



## **basic education**

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REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

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**TO: HEADS OF DEPARTMENT  
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TEACHER UNIONS  
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NATIONAL ALLIANCE OF INDEPENDENT SCHOOL ASSOCIATIONS (NAISA)  
UMALUSI  
UNIVERSITIES SOUTH AFRICA (USAf)  
DISTRICT DIRECTORS  
PRINCIPALS OF PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

### **CIRCULAR E 31 OF 2020**

#### **ALLOWING COVID-19 POSITIVE LEARNERS TO WRITE THE COMBINED 2020 NOVEMBER NATIONAL SENIOR CERTIFICATE (NSC) EXAMINATION**

1. The Department of Basic Education (DBE) in consultation with the Department of Health (DoH), agreed on 4 November 2020, to allow learners that have tested positive for COVID-19, to write the Combined 2020 November examination, based on specific conditions that will be articulated in this circular.
2. The parents, care-giver or a designated family member of candidates that have tested positive for COVID-19 are obliged to inform the school principal immediately of the positive status of the candidate, so that timeous arrangements can be made for the candidate to write the examination at an isolation venue that complies with the health and safety protocols and also the examination regulations relating to a secure examination.
3. The parents, care-giver or a designated family member that intentionally conceals the COVID-19 positive status of the candidate in their care will face legal consequences should it be later revealed that this information was wilfully withheld by the parent.
4. Only candidates that have tested positive and are deemed fit to write an examination, will be allowed to write the 2020 Combined November examination.

5. The Provincial Education Department (PED) will liaise with the Provincial Department of Health and establish isolation venues at selected centres in the province. An isolation venue could be:
  - (a) A quarantine or isolation centre established by the DoH for the purpose of keeping persons in quarantine or in isolation for those that have tested positive for COVID-19.
  - (b) A venue identified by the DoH in conjunction with the PED, that will serve as an isolation venue for the purpose of writing the 2020 Combined November examination. This could be a clinic, a room in a hospital, a community hall, a church hall or any other venue, which includes the home, that is conducive to the writing of an examination.
  
6. The invigilation at the isolation venue will be carried out by a health official, an educator, examination official or a private invigilator. In utilising the services of either of these persons to serve as an invigilator, the following must be complied with:
  - (a) The individual must be fully briefed of the task to be carried out.
  - (b) The written consent of the individual must be obtained.
  - (c) The individual must be trained to carry out the important task of invigilation.Educators must undertake the responsibility of invigilation on a voluntary basis and cannot be compelled to do so.
  
7. It needs to be noted that there will be strict compliance with the requirements of social distancing, the wearing of a face mask and hand sanitising, at the isolation venue. The social distancing at an isolation venue can be extended beyond the 1.5 metre requirement, given the limited number of candidates that may be located at an isolation venue at any given time. If the above three cardinal rules are strictly observed, the health experts confirm that the risk of contracting the virus are virtually non-existent.
  
8. In addition to allowing candidates that test positive for COVID-19 to write the examinations, candidates that present a temperature of 38°C and above and/or answer “yes” to two or more of the questions on the screening questionnaire must write the examination at an isolation venue at the school, identified and approved by the Principal and School Governing Body, as articulated in *Circular E23 of 2020*, entitled, *Protocol on the Writing of the 2020*

*November Examination in Compliance with the Covid-19 Regulations.* These candidates must be referred to a health facility or provider after the examination is written.

9. Candidates are advised to be extra cautious during this period of the examination to minimise their risk of contracting the virus. They should adhere to all health and safety measures and refrain from attending any social gatherings. Candidates must strictly observe the protocols relating to social distancing, wearing of the mask and hand sanitising.
10. Find attached the revised *Protocol on the Writing of the 2020 November Examination in Compliance with the Covid-19 Regulations*, dated 8 November 2020.
11. All enquiries regarding this circular must be directed to Dr R R Poliah, at Tel: (012) 357 3900/082 878 5696 or email: [Poliah.r@dbe.gov.za](mailto:Poliah.r@dbe.gov.za).
12. Your support in ensuring compliance to the contents of this circular will be greatly appreciated.



