

MEDIA RELEASE **COVID-19: PSA calls for learners to return to full-time contact teaching**

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The Public Servants Association (PSA), which represents thousands of educators and administrative staff at schools nationwide, believes that learners should return to full-time contact learning for the 2022-academic year.

The PSA believes that educators had enough time and opportunity to be vaccinated. The same applied for learners above twelve years of age. South Africa administered more than 28 million vaccinations to date and booster shots are also available that seems to be effective against the current variant of the virus. With most educators now being vaccinated, contact learning can take place, provided that all other COVID-19 protocols and regulations are followed. Most rural schools make use of contact learning only and learners who are not at school every day will undoubtedly fall behind their peers who have either returned to full-time contact learning or who make use of remote learning on days when they are at home.

Even before COVID-19 impacted the South African schooling system infrastructure, water shortage and sanitisation were already a concern for schools, specifically those in rural areas. Some of these problems were compounded by flooding after heavy and persistent rainfall in some areas.

The PSA calls on school principals to ensure that their schools are safe and in compliance with all health and safety requirements for quality education to take place. The PSA further calls on the Minister of Basic Education to return all learners to full-time contact learning for the 2022-academic year to ensure that no learner is left behind owing to a lack of quality education.

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