

**NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

**WRITTEN REPLY**

**QUESTION 1608.**

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**INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER: 16/2023**

**1608. Ms P Madokwe (EFF) to ask the Minister of Basic Education: to ask the Minister of Basic Education:**

What (a) is her department's position on schools which have grown intolerant of black learners, male and female, keeping their Afro hair to a point of even cutting learners' hair as it happened in the Endlozana Primary School, kwaNongoma, thus negatively affecting their dignity and their religious beliefs as they belong to the Nazareth Church and (b) consequences befall (i) principals of such schools and (ii) implicated teachers?

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##### **Response**

(a) The Department of Basic Education condemns schools which have grown intolerant of black learners, male and female, keeping their Afro hair to a point of even cutting learners' hair; as it happened in the Endlozana Primary School, kwaNongoma; thus negatively impugning on the learners' dignity and their religious beliefs; as they belong to the Nazareth Church. This practice is unconstitutional, intolerant and misaligned with the spirit of diversity and social inclusion in schools, expressed in the education policy frameworks to guide such matters.

Schools that are affected by this phenomenon often quote the School Codes of Conduct that tend to require children to dress their hair in a particular fashion. Many years ago, when this matter of hair arose for girls, the Sector resolved that School Codes of Conduct must be periodically reviewed for prejudice and discrimination; and immediately revised when findings of the review points out to existence of discrimination. Currently, 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 to avoid human rights violations of whatever nature.

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