**MR HM MWELI**  
**DIRECTOR-GENERAL**  
**DATE: 08 NOVEMBER 2020**



**basic education**

Department:  
Basic Education  
**REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA**

**PROTOCOL ON THE WRITING OF THE 2020 NOVEMBER  
EXAMINATIONS  
IN COMPLIANCE WITH THE COVID-19 REQUIREMENTS**

**Revised 8 NOVEMBER 2020**

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## DEFINITIONS

**Confirmed COVID-19 case:** When a staff member or learner tests positive for SARS-CoV-2 with or without symptoms.

**Direct/Close contact:** Staff or learner(s) who have been in contact with an individual with **confirmed** COVID-19 for more than 15 minutes and within 1 metre without a mask, face shield or face covering.

**Casual/Distant contact:** Staff or learner(s) who have been in contact with an individual with confirmed COVID-19 for a short period (15 minutes or less), and maintained physical distancing (more than 1 metre) with a confirmed case, and who was wearing a mask, face shield or face covering.

**Contact time:** The time that a disinfectant must be in contact with a surface or device to ensure that appropriate disinfection has occurred. For most disinfectants, the surface should remain wet for the required contact time. For SARS-CoV-2, it takes 20 seconds to dissolve the virus membrane.

**Detergent:** A synthetic cleansing agent that can emulsify and suspend oil. It contains surfactant or a mixture of surfactants with cleaning properties in dilute solutions to lower surface tension and aid in the removal of organic soil and oils, fats and greases. Detergents are effective against coronaviruses.

**Disinfectants:** Chemical compounds that inactivate (i.e. kill) pathogens and other microbes. Disinfectants are applied only to inanimate objects. All organic material and soil must be removed by a cleaning product before application of disinfectants. Some products combine a cleaner with a disinfectant.

**Decontamination:** All equipment and rooms that individuals with confirmed COVID-19 diagnoses have been in contact with, during the preceding three (3) days, should be identified for appropriate cleaning. Following a thorough wet cleaning, surfaces must be wiped, not sprayed, with disinfectants, in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions. The surfaces should remain wet for at least 20 seconds to dissolve the membrane of the virus.

**Fogging (fumigation/misting):** Dispersing a liquid chemical disinfectant to disinfect environmental surfaces in an enclosed space. Fogging is NOT recommended.

**Isolation:** A period during which someone who is confirmed to have COVID-19 is separated from healthy people. The period ends after 10 days of the onset of symptoms if symptomatic or from the date of testing if asymptomatic or from the date of clinical stability if hospitalised (end of oxygen treatment).

**Quarantine:** A period during which someone who has been exposed to a person who is confirmed to have COVID-19, is separated from healthy people and observed for the development of symptoms of COVID-19. This period is currently ten (10) days from the last date of exposure.

**Suspected COVID-19:** When a staff member or learner appears ill or displays symptoms consistent with COVID-19, based on the symptom screen/NICD case definition, but has either not been tested or is awaiting a SARS-CoV-2 test result.

## 1. Introduction

The advent of the COVID-19 pandemic has necessitated the need for an alternative approach to the general conduct, administration, and management of national examinations. It is imperative for officials entrusted with the responsibility of administering and managing the writing of examinations to ensure that the necessary precautions aimed at protecting both officials and candidates from contracting COVID-19 are observed at all examination centres.

This protocol must be read in conjunction with the most recent revised *Standard Operating Procedure for the containment and management of COVID-19 for schools and school communities*, issued by the Department of Basic Education. It is also assumed that in cases where the school is being used as an examination centre, the *Standard Operating Procedure for the containment and management of COVID-19 for schools and school communities* is being followed and therefore the contents of this protocol will emphasise certain requirements and also indicate the additional requirements that must be adhered to. In cases where an examination centre is not an existing operational school, it is incumbent on the chief invigilator at such a centre to ensure that the *Standard Operating Procedure for the containment and management of COVID-19 for schools and school communities* is strictly followed.

