

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

WRITTEN REPLY

QUESTION 1291.

DATE OF PUBLICATION OF INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER: 21/04/2023

INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER: 13/2023

1291. Ms P Marais (EFF) to ask the Minister of Basic Education: to ask the Minister of Basic Education:

Whether her department intends to establish a national policy on hair and appearance of learners at all schools to ensure their dignity and religious beliefs, in light of the intolerance amongst certain schools and their management and teaching staff who are now cutting the natural afro hair of male and female black children as has happened at the Endlozana Primary School in kwaNongoma, KwaZulu-Natal; if not, what is the policy position in this regard; if so, (a) by what date and (b) what steps will be taken against the principals and implicated teachers of such schools in the interim?

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

WRITTEN REPLY

QUESTION 1291.

Response

(a) No. The Department of Basic Education is not intending to develop policy on hair in respect of religious identities of learners. There is sufficient education policy frameworks to guide such matters. The challenge emanates from School Codes of Conduct that tend to require children to dress their hair in a particular fashion. Therefore, the Department is working with the South African Human Rights Commission (SAHRC), Equal Education Law Centre (EELC) and the Centre for Child Law to develop an human rights compliant exemplar code of conduct for schools in order to assist schools avoid human rights violations.

(b) Provincial Education Departments will be in a position to support principals and teachers regarding prevention and management of discrimination, prejudice and related intolerance in school management.