
GOVERNMENT NOTICE

DEPARTMENT OF BASIC EDUCATION
NATIONAL EDUCATION POLICY ACT, 1996 (ACT NO 27 OF 1996)
CALL FOR COMMENTS: PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO THE NATIONAL POLICY FOR
DETERMINING SCHOOL CALENDARS FOR PUBLIC SCHOOLS IN SOUTH AFRICA

I, Siviwe Gwarube, Minister of Basic Education, acting under section 3(4)(k) of the National Education Policy Act, 1996 (No. 27 of 1996) and after consultation with the Council of Education Ministers, invite stakeholder bodies and members of the public to comment on the Proposed Amendments to the National Policy for Determining School Calendars for Public Schools in South Africa (Policy).

The National Policy for Determining School Calendars for Public Schools in South Africa is obtainable at <https://www.education.gov.za>

All interested persons and organisations are invited to comment on the proposed amendments to the Policy, in writing, and direct the comments to the Director-General: Department of Basic Education, for the attention of Mr S Mlambo, e-mail: Mlambo.S@dbe.gov.za; cc Mkhize.ZM@dbe.gov.za.



MS SIVIWE GWARUBE, MP

MINISTER OF BASIC EDUCATION

DATE: 24/10/2025



basic education

Department:
Basic Education
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA



PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO THE POLICY

Paragraph	Current Policy position	Proposed amendments
1.1	INTRODUCTION In recent years, various stakeholders and the general public have made certain recommendations which have made it necessary to amend the policy that was published in 2015. The school calendar for a particular year structures the total number of days allocated for teaching and learning in that year and stipulates the dates of commencement and termination of the school terms and the length of school holidays. Usually, the calendar is not exactly the same two years running. Although there are various general principles that guide the process of determining school calendars, a set of specifications is also needed to ensure consistency. This policy serves as that set of specifications.	Delete - In recent years, various stakeholders and the general public have made certain recommendations which have made it necessary to amend the policy that was published in 2015.
3.	Definitions “staggering” Means the planning technique according to which the school terms in the two clusters start and end on different dates, the difference being at least one school day and at most five school days	Delete – “staggering” Means the planning technique according to which the school terms in the two clusters start and end on different dates, the difference being at least one school day and at most five school days Remove from the Policy
4.2	Transport and travel infrastructure Seeing that the timing of school holidays could have an effect on traffic flow, which, in turn, has potential road safety implications, the Department should plan the school calendar in a way that will assist in minimising traffic flow relating to school holidays.	Delete - Transport and travel infrastructure Seeing that the timing of school holidays could have an effect on traffic flow, which, in turn, has potential road safety implications, the Department should plan the school calendar in a way that will assist in minimising traffic flow relating to school holidays. Remove from the Policy
5.1.2	The number of school days must be the same in all provinces.	Delete - The number of school days must be the same in all provinces. Remove from the Policy
5.3.4	In the first term – (a) inland provinces must open during the second week of January; and (b) coastal provinces must open during the third week of January.	Delete - In the first term – (a) inland provinces must open during the second week of January; and (b) coastal provinces must open during the third week of January. Remove from the Policy
5.4.1	Holiday at end of first term Where the school calendar is a staggered calendar: Coastal Cluster: one week Inland Cluster: two weeks	Delete - Holiday at end of first term Where the school calendar is a staggered calendar: Coastal Cluster: one week Inland Cluster: two weeks Remove from the Policy
5.4.2	Holiday at end of second term Coastal Cluster: three weeks Inland Cluster: three weeks	Delete - Holiday at end of second term Coastal Cluster: three weeks Inland Cluster: three weeks Remove from the Policy
5.4.3	Holiday at end of third term Coastal Cluster: one week Inland Cluster: one week	Delete - Holiday at end of third term Coastal Cluster: one week Inland Cluster: one week Remove from the Policy

Paragraph	Current Policy position	Proposed amendments
5.4.4	Holiday at end of fourth term Where the school calendar is a staggered calendar: Coastal Cluster: five weeks Inland Cluster: four weeks	Delete - Holiday at end of fourth term Where the school calendar is a staggered calendar: Coastal Cluster: five weeks Inland Cluster: four weeks Remove from the Policy
6.	Clusters and Staggering	Delete - Clusters and Staggering Add - Scheduling of School Terms
6.1	Determination of clusters 6.1.1 The nine provinces are divided into the following two clusters: (a) Inland provinces: Free State, Gauteng, Limpopo, Mpumalanga and North West. (b) Coastal provinces: Eastern Cape, KwaZulu-Natal, Northern Cape and Western Cape. 6.1.2 When the school calendar is planned, different dates must be allocated to the two clusters. However, a common calendar may be considered under exceptional circumstances, to be determined by the Minister.	Delete - Determination of clusters 6.1.1 The nine provinces are divided into the following two clusters: (a) Inland provinces: Free State, Gauteng, Limpopo, Mpumalanga and North West. (b) Coastal provinces: Eastern Cape, KwaZulu-Natal, Northern Cape and Western Cape. 6.1.2 When the school calendar is planned, different dates must be allocated to the two clusters. However, a common calendar may be considered under exceptional circumstances, to be determined by the Minister. Remove from the Policy
6.2	Staggered closing and opening times	Delete - Staggered closing and opening times - Remove from the Policy
6.2.1	In the first term, the schools in the two clusters must open and close on different dates. This means, taking account of paragraph 6.3.2, that, except in very unusual circumstances, one cluster must start on the Wednesday a week after the other cluster.	Delete - 6.2.1 In the first term, the schools in the two clusters must open and close on different dates. This means, taking account of paragraph 6.3.2, that, except in very unusual circumstances, one cluster must start on the Wednesday a week after the other cluster. Remove from the Policy
6.2.2	As mentioned in sub-paragraph 4.2, the structure of the school calendar must take account of traffic flow. In particular, the aim is to allocate different dates to the two clusters in the first term so that traffic density before the opening of schools for the new school year is kept within acceptable levels.	Delete - As mentioned in sub-paragraph 4.2, the structure of the school calendar must take account of traffic flow. In particular, the aim is to allocate different dates to the two clusters in the first term so that traffic density before the opening of schools for the new school year is kept within acceptable levels. Remove from the Policy
6.2.3	School terms for learners must not begin on a Monday, as starting a term on a Monday leads to high traffic flow on the preceding Sunday and leaves insufficient time for school hostel staff to prepare for the return of learners.	Delete - 6.2.3 School terms for learners must not begin on a Monday, as starting a term on a Monday leads to high traffic flow on the preceding Sunday and leaves insufficient time for school hostel staff to prepare for the return of learners Remove from the Policy
6.3.1	Opening of schools in January The inland schools must open during the second week of January, while coastal schools must open during the third week of January.	Delete - Opening of schools in January (The inland schools must open during the second week of January, while coastal schools must open during the third week of January.) Replace with Schools must open in the third week of January.
6.3.2	First day of the school year In January, the school term must start on a Wednesday to reduce traffic flow on the last Sunday of the school holidays (as mentioned in paragraphs 4.2 and 6.2.2). Educators must report for work two days before the learners – that is, on the Monday before the learners start – to finalise preparations for the new academic year.	Delete –(as mentioned in paragraphs 4.2 and 6.2.2): Remove from the Policy