This protocol on the writing of the 2020 November examinations does not replace the *Regulations Pertaining to the Conduct, Administration and Management of the National Senior Certificate Examinations*, which is the primary legislation governing the management and administration of the NSC examinations.

## 2. Purpose

The purpose of this protocol is to ensure the safety of both candidates and officials from contracting the COVID-19 virus, and to encourage hygienically approved practices that would minimize the rate of infection during the writing of examinations. The need to maintain social distancing, to sanitize hands and to wear personal protective equipment, such as face masks, as a strategy instituted by the World Health Organization (WHO) to combat the spread of COVID-19 has a direct impact on the processes to be followed during the writing of examinations. This protocol aims at providing standardised procedures that are to be implemented as precautionary measures at all examination centres when managing the following processes relating to the writing of examinations:

- (a) Preparation of the examination centre
- (b) Preparation of the examination room
- (c) Admitting candidates into the examination room
- (d) Invigilation of the writing of the examinations
- (e) Handling of irregularities associated with the writing
- (f) Monitoring of the writing
- (g) Management of COVID-19 cases
- (h) Management of scribes and readers

### 3. Guiding Principles

The following set of guiding principles served as the basis for the development of this examination protocol and must guide the implementation of this examination protocol:

- (a) Maintaining the safety and well-being of learners, officials and educators is priority and this will guide all decisions and actions to be taken in the management of the examinations.
- (b) A nationally coordinated approach will be implemented in the management of the safety and protection of learners, officials and educators. Given the diversity of the South African environment and varying contextual factors, the DBE will provide the national directives, which must be adhered to in all examination centres.
- (c) This examination protocol must be implemented in conjunction with the rules and regulations pertaining to examinations.
- (d) The COVID-19 health and safety protocols will serve as the basis of this protocol developed for the management of examinations.
- (e) In the implementation of this protocol, fairness and equity must be observed, particularly with regard to the most vulnerable learners.
- (f) Any action that would compromise the integrity and credibility of the examinations must be avoided.
- (g) This protocol relating to examinations is aligned to the protocol followed by the school during the normal teaching and learning and it will include additional measures where necessary, given the specific requirements of public examinations.

### 4. Basic Safety and Health Requirements to be observed across all Examination Centres

The following are the basic health and safety requirements that must be observed at all examination centres and these cannot be compromised irrespective of the circumstances:

- 4.1 All candidates and invigilators must wear a face mask at all times. A face shield may be worn together with a face mask, but never on its own.
- 4.2 All examination rooms must be fully ventilated. All windows should be open.
- 4.3 All candidates and invigilators are to observe the one metre (1 m) social distancing protocol.
- 4.4 School halls are not limited to 50 candidates during the writing, provided that they adhere to the 1 m social distancing protocol and the number of invigilators complies with the 1:30 ratio.
- 4.5 All candidates and invigilators are expected to sanitize their hands at the entrance of each examination room, as well as before and after handling examination material. Sufficient quantities of hand sanitizers with at least a 70% alcohol base should be provided.
- 4.6 The wearing of surgical gloves by either invigilators or candidates is **NOT** recommended.
- 4.7 All officials and candidates arriving at an examination centre must be screened.
- 4.8 The screening of candidates must be completed 30 minutes before the commencement of the examination session.
- 4.9 Each examination centre should keep a register of candidates with co-morbidities.

