

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

WRITTEN REPLY

QUESTION 922.

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922. Ms M E Sukers (ACDP) to ask the Minister of Basic Education: to ask the Minister of Basic Education:

- (1) In terms of what statutory power(s) does she issue the *Standard Operating Procedure for the Containment and Management of COVID-19 in Schools and School Communities* (SOP);
- (2) what is the rationale for the SOP, given the context of the (a) low mortality rate caused by newer variants of the virus, such as Omicron, (b) high levels of immunity created by a combination of natural immunity and the national vaccination programme and (c) indication by the President of the Republic, Mr M C Ramaphosa, that the Republic is to exit the national state of disaster very soon;
- (3) how does clause 12.3 of the SOP regarding the prohibition of religious services serve to achieve the stated purpose of minimising the contamination of school facilities and observing the social gathering restrictions, given that (a) up to 1 000 indoor and 2 000 outdoor spectators are allowed at schools for various activities and (b) religious services are allowed, subject to strict sanitisation and social distancing protocols as per the [Regulations](#) and [ministerial directive](#);
- (4) (a) by what date is it envisaged that the SOPs will allow for religious services and (b) if no such point is anticipated, what is the reason for this?

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Response

The question has been addressed by the Revised Directions published in the gazette on 4 April 2022.