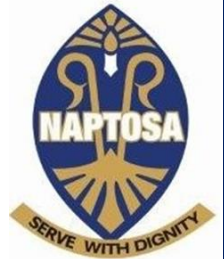


NATIONAL NEWS FLASH



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RE-OPENING OF SCHOOLS 2021: HERE WE GO AGAIN!!

Our President, Mr Nkosipendule Ntantala, in his message to members at the end of 2020, predicted that COVID -19 will still be with us in 2021, that the National State of Disaster will still be in place and the new school year will start as the 2020 one ended.

Who could, however, have thought that 2021 would find us in a worse pandemic situation from 2020? This inevitably impacts the re-opening of schools.

NAPTOSA continues to support the belief that schools are the safest places for children and teachers, provided that all the health and safety measures and protocols we fought for in 2020 are in place. As a union we nevertheless allow ourselves to be guided by scientists and scientific evidence.

The latest view of scientists is that at the expected new peak of the pandemic in South Africa it would be unwise to allow teachers and learners to gather in large groups because infections contracted at schools will be carried back into communities, thereby exacerbating the situation. The World Health Organisation (WHO) has also advised that it would be better to delay the re-opening of schools at the stage when the pandemic in a country is peaking.

Based on the views of the scientists and the WHO, the Department of Basic Education (DBE) will be making proposals to the National Coronavirus Command Council (NCCC) on the re-opening of schools. NAPTOSA will support any proposal to delay the re-opening until the peak infection period has passed. In discussions with the DBE on this matter NAPTOSA therefore supported a delay of not less than 14 days.

For now, we await the decision of the NCCC and the finalization of the dates. Members will be kept informed of the situation.

BASIL MANUEL
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR