

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

WRITTEN REPLY

QUESTION 280.

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280. Dr S S Thembekwayo (EFF) to ask the Minister of Basic Education: to ask the Minister of Basic Education:

Whether she has been informed of the recent bullying incidents in schools such as Leiden High School in Delft, and other various schools in the City of Cape Town; if not, what is the position in this regard; if so, what national strategy has she put in place to curtail the specified problems?

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Response

The Minister of Basic Education had not formally been informed of the bullying incident that took place at Leiden High School in Delft on 31 January 2025. However, the Minister strongly condemns such incidents and remains committed to advocating for safe and inclusive school environments.

The Western Cape Education Department (WCED) has reported that racial tension at the school was the root cause of the incident. Additionally, the parent of the affected learner has requested a transfer to another school.

To address the situation, the WCED has indicated that the following measures are being implemented:

- A meeting with the Disciplinary Committee had been scheduled for 18 February 2025 to address the incident;
- The Circuit Manager (CM) will visit the affected family to confirm their preferred school for the learner's transfer;
- The CM will engage with the school staff and principal to ensure the incident is properly managed and that a supportive learning environment is maintained;
- The CM will keep the District Director informed of any developments related to the case; and
- A strategy is being developed to prevent further racial tensions and potential protests.

The National School Safety Framework (NSSF) serves as the Department of Basic Education's key strategy in addressing school violence, including bullying. The NSSF:

- Provides guidelines for schools to identify and manage safety threats;
- Requires schools to establish School Safety Committees, which include teachers, police officers, and School Governing Body members;
- Encourages incident reporting mechanisms to ensure swift responses to bullying and other safety issues;
- Promotes collaboration with external stakeholders, such as the South African Police Service (SAPS), the Department of Social Development and civil society organisations; and

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- Guides schools in developing school safety policies tailored to their specific challenges.

To strengthen school safety, the DBE together with its partner, the Wits Reproductive Health and HIV Institute, developed a digital NSSF training course for school communities. This course, accredited by the South African Council of Educators (SACE), enables educators to receive 15 Professional Development Points (PDPs) upon successful completion.

Additionally, the DBE has developed the Addressing Bullying in Schools Manual, which assists schools in identifying various forms of bullying and implementing effective anti-bullying policies. The manual is currently being updated and will be released by June 2025 to further strengthen efforts in combating bullying.

The DBE remains committed to ensuring the safety and well-being of all learners and will continue to work closely with provincial authorities to uphold safe and inclusive school environments.