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# **SOUTH AFRICAN SCHOOLS ACT 84 OF 1996**

## **REGULATIONS RELATING TO MINIMUM UNIFORM NORMS AND STANDARDS FOR PUBLIC SCHOOL INFRASTRUCTURE**

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I, Angelina Matsie Motshekga, Minister of Basic Education, acting under [section 5A\(1\)\(a\)](#) of the South African Schools Act, 1996, and after consultation with the Minister of Finance and the Council of Education Ministers, hereby prescribe the Regulations Relating to Minimum Uniform Norms and Standards for Public School Infrastructure set out in the Schedule.

**(Signed)**

**ANGELINA MATSIE MOTSHEKGA, MP**

**MINISTER OF BASIC EDUCATION**

**DATE: 26/11/2013**

## **SCHEDULE**

### **PREAMBLE**

WHEREAS, as a result of the painful legacy of apartheid, South Africa has suffered an uneven development with regard to the provisioning of basic school infrastructure to all public schools, and bearing in mind that social investment in education is a responsibility of the Government, and requires education to be central to Government policies as one of its key priorities;

AND WHEREAS the State continues to provide basic school infrastructure to all public schools, particularly those that were previously disadvantaged;

AND WHEREAS strides have been taken to provide relevant, effective, responsive, inclusive and sustainable teaching and learning school infrastructure to address the systematic inequalities experienced by all learners and, in particular, those learners with disabilities within and outside the special and mainstreamed school environment;

BE IT THEREFORE REGULATED by the Minister of Basic Education as follows-

### **1. Definitions**

In these regulations any word or expression to which a meaning has been assigned in the South African Schools Act, 1996 (Act No. 84 of 1996), has the meaning so assigned and, unless the context otherwise indicates -

**“administration areas”** means areas in a school, listed in the first column of Annexure C, that are used by the school management and staff for administration and management purposes and for the day to day running of a school;

**“Agrement South Africa”** means the body that operates under the delegation of authority of the Minister of Public Works (1969);

**“education support areas”** means areas in a school, listed in Annexure B, that are required to create a healthy, safe and conducive school environment and to support the teaching and learning functions at a school;

**“minimum education areas”** means the minimum teaching and learning areas in a school, listed in Annexure A, that are essential to carry out the teaching and learning functions at a school;

**“MTEF”** means the medium term expenditure framework containing the three-year spending plans of national and provincial governments, published at the time of the Budget;

**“National Building Regulations”** means the regulations issued in terms of [section 17](#) of the National Building Regulations and Building Standards Act, 1977 (Act No. 103 of 1977);

**“new schools”** means schools built after the date of publication of these regulations;

**“SANS 10-400”** means the South African National Standard with that number, issued by the South African Bureau of Standards in terms of the National Building Regulations;

**“school”** means a public school;

**“the Act”** means the South African Schools Act, 1996 (Act No. 84 of 1996); and

**“Universal Design”** means the design of products, environments, programmes and services to be usable by all people, to address the diversity of learners and teachers with functional limitations.

## 2. Objectives of regulations

The objectives of the regulations are-

- (a) to provide minimum uniform norms and standards for public school infrastructure;
- (b) to ensure that there is compliance with the minimum uniform norms and standards in the design and construction of new schools and additions, alterations and improvements to schools which exist when these regulations are published; and

- (c) to provide for timeframes within which school infrastructure backlogs must be eradicated.

### **3. Scope and application**

These regulations apply to all schools.

