

Revised 2021 academic calendar: Schools only set to open mid-February

The Deputy Minister of Basic Education, Dr Reginah Mhaule this morning announced the revised dates for the opening of public and private schools for the 2021 academic year.



Photo by August de Richelieu from [Pexels](#)

"The coronavirus has turned our lives upside down; and decision-making for a sector as large as basic education, has become a difficult exercise," Mhaule said in a press briefing.

"Between Tuesday and Wednesday (12 and 13 January 2021), we consulted the Council of Education Ministers (CEM), the Heads of Education Departments Committee (HEDCOM), the national school governing body associations, teacher unions, learner formations, principal associations, as well as the national associations representing independent schools and learners with special education needs. All stakeholders were united in supporting a delay in the opening of schools," Mhaule continued.

"Given the pressure experienced by the health system in the past few weeks, occasioned by increased Covid-19 infections which has led to the second wave, the Council of Education Ministers in conjunction with the National Coronavirus Command Council and Cabinet, has taken the decision to delay the reopening of both public and private schools with two weeks. This includes private schools that have reopened already. They will need to postpone their reopening to a later date. This is done to provide relief to the health system which is already struggling to cope with the current demands. The new dates for the reopening of private schools will vary depending on the calendar that they follow."

For public schools and private schools which follow the same calendar, changes are as follows:

- School Management Teams (SMTs) shall report for duty on Monday, 25 January 2021;
- Teachers shall follow on Monday, 1 February 2021; and
- Lastly, learners return on Monday, 15 February 2021.

Mhaule said this will allow the the SMTs to first prepare for the return of teachers; and the teachers will prepare for the return of learners. Schools will be able to use this time to finalise outstanding matters regarding admissions, especially the unplaced learners in certain cases.

"The DBE will work closely with all nine Provincial Education Departments, to establish the true extent of the impact of the virus, resulting from the unfortunate demise of educators, workers and leaders in the sector, especially during the December / January holidays," the deputy minister confirmed. "We will have a series of meetings with provinces next week, to check on the very latest, regarding the state of readiness; taking into account the Cabinet decision from yesterday's meeting.

"Now that Cabinet has taken a decision, we will once again go back to our stakeholders for consultation on the details of the opening of schools for 2021 school year, amid the pandemic."

For more, visit: <https://www.bizcommunity.com>