## 5. Preparation of the Examination Centre

- 5.1 A COVID-19 screening team must be established for each examination centre.
- 5.2 A dedicated SMT member or a senior teacher, or an invigilator in the case of designated centres, must lead the screening team.
- 5.3 All the invigilators, candidates, monitors and any other examination official entering the examination centre must be screened before entering the examination centre (preferably at the main gate).
- 5.4 The screening team must ensure that invigilators, candidates and monitors complete the health-profile form (**Annexure A**) on entry to the examination centre, and this must be done on a daily basis.
- 5.5 An adequate number of examination rooms must be identified for candidate accommodation. The number of examination rooms at an examination venue must be based on the highest number of candidates sitting for the examinations at that venue and must be based on the COVID-19 protocol on social distancing. In addition to the examination room(s), an isolation room must be identified, preferably some distance away from the examination rooms.
- 5.6 Sufficient and appropriate furniture must be made available to accommodate the highest number of candidates writing at that venue.
- 5.7 The Grade 12 examination rooms must be cordoned off from the rest of the classrooms that may be used by the internal classes. (Schools may use demarcation tape to cordon off the examination rooms.)
- 5.8 The number of invigilators to be used, including the relief invigilators, must correlate with the number of examination rooms to be used per examination session.
- 5.9 A reserve list of invigilators must be available, to accommodate an invigilator that has to be isolated due to displaying COVID-19 related symptoms or testing positive.
- 5.10 Cleaning and disinfection of the identified examination rooms/halls must be done when the examination rooms/halls are being prepared for the examinations and before every examination session. Examination rooms/halls must be locked to avoid any unauthorised entry prior to examinations/sessions. Cleaning and disinfection can be carried out by suitably trained cleaning staff.
- 5.11 Decontamination is only required post the identification of a COVID-19 infection in that room.
- 5.12 It is imperative to remember that **all** ablution facilities are cleaned daily and that they are well equipped with consumables, such as soap, water, paper towels, etc.
- 5.13 An alternative venue close to the examination centre must be identified for writing purposes, just in case the examination centre has to be closed due to COVID-19 cases being identified at the centre.

## 6. Training of Invigilators

- 6.1 All invigilators must receive COVID-19 training as outlined in the revised DBE Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) and this protocol.

- 6.2 Additional invigilators may be required if additional examination rooms are to be used and therefore these additional invigilators must be trained on the current protocols.
- 6.3 Inform invigilators that face masks and face coverings may be used to conceal unauthorized materials, such as notes or communication devices. Invigilators must monitor candidate behaviour closely during the examination. They should be alert to any activity suggesting that a candidate has concealed unauthorized materials in their face covering.

## **7. Preparation of the Examination Room**

- 7.1 Disinfect and sanitize all surfaces, in all examination rooms daily, **before** each session.
- 7.2 Physical distancing of the candidates' furniture should be maintained at 1 metre (1 m).
- 7.3 Ensure adequate ventilation and lighting in the examination room.
- 7.4 Have compliant hand sanitizers at the entrance of each examination room.
- 7.5 A reserve supply of masks must be kept in the examination room, should candidates arrive without masks.
- 7.6 Adequate COVID-19 signage must be displayed in every examination room.
- 7.7 Strictly adhere to a ratio of one (1) invigilator to 30 candidates when a normal classroom is used as an examination room.
- 7.8 In the case of a hall being used as an examination venue, divide the space in accordance with the 1 m social distancing requirement and accommodate candidates accordingly. Remember that the number of candidates should not be more than 30 per invigilator.
- 7.9 Invigilators and candidates must always wear face masks.

## **8. Admitting Candidates into the Examination Room**

- 8.1 Candidates must arrive at the examination centre at least one and a half hour before the start of the examination to allow for the screening processes, and candidates must be seated in the examination room at least 30 minutes prior to the commencement of the examination.
- 8.2 Candidates must sanitize their hands before admission into the examination room.
- 8.3 Face masks are to be worn at all times by all persons entering the examination room.
- 8.4 The seating plans must adhere to the 1 m social distancing protocol.
- 8.5 Avoid congestion at the venue entrance and exit by allowing a few candidates to enter at regular intervals, while maintaining social distancing. Where feasible, the arrival times of candidates should be staggered to prevent large numbers accumulating outside the venue. Place markers on the ground or barriers outside the examination venue to ensure the 1 metre social distancing and also place markers on the ground at the entrance to the examination room.
- 8.6 Implement a one-way system for walking within the examination room.