### **4. Implementation of regulations**

- (1) Notwithstanding the provisions of these regulations, the norms and standards contained in the regulations-
  - (a) must, subject to subregulation (5) and as far as reasonably practicable, be applied to all new schools and additions, alterations and improvements to schools, with the exception of schools contemplated in subregulation (2); and
  - (b) as far as schools are concerned which exist when these regulations are published, must, subject to subregulation (5), and as far as reasonably practicable-
    - (i) with reference to the norms and standards mentioned in subregulation (3)(a) and (b), be complied with within a period of three years from the date of publication of these regulations;
    - (ii) with reference to the norms and standards mentioned in subregulation (3)(c), be phased in over a period of seven years from the date of publication of these regulations;
    - (iii) with reference to the norms and standards mentioned in subregulation (3)(d), be phased in over a period of ten years from the date of publication of these regulations; and
    - (iv) with reference to all the other norms and standards contained in these regulations, be planned, prioritised and phased in before 31 December 2030.
- (2)
  - (a) New schools and additions, alterations and improvements to schools excluded from subregulation (1)(a) are those of which the planning and prioritisation within the current 2013-2014, 2014- 2015 and 2015-2016 MTEF cycle have already been completed.
  - (b) The plans and prioritisation of the schools contemplated in paragraph (a) must, where possible and reasonably practicable, be revised and brought in line with these regulations.
- (3) As far as schools contemplated in subregulation (1)(b) are concerned-

- (a) and for the purposes of subregulation 1(b)(i), all schools built entirely from mud as well as those schools built entirely from materials such as asbestos, metal and wood must be prioritised;
  - (b) and for the purposes of subregulation 1(b)(i), all those schools that do not have access to any form of power supply, water supply or sanitation must be prioritised;
  - (c) a Member of the Executive Council must, for the purposes of subregulation (1)(b)(ii), prioritise the norms and standards relating to the availability of classrooms, electricity, water, sanitation, electronic connectivity and perimeter security, and their plans contemplated in subregulation (6) must reflect such prioritisation; and
  - (d) a Member of the Executive Council must, for the purposes of subregulation (1)(b)(iii), specifically focus on the norms and standards relating to libraries and laboratories for science, technology and life sciences.
- (4) In implementing these regulations every reasonable possible avenue must be explored and alternatives considered to give effect to the norms and standards contained in these regulations.
- (5)
- (a) The implementation of the norms and standards contained in these regulations is, where applicable, subject to the resources and co-operation of other government agencies and entities responsible for infrastructure in general and the making available of such infrastructure.
  - (b) The Department of Basic Education must, as far as practicable, facilitate and co-ordinate the responsibilities of the government agencies and entities contemplated in paragraph (a).
- (6)
- (a) A Member of the Executive Council must, within a period of 12 months after the publication of the regulations and thereafter annually on a date and in the manner determined by the Minister, provide the Minister with detailed plans on the manner in which the norms and standards are to be implemented as far as schools referred to in subregulation (1) are concerned.
  - (b) The plans referred to in paragraph (a) are to make provision for, but not be limited to, the following:
    - (i) The backlogs at district level that each province experiences in terms of the norms and standards;
    - (ii) costed short, medium and long-term plans with targets;

- (iii) how new schools should be planned and maintained and how existing schools are to be upgraded and maintained; and
  - (iv) proposals in respect to procurement, implementation and monitoring.
- (7) In addition to the requirements contained in [section 58C](#) of the Act, a Member of the Executive Council must, in the manner determined by the Minister, report annually to the Minister on the implementation of the plans required in terms of subregulation (6).
- (8) Measures which are taken to comply with the norms and standards contained in these regulations must be funded through the relevant budgetary sources and processes for new facilities and the upgrading of existing facilities at schools.

## **5. Types of schools**

- (1) Schools are classified as primary or secondary schools.
- (2) Primary schools offer grades R to 7 or offer learning within that range.
- (3) Primary schools are further classified into-
  - (i) micro primary schools, with a capacity of less than 135 learners;
  - (ii) small primary schools, with a minimum capacity of 135 learners;
  - (iii) medium primary schools, with a minimum capacity of 311 learners;
  - (iv) large primary schools, with a minimum capacity of 621 learners; and
  - (v) mega primary schools with a capacity in excess of 931 learners.
- (4) Secondary schools offer grades 8 to 12 or offer learning within that range.
- (5) Secondary schools are further classified into-
  - (i) small secondary schools, with a minimum capacity of 200 learners;
  - (ii) medium secondary schools, with a minimum capacity of 401 learners;
  - (iii) large secondary schools, with a minimum capacity of 601 learners; and
  - (iv) mega secondary schools, with a capacity in excess of 1001 learners.
- (6) A Member of the Executive Council may, based on valid reasons, approve the establishment or retention of a school below the minimum capacity as contemplated in subregulations (3) and (5), subject to the availability of infrastructure and the norms and standards contained in these regulations.

