

MEDIA RELEASE **PSA calls on Limpopo government to educate food handlers and not suppress local economic activities**

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The Public Servants Association (PSA) calls on the Limpopo Department of Education to assist and educate vendors and other service providers to ensure that all food to be consumed by learners is safe.

Collaboration with stakeholders such as the Department of Employment and Labour, SETAs, and Health institutions, is imperative. A directive issued by the Limpopo Department of Education, in *Circular 253 of 2024* issued on 25 October 2024, instructing all District Directors, Circuit Managers, and School Principals to implement the suspension of the sale of food items on school premises by all parties, including outside vendors, does not consider local economic activity. Many families and learners solely depend on community members who make a living as vendors around schools.

The recent food-related illnesses and tragic deaths highlight the urgent need for various interdepartmental integrated actions for education initiatives and ensure food-safety practices amongst vendors and learners. Whilst schools take preventative measures on school premises, law enforcement agencies, environmental health officials (at hospitals and municipalities), and the Limpopo Department of Economic Development, Environment and Tourism are called upon to ensure strict compliance with food-safety regulations. The Department of Education is further urged to roll out food handling courses, with assistance of SETAs, to regulate the provision and preparation of food at schools, including hostels and tuck shops. Such measures are crucial to ensure a safe and secure environment for learners.

The PSA is committed to supporting all efforts aimed at protecting learners and ensuring safe practices in schools.

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