- 8.7 Allow candidates whose examination desks are furthest away from the entrance to enter the examination room first.
- 8.8 Candidates must enter the examination room one at a time at a distance of 1 m from each other and candidates must immediately move to their designated seats.
- 8.9 If more than one examination subject is written simultaneously in the same venue, candidates can be separated in the venue by subject cohort. This is to facilitate contact tracing if necessary.
- 8.10 The social distancing protocol must be maintained at all times, including when candidates present their identity documents (IDs) and admission letters before entering the examination room.
- 8.11 Candidates should be allowed to bring their own sanitizers into the examination room. The sanitizer bottles should not have any labels or have anything written on it and must always be visible to the invigilators. These must be placed either on the desk or on the floor.
- 8.12 Should a candidate refuse to be screened, he/she will not be allowed entry into the examination centre.
- 8.13 Candidates will be requested to remove their face masks for identification purposes before being admitted into the examination room.

## **9. Candidates presenting a temperature above 38°C or other COVID-19 related symptoms**

- 9.1 A candidate who presents with COVID-19 symptoms, including a temperature reading of more than 38 °C, will not be allowed to proceed to the examination room.
- 9.2 Make sure that the thermometer is in good working order. The temperature should be checked with another functional thermometer. It is advisable to have at least two functional thermometers at each screening point.
- 9.3 Candidates whose temperature is higher than the acceptable level (above 38 °C) will be isolated and re-screened every ten minutes for thirty minutes. Such candidates will only be allowed into an examination room if their temperature decreases to the acceptable level (below 38 °C) **and** he/she has answered “no” to the other six questions on the screening form, **within the first hour** of the examination session. The candidate is allowed entry into the examination room and must be compensated for the lost time.
- 9.4 A candidate whose temperature is consistently above 38 °C after the regular 10-minute checks in the first 30 minutes and/or answers “yes” to two or more of the questions on the screening questionnaire, will be taken to the isolation room at the centre for the candidate to sit for the examination. The examination may be conducted in the isolation room for candidates that present a temperature above 38 °C and deemed able to sit for the examination. The isolation area may also be an open well-defined and visible space such as a veranda, corridor/passage, provided it is isolated and has no access to other persons.
- 9.5 The parent(s)/guardian(s) should be informed immediately that his/her son/daughter/ward has presented a temperature of above 38 °C and/or answered “yes” to two or more of the questions on the screening questionnaire and therefore will be writing the examination in an isolation room. The parent/guardian must also be directed to seek medical assistance from health practitioners (local health facility or private practitioner), which should be done after the examination session.

- 9.6 Adherence to social distancing and other standard precautions will be of utmost importance in the isolation room/area. Normal invigilation rules will apply in the isolation room and the social distancing can be extended beyond the 1 metre in the isolation room, depending on the number of candidates present.
- 9.7 Invigilators need to be reassured that provided the social distancing rule, the wearing of a face mask and hand sanitization are strictly observed, their personal safety is not at risk. Invigilators could be provided with face shields in addition to the masks, where possible. However, invigilators cannot be compelled to invigilate in an isolation venue.
- 9.8 These candidates must not socialize or have contact with other candidates before or after the examination. They should remain in the isolation room/area until other candidates have dispersed, and should ideally be accompanied home or other arrangements be made to ensure that no contact with other candidates occurs. Testing for COVID-19 is also recommended, and will be determined by the treating health practitioner.

