

**NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

**ORAL REPLY**

**QUESTION 105.**

**DATE OF PUBLICATION OF INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER: 27/08/2024**

**INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER: 06/2024/7**

**105. Ms N R Mashabela (EFF) to ask the Minister of Basic Education: to ask the Minister of Basic Education:**

What are the relevant details of interventions her department made to fully subsidise school uniforms for all learners in no fee schools?

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#### **QUESTION 105.**

##### **Response**

Unfortunately, within our highly pressured fiscal environment, the Department does not presently subsidise school uniforms for schools.

The management of school uniform policy and assistance to struggling parents remains in the hands of School Governing Bodies.

However, the Department is not blind to the challenges faced by struggling parents regarding the high prices of school uniforms. As early as 2020, both the Department and the Competition Commission recognised the concerning practice by many schools of signing exclusive supply agreements with specific pre-selected suppliers of school uniforms.

These agreements are entered into without transparent, competitive bidding processes and remain in force for 10 to 50 years. These long and exclusive agreements substantially prevent and lessen competition, and parents are forced to bear the brunt and pay higher prices.

The Department has released a circular which requires SGBs to adhere to several guidelines to avoid contravening existing legislation. SGBs should –

- Ensure that school uniforms are as generic as possible so they may be obtained from many suppliers;
- Exclusivity should be limited to items that the school regards as necessary to justify obtaining from preselected suppliers;
- Schools must follow a competitive bidding process when appointing suppliers;
- Schools should appoint more than one supplier to give parents more options; and
- Agreements concluded with suppliers should run for only a limited duration.