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SCHOOL SAFETY, REPORTING OBLIGATIONS AND THE PROTECTION OF EDUCATION COMMUNITIES

NAPTOSA expresses its deep shock and condemnation of the violent incident that occurred at Ntabankulu Junior Secondary School in the Eastern Cape. The alleged actions of a former educator, who reportedly opened fire on educators during a meeting before turning the firearm on himself, represent a grave violation of the sanctity and safety of our schools.

This tragic incident is made even more disturbing by reports that the alleged perpetrator had previously been accused of raping learners at the same school and was allegedly out on bail. This raises serious concerns about school safety, the protection of learners and educators, and the need for greater caution and responsibility in bail considerations where allegations involve sexual violence and pose a clear risk to education communities.

NAPTOSA unequivocally condemns **all forms of violence against learners, teachers, and education support personnel**. Schools must be places of safety, dignity, and learning – never spaces of fear or harm. Under our **#SafeSchoolsEqualSafeNation** campaign, we reaffirm that safe schools are fundamental to a safe and just society.

As educators and education staff, we carry a profound moral and professional obligation to **report all forms of sexual misconduct, abuse, and violence**. Silence enables harm. Speaking out protects learners, colleagues, and communities. We recognise that educators are leaders in society, and that leadership requires courage – including the courage to speak when others remain silent and to act in accordance with conscience, even when it is difficult or inconvenient.

Guided by the NAPTOSA Code of Conduct, we reaffirm that:

- 🕯 The **needs, safety, and welfare of learners are of central importance at all times**.
- 🕯 We respect and protect the **constitutional rights and dignity of every individual** in our education communities.
- 🕯 We **refrain from any improper or inappropriate relationships with learners**, whether physical, sexual, emotional, or otherwise.
- 🕯 We serve all learners with **equal dedication**, irrespective of gender, race, culture, religion, or sexual orientation.
- 🕯 We uphold confidentiality, professionalism, and integrity, while recognising that confidentiality can never be used to shield abuse or criminal conduct.
- 🕯 We accept our role as custodians of the profession and commit to advancing its dignity, credibility, and moral standing.

NAPTOSA calls on the justice system, law enforcement agencies, and all relevant authorities to ensure **stronger protective measures for schools**, improved risk assessment processes, and greater scrutiny when bail is considered for alleged perpetrators of sexual and violent crimes, particularly where children and educators may be placed at risk.

In humility, and conscious of our shared responsibility, NAPTOSA urges all members to serve the education sector with dignity, compassion, and unwavering commitment to safety. Violence has no place in our schools. Protecting learners and educators is not optional – it is a collective duty.

#SafeSchoolEqualSafeNation

Mr BL Manuel

Executive Director