#### **10. Candidates that have tested positive for COVID-19, prior to the examination session**

- 10.1. Learners that have tested positive for COVID-19, will be allowed to write the examination, provided they are deemed fit, to write the examination. This determination must be made by the parent/guardian and the learner.
- 10.2. The parent, care-giver or designated family member, of candidates that have tested positive for COVID-19 are obliged to inform the school principal immediately of the positive status of the candidate, so that arrangements can be made for the candidate to write the examination at an isolation venue that complies with the health and safety and also the examination regulations relating to a secure examination. An early notification to the school will allow for the necessary preparations to be done in advance and will also allow for the candidate to be informed well in advance of the arrangement. Parents that inform the school on the morning of the examination cannot be guaranteed that the candidate will be able to write the examination as scheduled.
- 10.3. As soon as the notification is received of a candidate that is tested positive, an urgent meeting should be convened between the parent, the school principal, an examination official, a governing body representative and where possible a health official, and the most suitable arrangement for the writing of the examination for this candidate must be finalized. The parent must take responsibility for the transportation of the candidate to the isolation venue and the school and the Departments of Health and Education will take responsibility for the isolation venue.
- 10.4. The Provincial Education Department (PED) must liaise with the Provincial Department of Health and establish isolation venues at selected centres in the province. An isolation venue could be:
  - (a) A quarantine or isolation centre established by the DoH for the purpose of keeping persons in quarantine or those that have tested positive for COVID-19, in isolation.
  - (b) A venue identified by the DoH in conjunction with the PED, that will serve as an isolation venue for the purpose of writing the 2020 Combined November examination. This could be a clinic, a room in a hospital, a community hall, a church hall or any other venue, which does not exclude the home, that is conducive to the writing of an examination.

- 10.5. The invigilation at the isolation venue will be carried out by an educator, examination official, a private invigilator or, by agreement, a health official. In utilising the services of either of these persons to serve as an invigilator, the following must be complied with:
- (a) The individual must be fully briefed of the task to be carried out.
  - (b) The written consent of the individual must be obtained.
  - (c) The individual must be trained to carry out the important task of invigilation.
- Educators must undertake the responsibility of invigilation on a voluntary basis and cannot be compelled to do so.
- 10.6. In liaison with the DoH, the PED will also finalise the use of health officials as invigilators and where this is possible, the health officials must be trained by the PED on how the invigilation process is conducted. Private invigilators may also be used at the Isolation venue but it is essential that they be informed of the details of the invigilation task and are duly trained. The private invigilator must also agree in writing to undertaking this task.
- 10.7. The PED must have a pool of private invigilators available that are on standby in the different areas to conduct invigilation at short notice.
- 10.8. It needs to be noted that there will be strict compliance with the requirements of social distancing, the wearing of a face mask and hand sanitising, at the isolation venue. The social distancing at an isolation venue can be extended beyond the 1.5 metre requirement to at least 2 metres, given the limited number of candidates that may be located at an isolation venue at any given time. If the above three cardinal rules are strictly observed, the health experts confirm that the risk of contracting the virus are virtually non-existent.
- 10.9. Where personal protective equipment (PPE), is available which includes the body suit, this can be used, but the health experts confirm that this is not necessary given that the transmission of the virus is through the mucosa which is located in the mouth, nose, throat and eyes, and not through the skin.
- 10.10. Invigilation can be conducted by locating the candidate/s at a distance away from the invigilator depending on the space available and the invigilator does not have to approach the candidate, if he has a clear view of the candidate from the position he/she is located.
- 10.11. A candidate who has been in close contact with a person that has tested positive for COVID-19, as per the NICD and DOH guidelines as well as the DBE SOP, must be in quarantine for ten days, if not tested; hence such a candidate must be managed as if, he/she has tested positive, which implies that the examination will be conducted at an isolation venue, outside the allocated examination venue.
- 10.12. It is recommended that candidates that are in close contact with a person that has tested positive for COVID-19 be tested. If, based on the advice of a health professional, they are not tested, a 10 day quarantine period from last contact with the positive case must be observed (10.11 above), after which they are regarded as non-infectious and must be allowed to write the examination at the regular allocated examination venue.
- 10.13. The question paper will be brought to the isolation venue, at the beginning of an examination session, by an examination official who will then hand over the sealed satchel to the invigilator at the isolation venue. The examination official must remain at the isolation venue for the duration of the examination session and collect the script which will be placed in two security bags.

- 10.14. The script of a positive candidate must be inserted by the candidate, in the presence of the invigilator, into the plastic security bag and sealed by the candidate. The security bag is then sanitized by the candidate and dropped into a box made available for this purpose. The security bag is then placed into a second security bag and transferred to the examination official who will be at the isolation venue to exercise oversight over the process, but will not be involved in the invigilation process.
- 10.15. The Health experts have confirmed that the virus only remains viable on paper for a period not exceeding 2.5 hours and given that marking of the script only take place in January 2021, almost a three weeks from the date of the last examination, it is not necessary to identify the script as that of a candidate that is COVID-19 positive, since the script poses no risk to the marker.

