipend subsidy per year:

Type of institution (25 Grade R learners or more)	National Quintile (NQ)	Fee status of the institution	N&S subsidy payable per Grade R learner per year *	Minimum Grade R practitioner stipend subsidy per year **
Ordinary public and public ECD schools offering Grade R	NQ1-NQ5	No-fee	R1 512	R148 510
	NQ4	Fee-charging	R920	R148 510
	NQ5	Fee-charging	R420	R148 510

* N&S subsidy amount per learner, per year, is for non-personnel operational cost, including Learning and Teaching Support Material (LTSM).

**The minimum stipend subsidy to a governing body employed, unqualified Grade R practitioner.

Minimum N&S subsidy applicable to all ordinary public and public ECD schools:

Type of institution	NQ	Fee status of the institution	Minimum allocation per year (fewer than 25 Grade R learners)		Minimum allocation per year (fewer than 13 Grade R learners)	
			Stipend subsidy per year	N&S subsidy per year	Stipend subsidy per year	N&S subsidy per year
Ordinary public and public ECD schools offering Grade R	NQ1-NQ5	No-fee	R148 510	R36 291	R148 510	R18 145
	NQ4	Fee-charging	R148 510	R22 070	R148 510	R11 035
	NQ5	Fee-charging	R148 510	R10 080	R148 510	R5 040

Public schools with a governing body-employed, unqualified Grade R practitioner will receive the minimum stipend subsidy, per year, plus the N&S subsidy per year. If the Grade R practitioner is remunerated through PERSAL by the Western Cape Education Department (WCED), the school will receive the N&S subsidy per year, whether they are qualified or underqualified.

(b) Independent schools

Type of institution	Fee status of the institution	Grade R subsidy per learner per year *
Independent sites (all privately governed centres/schools, offering Grade R)	No-fee	R6 600
	Fee-charging	R3 780

* Grade R subsidy per learner, per year, includes the N&S subsidy per learner as well the stipend subsidy for a Grade R practitioner.

2. Use of Grade R allocation

2.1 Ordinary public and public ECD schools

2.1.1 Grade R practitioners (governing body-employed) at all ordinary public and public ECD schools must receive the minimum stipend subsidy allocation of R148 510 per annum (R12 375, 83 per month), that is transferred biannually.

2.1.2 The N&S subsidy is intended to cover any non-personnel cost such as LTSM and operational costs such as municipal services accounts, telephone accounts, copying and printing, cleaning materials, maintenance of the Grade R classroom(s), and any other services required by Grade R practitioners. It is recommended that the N&S subsidy be divided as follows:

- (a) 50% is allocated for LTSM, including both indoor and outdoor LTSM to the benefit of Grade R learners. All LTSM purchased must be recorded on the inventory of the Grade R class.
- (b) 50% is allocated for the payment of any operational cost. Operational costs are the ongoing expenses incurred from the normal day-to-day of running a business.

2.2 Independent schools

2.2.1 Schools must earmark a portion of their Grade R subsidy towards personnel costs and a portion towards non-personnel costs.

2.2.2 Governing bodies of all independent schools must augment the Grade R practitioner's salary so that the practitioner receives at least the minimum stipend subsidy of R148 510 per annum (R12 375, 83 per month), or more.

- 2.2.3 It is recommended that, after allocating a portion of the Grade R subsidy to personnel costs, the remaining balance of the subsidy should be divided as follows:
- (a) 50% is allocated for LTSM, including both indoor and outdoor LTSM to the benefit of Grade R learners. All LTSM purchased must be recorded on the inventory of the Grade R class.
 - (b) 50% is allocated for the payment of any operational cost. Operational costs are the ongoing expenses incurred from the normal day-to-day of running a business.
- 2.3 Governing bodies must register with the South African Revenue Service as employers. The Unemployment Insurance Fund and Pay as You Earn must be deducted from the Grade R practitioner's salary and paid over to the relevant government departments.
3. **Grade R subsidy claims and payment**
- 3.1 Grade R subsidy claims will be based on the **2026 Annual School Survey (ASS)**.
- 3.2 **Please ensure that all the data on the 2026 ASS is correct and signed off as per indicated timeline. No amendments on CEMIS will be allowed after the ASS has been signed off.**
- 3.3 It is important to note that:
- (a) all Grade R learners must be captured/registered on CEMIS;
 - (b) every Grade R learner must be linked to a class;
 - (c) a correctly identified Grade R practitioner must be linked to every class. The identification is important in the calculation of the institution's Grade R subsidy; and
 - (d) if a practitioner is remunerated through PERSAL, whether they are **qualified or underqualified**, the practitioner has to be linked as a WCED employee. If the governing body is responsible for remuneration, please indicate the governing body's classification on CEMIS. This will ensure accurate calculation of the subsidy transfer payment.
- 3.4 A claim can only be submitted for payment if the above requirements have been met. Failure to adhere to these requirements may result in an institution forfeiting its subsidy payment or part thereof.
- 3.5 For independent schools that have both governing body and WCED Grade R practitioners, the WCED will deduct a maximum of 33 learner for the Grade R class with a WCED practitioner and only fund the remaining number of learners.
- 3.6 As a continuous process, Grade R subsidy claims must be submitted by schools via CEMIS in the following way:
- (a) Log on to CEMIS.
 - (b) Click "Proceed", select the "Administration" option on the menu bar and then click on "Grade R Subsidy".
 - (c) Select "Submit Application".
 - (d) Indicate "Will you be applying for Grade R subsidy", by selecting YES/NO.

- 3.7 Please complete the relevant fields as required and print the school's subsidy claim for record purposes after the claim has been submitted. The school's subsidy claim will be submitted electronically to the relevant district office. No further action will be required from the school/site.
- 3.8 Please refer to the *Grade R Subsidy Claim Application System User Manual* on CEMIS for detailed step-by-step guidance on how to submit a subsidy claim successfully.
- 3.9 A total of 50% of the allocation will be paid during the **April/May** tranche and the remaining 50% will be paid during the **October/November** tranche.
- 3.10 Time frames for the 2026 process

April/May tranche (Terms 2 and 3 of the 2026 school year)

Date	Action
08 April 2026	CEMIS opens for the submission of claims for FOUR days only .
13 April 2026	Final date for schools to submit claims. Please note: Claims cannot be submitted for payment after this date.
17 April 2026	District offices finalise recommendation and approval processes on EduInfoSearch and sign off on each claim.
15 May 2026	Final date for subsidy payments to schools.

October/November tranche (Term 4 of the 2026 school year and Term 1 of the 2027 school year)

Date	Action
06 October 2026	CEMIS opens for the submission of claims for FOUR days only .
09 October 2026	Final date for schools to submit claims. Please note: Claims cannot be submitted for payment after this date.
16 October 2026	District offices finalise recommendation and approval processes on EduInfoSearch and sign off on each claim.
13 November 2026	Final date for subsidy payments to schools.

3.11 Progress of claim

The progress of your school's claim can be tracked on CEMIS in the following way:

- Log on to CEMIS.
- Click "Proceed", select the "Administration" option on the menu bar and then click on "Grade R Subsidy".
- Select "Claim status".

4. **No-fee schools offering Grade R**

- 4.1 No-fee schools receiving Grade R funding from the government are not allowed to charge school fees for Grade R learners (see *National Financial Management Guidelines in Respect of Schools Offering Grade R Classes*, October 2009, page 4).
- 4.2 Parents may be requested to make voluntary contributions, but these contributions should not be compulsory and may not be used to exclude learners whose parents are not able to make such contributions.

5. **Reporting requirements**

Normal reporting requirements, as communicated by district offices, must be followed to facilitate the next subsidy payment.

6. **Grade R letters**

6.1 Final allocation letter

6.1.1 Final allocation letters will be published on CEMIS by 15 April 2026.

6.1.2 Schools can view and print the final allocation letter on CEMIS in the following way:

- (a) Log on to CEMIS.
- (b) Click "Proceed", select the "Administration" option on the menu bar and then click on "N&S Allocation".
- (c) Select "N&S 2026/27 Final".

6.2 Subsidy payment letter

6.2.1 Subsidy payment letters, based on the approved learner numbers by the relevant district office, will be available on CEMIS after each tranche.

6.2.2 Schools can view and print the subsidy payment letters on CEMIS in the following way:

- (a) Log on to CEMIS.
- (b) Click "Proceed", select the "Administration" option on the menu bar and then click on "Grade R Subsidy".
- (c) Select "Subsidy payment letter".
- (d) Select "Print" (for a printed copy).

7. **Contact numbers for enquiries**

Subject	Name	Contact details
N&S allocation and transfer payments to schools and other Grade R subsidy-related enquiries (N&S allocations)	Contact the relevant Grade R official at district level.	Applicable district office
CEMIS-related enquiries	Contact the relevant CEMIS administrator at district level.	The CEMIS support contact number is available under the "CEMIS Support" menu option.

8. Please bring the content of this circular to attention of all relevant personnel.

SIGNED: B WALTERS

HEAD: EDUCATION

DATE: 2025-09-19