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DEPARTMENT OF BASIC EDUCATION

NO. 4994

27 June 2024

**SOUTH AFRICAN SCHOOLS ACT, 1996 (ACT NO. 84 OF 1996)**

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

I, Angelina Matsie Motshekga, Minister of Basic Education, acting under section 5A(1)(a) of the *South African Schools Act, 1996 (Act No. 84 of 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.



**MRS ANGELINA MATSIE MOTSHEKGA, MP  
MINISTER OF BASIC EDUCATION  
DATE: 14 MAY 2024**

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## **SCHEDULE**

### **PREAMBLE**

**WHEREAS**, South Africa has 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 enhance the level of 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 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—

## Definitions

1. In these Regulations a word or expression to which a meaning has been assigned in the South African Schools Act, 1996 (Act No. 84 of 1996), bears 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;

**"Agrément South Africa"** means the body that operates under the delegation of authority of the National Minister of Public Works and Infrastructure;

**"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 made in terms of section 17 of the National Building Regulations and Building Standards Act, 1977 (Act No. 103 of 1977);

**"new school"** means a school built after the date of publication of these Regulations;

**"SANS 10400"** 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 usable by all people, to address the diversity of learners and teachers with functional limitations.

### **Objectives of Regulations**

2. 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 timeframes within which school infrastructure backlogs must be addressed.

### **Scope and application**

3. These Regulations apply to all schools.

### **Implementation of Regulations**

4.(1) The norms and standards in these Regulations must be applied to all new and existing schools, additions, alterations and improvements.

(2) The following must be considered for the purposes of planning and implementation of these Regulations at the schools contemplated in subregulation (1):

- (a) All schools that do not have access to any form of power supply, water supply or sanitation must comply with the norms and standards prescribed in regulations 10,11 and 12;
- (b) all buildings built entirely or substantially from materials such as mud, asbestos, metal and wood must be replaced with structures which accord with these Regulations, the National Building Regulations, SANS 10400 and the Occupational Health and Safety Act, 1993 (Act No. 85 of 1993);
- (c) all schools that do not have sufficient classrooms to accommodate learners enrolled in the schools;
- (d) all schools that do not have adequate perimeter fencing to comply with the norms and standards prescribed in regulation 17;
- (e) all schools that do not have the relevant minimum education areas as per Annexure A, for an enabling school environment.

(3) The norms and standards in these Regulations must, with regard to the schools contemplated in subregulation (2)(a), must within 12 months from the publication of these Regulations, be included in the infrastructure plans contemplated in subregulation (10) and progress on the implementation must be reported annually as contemplated in subregulation (12).

(4) With regard to the buildings contemplated in subregulation (2)(b), the norms and standards in these Regulations must within 12 months from the publication of these Regulations, be included in the infrastructure plans contemplated in subregulation (10) and progress on the implementation must be reported annually as contemplated in subregulation (12).

(5) With regard to the schools contemplated in subregulation (2)(c), the implementation of the norms and standards in these Regulations must be addressed and reviewed annually taking into account changes in school population caused by, amongst other things, enrolments, migration, admissions and effects of natural and manmade disasters.

(6) With regard to the schools contemplated in subregulation (2)(d) the norms and standards in these Regulations must within 12 months from the publication of these Regulations, be included in the infrastructure plans contemplated in subregulation (10) and progress on the implementation must be reported annually as contemplated in subregulation (12).

(7) With regard to the schools contemplated in subregulation (2)(e) the norms and standards in these Regulations must within 12 months from the publication of these Regulations, be included in the infrastructure plans contemplated in subregulation (10) and progress on the implementation must be reported annually as contemplated in subregulation (12).

(8) Provincial departments must, when implementing these Regulations, explore every avenue to give effect to the norms and standards contained in these Regulations and must consider appropriate alternatives when necessary.

(9) Provincial departments must facilitate and co-ordinate the responsibilities of the government agencies and entities who provide infrastructure and related services.

(10) Each provincial department must, 90 days after the beginning of each financial year, submit a detailed infrastructure plan on the implementation of the infrastructure programme which must be published on the DBE and PED websites for access by the public.

(11) The infrastructure plan contemplated in subregulation (10) must contain information on—

- (a) the need for school infrastructure as per the minimum uniform norms and standards;
- (b) the current status of school infrastructure;
- (c) the prioritisation of backlog in school infrastructure;
- (d) the scope of planned projects in the MTEF;
- (e) the budget allocation of planned projects in the MTEF;
- (f) the source of funding for planned projects in the MTEF;
- (g) the status of each project.
- (h) human resources capacity

(12) Each provincial department must, 60 days after the end of each financial year, submit an End of Year Evaluation Report on progress in the implementation of the infrastructure programme which must be published on the DBE and PED websites for access by the public.