## **11. Invigilation**

- 11.1 All invigilators are to sanitize their hands prior to and after handling question paper packs and individual question papers.
- 11.2 An invigilator must ensure that he/she personally distributes question papers to candidates, and not request candidates to pass question papers from one to another.
- 11.3 Candidates must report to the invigilator if he/she feels ill during the examination session.
- 11.4 Invigilators must also report to the chief invigilator if they are not feeling well.
- 11.5 Candidates and all staff must report to the chief invigilator immediately, if they become ill to facilitate contact-tracing if necessary.
- 11.6 There is to be NO sharing of writing materials/instruments among candidates.
- 11.7 Should a candidate require a bathroom break, she/he must be accompanied by a same-gender invigilator. On their return from the bathroom, both the candidate and the invigilator must sanitize their hands.
- 11.8 Invigilators must check that candidates are not carrying crib notes in/on their face masks.
- 11.9 Disposable cups must be provided for candidates who may need to drink water during writing.
- 11.10 A candidate may be allowed to bring along his/her own water bottle, provided it has no labels and no writing, and is visible to the invigilators and monitors. In such a case, the water bottles must be placed on the floor.
- 11.11 Invigilators are to remind candidates that if they leave anything behind after the examination (such as a pencil case), these items may be thrown away or destroyed for hygiene reasons.

## **12. The Handling of Irregularities**

- 12.1 *A candidate found with crib notes/unauthorised material:* The invigilator must confiscate the crib notes/unauthorised material. The invigilator must sanitize his/her hands before and after handling the crib notes/unauthorised material. The crib notes/unauthorised material must be attached to the answer script, if possible. A copy must be safely retained as evidence. Exercise caution and refrain from spraying sanitizer on notes/answer scripts, to avoid tampering with evidence.

12.2 *A candidate found with a cellular phone during writing:* The invigilator must confiscate the cellular phone. The cellular phone must be sanitized by the candidate before it is handled by the invigilator and retained in a plastic bag/envelope for safekeeping as evidence. The invigilator must sanitize his/her hands before and after handling the cellular phone.

### **13. Monitoring**

13.1 Monitors should arrive at least **an hour** before the start of the examination.

13.2 All monitors are to be screened before entering an examination centre. No monitor will be allowed into the examination centre without being screened. Should a monitor refuse to be screened, he/she will not be allowed access into the examination centre.

13.3 The screening of the monitors is additional to providing answers to the seven COVID-19 protocol questions. Should a monitor answer “yes” to any one or more of the seven questions, the monitor will not be allowed to fulfil his/her duty at the examination centre.

13.4 Monitors whose temperatures are high (above 38 °C) will be isolated and re-screened every ten minutes. Should the temperature test normal (below 38 °C) on re-screening **and** the monitor’s responses to the COVID-19 protocol questions are fine, the monitor will then be allowed access into the examination centre. If the temperature of the monitor does not return to normal, the monitor should not be allowed into the examination centre.

13.5 All monitors are to sanitize their hands before entering an examination room and during the execution of their duties in an examination room, e.g. when checking the IDs and admission letters of candidates.

13.6 Monitors without face masks will not be granted access into an examination room.

13.7 All monitors must adhere to the social distancing protocol of 1 m during monitoring.

13.8 Monitoring instruments are to be completed electronically, where possible, and e-mailed to the responsible PED official.

13.9 Monitors are permitted to bring their own sanitizers into an examination room.

### **14. Management of COVID-19 Cases**

14.1 Only the head of department (HOD) or the delegated official (e.g. District Director), on the advice of the Department of Health, can authorize the closure of a classroom/examination room or section of a school.

14.2 The district office should ensure that the examination centre where confirmed case(s) of COVID-19 infections were identified is supported and assisted in conducting the decontamination of the specific examination room(s) or section of the school overnight or as soon as practically possible to ensure that the conduct of the examination is not negatively impacted.