- (7) Notwithstanding subregulations (3) and (5), a Member of the Executive Council may, based on valid reasons, approve the establishment or retention of a combined school where it is not practicable to have a separate primary and secondary school, on such conditions as the Member of the Executive Council may determine and for a fixed period which may from time to time be extended.

## **6. Universal access**

- (1) All schools must adhere to the requirements and principles of Universal Design. This will apply to all buildings, access ways, indoor and outdoor facilities as well as signage, communication and other services in new schools and to additions, alterations and improvements to existing schools.
- (2) In addition to the requirements contained in subregulation (1), schools for learners with special education needs must comply with the requirements related to the nature of the specialised support programme offered at the school, and the level of support required at that particular school.
- (3)
- (a) Schools for learners with special education needs must be fully accessible, and such access includes ramps, handrails and space for manoeuvrability for all learners and educators.
  - (b) For the purposes of paragraph (a) minimum Universal Design requirements must include, but not be limited to, the following:
    - (i) Clear floor area in passages, walkways and points of ingress for people using wheelchairs and other mobility devices and aids;
    - (ii) parking for persons with disabilities to be located as close as possible to entrance areas;
    - (iii) ramps and handrails with regulated gradients, heights and spacing;
    - (iv) toilets for the disabled must meet the requirements of the National Building Regulations;
    - (v) all schools must be provided with adequate notice boards which are accessible for all users in the school building and which contain signage that is visible and legible;
    - (vi) tactile signage should be provided for learners and educators with impaired vision;
    - (vii) visual aids should be provided for communication with learners and educators who are deaf or hearing impaired; and

- (viii) all other aspects of Universal Design must be compliant with the relevant requirements of the National Building Regulations and SANS 10-400.

## **7. Site and identification of school**

- (1) The following principles apply in respect of the geographic location of a new school:
  - (a) The location of the school should ensure easy accessibility to roads, sewage lines and other basic services; and
  - (b) where practicable, a school may not be located close to, or adjacent to-
    - (i) cemeteries;
    - (ii) business centres;
    - (iii) railway stations;
    - (iv) taxi ranks;
    - (v) sewage treatment plants;
    - (vi) public hostels;
    - (vii) busy roads, unless adequate preventative measures have been taken to ensure the safety of the learners; and
    - (viii) bottle stores and shebeens.
- (2) The siting of new schools should, as far as possible, recognise the need for appropriate topography and location related to access and demographic realities.
- (3) A school site must contain a name board which is clearly visible to the public, indicating-
  - (a) the name of the school;
  - (b) the contact details of the school; and
  - (c) the GPS coordinates and the National Education Management and Information System (EMIS) number of the school.

## **8. Categories of key school areas and their sizes**

- (1) An enabling teaching and learning environment in a school consists of-
  - (a) minimum education areas;

- (b) education support areas; and
  - (c) administration areas.
- (2) Subject to regulation 4 and to subregulation (3), and having regard to the curriculum of a school, the size norms for areas referred to in subregulation (1) required by a school, must be determined in accordance with Annexures A, B and C.
- (3) As far as schools referred to in regulation 4(1)(b) are concerned, the size norms contained in Annexures A, B and C will serve as a guideline.
- (4) As part of planning for schools contemplated in regulation 4(1)(a), Annexures D, E and F provide for a minimum package of education areas for each classification of a school contemplated in regulation 5.

## **9. Classrooms**

- (1) The minimum space in a school allocated for each learner and educator must be as follows:
- (a) Grade R-
    - (i) learner: 1.6m<sup>2</sup>; and
    - (ii) educator: 7m<sup>2</sup>;
  - (b) Grades 1-12-
    - (i) learner: 1 m<sup>2</sup>; and
    - (ii) educator: 7m<sup>2</sup>; and
  - (c) learners with disabilities: 2.m<sup>2</sup>.
- (2) The following are acceptable norms for class size:
- (a) Grade R: A maximum of 30 learners; and
  - (b) for all other classes: A maximum of 40 learners.