(13) The End of Year Evaluation Report contemplated in subregulation (12) must contain information on—

- (a) the overall performance with regard to the achievement of practical completion targets;
- (b) the overall performance with regard to the utilisation of budgets;
- (c) the overall performance according to the nature of investment and commitments;
- (d) original budget allocation, revised budget allocation and expenditure to date per project;
- (e) the status of each project;
- (f) the projects planned for the new financial year.

(14) The measures 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.

### **Types of schools**

5.(1) Schools are classified as primary or secondary schools.

(2) Primary schools offer grades R to 7.

(3) Primary schools are classified into—

- (a) micro primary schools, with a capacity of less than 135 learners;
- (b) small primary schools, with a capacity ranging from 135 to 310 learners;
- (c) medium primary schools, with a capacity ranging from 311 to 620 learners;
- (d) large primary schools, with a capacity ranging from 621 to 930 learners; and
- (e) mega primary schools with a capacity in excess of 930 learners.

(4) Secondary schools offer grades 8 to 12.

(5) Secondary schools are classified into—

- (a) micro secondary schools, with a capacity of less than 200 learners;
- (b) small secondary schools, with a capacity ranging from 200 to 400 learners;
- (c) medium secondary schools, with a capacity ranging from 401 to 600 learners;
- (d) large secondary schools, with a capacity ranging from 601 to 1000 learners; and
- (e) mega secondary schools, with a capacity in excess of 1000 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 contemplated in subregulations (3) and (5), subject to the availability of infrastructure and the norms and standards contained in these Regulations.



(7) Despite subregulations (2) and (4), a Member of the Executive Council may, based on valid reasons, approve the establishment or retention of a school that offer some of the primary schools grades, or some of the secondary school grades, or a combination of some primary school and some secondary school grades. Such approval must be for a specified period that may be extended from time to time.

### **Universal access**

6.(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) A school 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 must be provided for learners and educators with impaired vision;
- (vii) visual aids must 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 10400.

#### **Site and identification of school**

- 7.(1) The following principles apply in respect of the geographic location of a new school:
- (a) The location of the school must ensure easy accessibility to roads, sewerage lines and other basic services; and
  - (b) where practicable, a school may not be located close to, or adjacent to—
    - (i) a cemetery;
    - (ii) a business centre;
    - (iii) a railway station;
    - (iv) a taxi rank;
    - (v) a sewage treatment plant;
    - (vi) a public hostel;

- (vii) a busy road, unless adequate preventative measures have been taken to ensure the safety of the learners; or
  - (viii) a bottle store or shebeen.
- (2) The siting of a new school must, 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 number of the school.

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

- 8.(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) 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.

### **Classrooms**

9. The following are planning norms for class size:
- (a) Grade R: A maximum of 30 learners; and

- (b) for all other grades: A maximum of 40 learners.

### **Electricity**

10.(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 may include one or more of the following:

- (a) grid electrical reticulation;
- (b) generators;
- (c) solar powered energy; or
- (d) wind powered energy sources.

### **Water**

11.(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 may include one or more of the following:
- (a) A municipal connection;
  - (b) municipal tanker supply;
  - (c) rain water harvesting;
  - (d) borehole supply; or
  - (e) local water schemes from reservoirs and dams.

### **Sanitation**

**12.(1)** All schools must have a sufficient number of sanitation facilities, as contained in Annexure D, 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, taking cognisance of the specific site conditions.
- (3) Sanitation facilities may include one or more of the following:
- (a) Water borne sanitation, including closed-circuit systems;
  - (b) septic or conservancy tank systems;
  - (c) ventilated improved pit latrines; or
  - (d) composting toilets.
- (4) Plain pit toilets and bucket latrines are not allowed at a school.

### **Library**

**13.(1)** All schools must have access to a school library or a media centre and a minimum, adequate and suitable school library collection.

(2) A school library contemplated in subregulation (1) may be one or more of the following:

- (a) a mobile library;
- (b) a cluster library;
- (c) a classroom library;
- (d) a centralised school library;
- (e) a school community library; or
- (f) a digital library.

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

**14.(1)** All schools that offer science and technology subjects must have access to a laboratory and the necessary apparatus and consumables in accordance with the specific curriculum needs to make it possible to conduct experiments and scientific investigations.

(2) The apparatus and consumables contemplated in subregulation (1)—

- (a) may be housed in a laboratory, a mobile laboratory, a classroom or a safe container; and
- (b) must be stored in a lockable facility in accordance with safety standards provided for in the relevant laws.

(3) A laboratory for science, technology and life sciences may, where practicable, be combined in one room.

- (4) A laboratory must be maintained in good working order.

### **Sport and recreation facilities**

**15.(1)** All schools must have access to 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) 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.