14.3 Candidates who have tested positive and decide not to write the examinations due to their adverse symptoms, will be marked absent and must be allowed to write the May/June 2021 examinations.

- 14.4 It will not be necessary for a candidate who has tested positive for COVID-19 to conduct a second test to produce a negative result. If they have completed the 10 days of isolation and are without symptoms, they must be allowed to write the examination in the normal examination room. However, the parent/guardian must provide a written undertaking/endorsement that the candidate was subjected to ten days in isolation indicating the commencement date which is based on the start of the symptoms, if symptomatic, or from the date of the test, if asymptomatic, or ten days from clinical stability (end of oxygen treatment) if hospitalised.
- 14.5 If a candidate or staff member notifies the examination centre that they became ill within 48 hours after the examination with suspected or confirmed COVID-19, the designated COVID-19-point person/compliance officer should ensure that the register is sourced from the administrator. Evaluation of the contact risk to all candidates sharing the examination room must be conducted. Attention must be given to those who sat in direct proximity to the individual. The decision as to who is a close contact should be made using the definition herein, and in consultation with local health officials and appropriate contact-tracing actions should be taken.

## **15. Management of Accommodation Providers**

- 15.1 Accommodation providers (e.g. scribes and readers) should be appointed centrally by the provincial office and deployed to specific centres by request.
- 15.2 The examination room where the services of a scribe or reader are needed must be cleaned and surfaces should be sanitized before every sitting in the same way as the other examination rooms.
- 15.3 All scribes and readers should always wear clear face shields and face masks.
- 15.4 No scribe or reader should be allowed into the examination centre without a face mask and a face shield.
- 15.5 All scribes and readers are to be screened before entering an examination room. No scribe/reader will be allowed into the examination room without being screened. Should a scribe/reader refuse to be screened, he/she will not be allowed access into the examination room.
- 15.6 The screening of the scribes/readers is additional to providing answers to the seven COVID-19 protocol questions. Should a scribe/monitor answer “yes” to any one or more of the seven COVID-19 protocol questions, the scribe/reader will not be allowed access into the examination room.
- 15.7 Scribes/Readers whose temperatures are high (above 38 °C) will be isolated and rescreened every ten minutes for thirty minutes, ideally with another thermometer. Should the temperature test normal (below 38 °C) on re-screening **and** the scribe’s/reader’s respond with a “No” to the COVID-19 protocol questions, the scribe/reader will then be allowed access into the examination room.
- 15.8 The chief invigilator should ensure that there is an invigilator at each of the examination rooms where either the scribe or reader has been assigned to provide their services to the candidates. The invigilator must comply with all the protocols as outlined in paragraph 8.

## **16. Conclusion**

This protocol on the writing of the examination amid the COVID-19 pandemic is not a replacement of the policy document and regulations pertaining to the conduct, administration and management of the National Senior Certificate (NSC) examinations. These protocols deal specifically with the challenges raised by the COVID-19 environment. Thus, the standard requirements as per the regulations pertaining to the conduct, administration and management of the National Senior Certificate examinations still apply, except for those clauses directly affected by the need to comply with international COVID-19 protocols. Examination officials and other members of staff involved in the administration of examinations should ensure that procedures as contained in this protocol are adhered to during the writing of examinations in an attempt to minimize the proliferation of COVID-19 infections.

## ANNEXURE A



Basic Education  
Health  
Social Development

**COVID-19**  
Online Resource & News Portal  
[SAcoronavirus.co.za](http://SAcoronavirus.co.za)



health  
Department:  
Health  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA



Checklist for Screening	Yes/No
Record temperature using infrared thermometer	
<b>Screening questions</b>	
Do you have a high temperature?	
Do you have a cough?	
Do you have a sore throat?	
Do you have difficulty breathing (shortness of breath)?	
Can you taste food and drinks normally?	
Can you smell normally?	
Have you had close contact with someone suspected to have COVID-19 or has been diagnosed positively with COVID-19?	