KWAZULU-NATAL PROVINCE
EDUCATION
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

OFFICE OF THE HEAD OF DEPARTMENT

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TO: CHIEF DIRECTORS: DISTRICT OPERATIONS
DISTRICT DIRECTORS
CESs: CIRCUIT MANAGEMENT
CESs: DISTRICT GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT
CIRCUIT MANAGERS
PRINCIPALS OF ALL PUBLIC SCHOOLS
CHAIRPERSONS OF SCHOOL GOVERNING BODIES
CHAIRPERSONS OF QLTC COMMITTEES

KZN CIRCULAR NO. 72 OF 2026

SUBJECT: MANAGEMENT OF SCHOOL CELEBRATION ACTIVITIES, INCLUDING PENS DOWN AND MEASURES TO SAFEGUARD LEARNERS.

1. While the Department acknowledges learners' desire to celebrate the conclusion of an academic milestone, it is imperative that the safety, well-being and protection of learners remain paramount.
2. The department has noted with serious concern a hazardous, unauthorized and extremely dangerous post examination party culture that normally takes place immediately after the National Senior Certificate examinations. This culture is popularly known as "pens down" which is an event held after students have finished their final examinations. It is common at the end of NSC examinations.
3. School Governing Bodies and principals are requested to communicate clearly to learners, parents, guardians and school communities that "pens down" celebrations are not official school or departmental activities unless they have been formally approved and organized in accordance with applicable legislation and departmental policies.
4. Schools should therefore refrain from promoting, endorsing, organising or associating themselves with unauthorized celebrations that may expose learners to unnecessary risks.
5. Particular attention should be drawn to the following legislative and legal obligations:
   5.1 The Liquor Act No. 59 of 2003 prohibits the sale or supply of liquor to persons under the age of 18 years. Any individual or establishment that supplies alcohol to a minor is guilty of an offence. School communities are encouraged to remind parents and learners that underage drinking places learners at significant risk of injury, impaired judgement, violence, sexual exploitation and conflict with the law.

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5.2 The Sexual Offences and Related Matters Amendment Act No, 32 of 2007 provides protection against sexual offences and exploitation involving children and outlines circumstances in which sexual conduct involving minors constitutes an offence. All learners should be reminded that consent, respect, personal safety and compliance with the law always remain essential. Parents and guardians are encouraged to discuss responsible behaviour and appropriate supervision with their children during celebratory events.

5.3 A significant number of injuries and fatalities involving young people occur during celebratory periods due to reckless driving, speeding, driving under the influence of alcohol or drugs, overloading of vehicles and failure to wear seat belts. The National Road Traffic Act, No. 93 of 1996 places legal responsibilities on all road users to promote safe driving practices.

6. School Governing Bodies and principals are requested to:

6.1 Encourage parents and guardians to exercise appropriate supervision and maintain open communication with their children regarding post-examination celebrations.

6.2 Reinforce messages on responsible decision-making, personal safety, respect for others and compliance with the law.

6.3 Collaborate with community stakeholders, law enforcement agencies and relevant government departments where appropriate to promote learner safety.

6.4 Encourage school leavers to rather donate their school uniform to the needy children than tearing it up or draw meaningless drawings on them.

7. The department appeals to all members of the school community to work collaboratively to ensure that the completion of examinations is celebrated in a manner that upholds the dignity of learners, protects their well-being and safeguards their futures

The contents of this circular must be brought to the attention of all educators and Education Officials.

MR. GN NGCOBO
HEAD OF DEPARTMENT: KZN EDUCATION
DATE: 31/12/25