## **10. Electricity**

- (1) All schools must have some form of power supply which complies with all relevant laws.



- (2) The choice of an appropriate power supply must be sufficient to serve the power requirements of each particular school and must be based on the most appropriate source of power supply available for that particular school.
- (3) Forms of power supply could include one or more of the following:
  - (a) Grid electrical reticulation;
  - (b) generators;
  - (c) solar powered energy; or
  - (d) wind powered energy sources.

## **11. Water**

- (1) All schools must have a sufficient water supply which complies with all relevant laws and which is available at all times for drinking, personal hygiene and, where appropriate, for food preparation.
- (2) Sufficient water-collection points and water-use facilities must be available at all schools to allow convenient access to, and use of, water for drinking, personal hygiene and, where appropriate, for food preparation.
- (3) The choice of an appropriate water technology must be based on an assessment conducted on the most suitable water supply technology for each particular school and must be maintained in good working order.
- (4) Sources of water supply could include one or more of the following:
  - (a) A municipal reticulation network;
  - (b) rain water harvesting and, when so required, tanker supply from municipalities;
  - (c) mobile tankers;
  - (d) boreholes and, when so required, tanker supply from municipalities; or
  - (e) local reservoirs and dams.

## **12. Sanitation**

- (1) All schools must have a sufficient number of sanitation facilities, as contained in Annexure G, that are easily accessible to all learners and educators, provide privacy and security, promote health and hygiene standards, comply with all relevant laws and are maintained in good working order.

- (2) The choice of an appropriate sanitation technology must be based on an assessment conducted on the most suitable sanitation technology for each particular school.
- (3) Sanitation facilities could include one or more of the following:
  - (a) Water borne sanitation;
  - (b) small bore sewer reticulation;
  - (c) septic or conservancy tank systems;
  - (d) ventilated improved pit latrines; or
  - (e) composting toilets.
- (4) Plain pit and bucket latrines are not allowed at schools.

### **13. Library**

- (1) All schools must have a school library or a media centre and a minimum, adequate and suitable school library collection.
- (2) The core school library collection must be regularly replenished according to the requirements of a particular school and administered using one or more of the following:
  - (a) A mobile library;
  - (b) a cluster library;
  - (c) a classroom library;
  - (d) a centralised school library; or
  - (e) a school community library.

### **14. Laboratories for science, technology and life sciences**

- (1) All schools that offer science subjects must have a laboratory and the necessary apparatus and consumables in accordance with the specific curriculum needs of a particular school to make it possible to conduct experiments and scientific investigations.
- (2) The apparatus and consumables contemplated in subregulation (1) may be housed in a laboratory, a mobile laboratory, a classroom or a safe container, as determined by the school.

- (3) The apparatus and consumables contemplated in subregulation (1) must be stored in a lockable facility in accordance with safety standards provided for in all relevant laws.
- (4) A laboratory for science, technology and life sciences may, where practicable, be combined in one room.
- (5) A laboratory must be maintained in good working order.

**15. Sport and recreation facilities**

- (1) All schools must have areas where physical education, sporting and recreational activities can be practised.
- (2) The areas that are provided by a particular school for sporting and recreational activities will depend on the type of sporting and recreational activities undertaken by that school.
- (3) Despite the provisions of this regulation, a school may make use of the sporting and recreational facilities of another school or of a local community, in consultation with that other school or with the responsible officials of the community concerned, if it is not possible for the first mentioned school to provide such facilities.

**16. Electronic connectivity at a school**

- (1) All schools must have some form of wired or wireless connectivity for purposes of communication, which must be maintained in good working order.
- (2) The following communication facilities must be provided:
  - (a) Telephone facilities;
  - (b) fax facilities;
  - (c) Internet facilities; and
  - (d) an intercom or public address system.

**17. Perimeter security and school safety**

- (1) Every school site, which includes all school outbuildings and sporting and recreational facilities, must be surrounded by appropriate fencing to a minimum height of at least 1,8 meters.
- (2) School buildings must have at least one form of safety and security measure, such as the following:

- (a) Burglar proofing to all opening window sections on all ground floor buildings that are accessed by learners and educators;
  - (b) a security guard arrangement; or
  - (c) an alarm system linked to a rapid armed response, where available.
- (3) School buildings and other school facilities must comply with fire regulations in terms of the National Building Regulations and SANS 10-400.

## **18. Design considerations for all education areas**

- (1) School design must make as much provision for the specific needs of learners, educators and administrative staff with disabilities as for the needs of their able colleagues.
- (2) Obscure glazing must be used in both male and female toilet windows.
- (3) Boys and girls toilets must as far as reasonably practicable be separated from each other.
- (4) The relationship of buildings and open areas within the school should, as far as reasonably practicable, allow for natural surveillance for the safety of learners.
- (5) Passive solar design principles should be employed in the design of all education areas to address energy saving and natural cooling, subject to all relevant laws.
- (6)
  - (a) Natural day lighting should be utilised when designing classrooms, to minimise the dependence on artificial lighting.
  - (b) Lighting and shading should, as far as reasonably practicable, be designed to minimise glare.
- (7) Ventilation should be natural ventilation and should include permanent wall vents and windows with opening sections in compliance with all relevant laws.
- (8) In the provisioning of windows, ease of operation, natural ventilation requirements and maintaining an adequate level of safety must be taken into account.
- (9) Acoustic conditions should, as far as reasonably practicable, facilitate clear communication of speech between teacher and learner, and between learners themselves, and should not impede teaching and learning activities.
- (10) Background noise and reverberation should, as far as reasonably practicable, be reduced to a minimum.

- (11) Flexibility of usage and the assigning of multiple functions should be a consideration in the design of education areas and education support areas.
- (12) Innovative design that is efficient, cost effective and appropriate to create an enabling and inclusive teaching and learning environment should be promoted.
- (13) Schools must not be constructed with mud or asbestos material or any other inappropriate material.
- (14) In the planning and design of all schools contemplated in regulation 4(1)(a), school design must comply with all relevant laws, including the National Building Regulations, SANS 10-400 and the Occupational Health and Safety Act, 1993 (Act No 85 of 1993).
- (15) Where the use of alternative or innovative building technologies are to be considered for the implementation of the norms and standards contained in these regulations, certification is required from AgreementSouth Africa.

## **19. Review of regulations**

- (1) The Department of Basic Education must periodically review the norms and standards contained in these regulations in order to ensure that those norms and standards remain current and serve the needs of the teaching and learning process.
- (2)
  - (a) An education department may within the parameters set by these regulations, adapt the norms and standards to best suit schools within the province concerned.
  - (b) Any adaptation contemplated in paragraph (a) may not lead to a diminution of the minimum norms and standards contained in these regulations.

## **20. Dispute resolution**

- (1) Any dispute between government agencies and entities with regard to the implementation of these regulations must be dealt with in terms of the Intergovernmental Relations Framework Act, 2005 (Act No.13 of 2005)
- (2) Any dispute between government agencies and entities, on the one hand, and any other party, on the other hand, with regard to the implementation of these regulations, may by agreement be referred for mediation or for arbitration in terms of the Arbitration Act, 1965 (Act No.42 of 1965).

## **21. Short title**

These regulations are called the Regulations Relating to Minimum Uniform Norms and Standards for Public School Infrastructure.

## **ANNEXURE A**

**SIZE NORMS FOR MINIMUM EDUCATION AREAS**

**ANNEXURE B**

**SIZE NORMS FOR EDUCATION SUPPORT AREAS**

**ANNEXURE C**

**SIZE NORMS FOR ADMINISTRATION AREAS -**

**ANNEXURE D**

**PRIMARY SCHOOL MINIMUM EDUCATION AREAS FOR AN ENABLING  
SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT**

**ANNEXURE E**

**SECONDARY SCHOOL MINIMUM EDUCATION AREAS FOR AN ENABLING  
SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT**

**ANNEXURE F**

**MICRO SCHOOL MINIMUM EDUCATION AREAS FOR AN ENABLING SCHOOL  
ENVIRONMENT**

**ANNEXURE G**

**NORMS FOR SCHOOL SANITATION**