### **Electronic connectivity at a school**

**16.(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) internet facilities; and
  - (c) an intercom or public address system.

### **Perimeter security and school safety**

17.(1) Every school site, which includes all school outbuildings and sporting and recreational facilities, must be secured by appropriate fencing as provided for in the School Infrastructure Safety and Security Guidelines.

(2) School buildings must have at least one form of safety and security measure, which may include one of the following:

- (a) Burglar proofing on 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 10400.

### **Design considerations for education areas**

18.(1) School design must make equal provision for the specific needs of learners, educators and administrative staff with disabilities and for the needs of their physically able colleagues.

(2) Obscure glazing must be used in all 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 must, as far as reasonably practicable, allow for natural surveillance for the safety of learners.



- (5) Passive solar design principles must be employed in the design of all educational spaces to address energy saving and natural cooling, subject to the relevant laws.
- (6)(a) Natural day lighting must be utilised when designing classrooms, to minimise the dependence on artificial lighting.
- (b) Lighting and shading must, as far as reasonably practicable, be designed to minimise glare.
- (7) Ventilation must be natural ventilation and must include permanent wall vents and windows with opening sections in compliance with the 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 must, as far as reasonably practicable, facilitate clear communication of speech between teacher and learner, and between learners themselves, and must not impede teaching and learning activities.
- (10) Background noise and reverberation must, as far as reasonably practicable, be reduced to a minimum.
- (11) Flexibility of usage and the assigning of multiple functions must 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 must be promoted.
- (13) A school must not be constructed from material such mud, asbestos, wood, as contemplated in 4 (2) (b);
- (14) In the planning and design of schools contemplated in regulation 4(1), school design must comply with the relevant laws, including the National Building Regulations, SANS 10400 and the Occupational Health and Safety Act, 1993.

(15) Where the use of alternative or innovative building technologies is to be considered for the implementation of the norms and standards contained in these Regulations, the provisions of the Agrément South Africa Act, 2015 (Act No. 11 of 2015) must be complied with where applicable, or alternatively the technology must be signed off by a competent person as provided for in the National Building Regulations.

### **Review of regulations**

**19.(1)** The Department of Basic Education must periodically review the norms and standards contained in these Regulations in order to ensure that the norms and standards remain current and serve the needs of the teaching and learning process.

(2)(a) A provincial department may within the parameters set by these Regulations, adapt the norms and standards to best suit schools within the province concerned.

(b) An adaptation contemplated in paragraph (a) may not lead to a diminution of the minimum norms and standards contained in these Regulations.

### **Dispute resolution**

**20.(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,

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may, by agreement, be referred for mediation or arbitration in terms of the Arbitration Act, 1965 (Act No. 42 of 1965).

**Short title**

21. These Regulations are called the Regulations Relating to Minimum Uniform Norms and Standards for Public School Infrastructure, 2023.

<b>SIZE NORMS FOR EDUCATION AREAS - ANNEXURE A</b>	
<b>MINIMUM EDUCATION AREAS</b>	<b>Unit size (m<sup>2</sup>)</b>
	<b>Minimum size</b>
Classroom	48
Grade R classroom	60
Science laboratory	60
Computer room	60
Multipurpose classroom	60
School library/Media centre	60
Multimedia centre (library and computer function)	80
Storage areas for classrooms and teaching spaces	12
<b>OPTIONAL EDUCATION SPACES (SUBJECT TO CURRICULUM OFFERINGS)</b>	
Arts and culture classroom	60
Technology classroom	60
Physiotherapy room	15
Occupational room	15
Speech therapy room	15
Incontinence room	15
Dance studies room	80
Design room	80
Dramatic arts room	80
Music room	80
Hospitality studies room	80
Visual arts room	80
Social sciences room	80
Agricultural sciences room	80
Engineering graphics and design room	60
Agricultural technology workshop	180
Civil technology workshop	180
Electrical technology workshop	180
Mechanical technology workshop	180

<b>SIZE NORMS FOR EDUCATION SUPPORT AREAS - ANNEXURE B</b>		
<b>EDUCATION SUPPORT AREAS</b>		<b>Unit size (m<sup>2</sup>)</b>
		<b>Minimum size</b>
Food garden		30
Tuckshop		15
Pastoral care centre	1. Sick room	15
	2. Counselling room	15
Nutrition centre	1. Kitchen	15
	2. Food storage	12
	3. Dining room	100
Caretaker room		12
Storage areas		12
Security room		4
Multipurpose hall		120
Parking bays (including parking and drop-off for learners with disabilities)		Subject to size of school
Walk ways (covered)		Subject to climatic considerations
Assembly area		Subject to school design
Learners' toilets		Annexure D
Physical education, sport and recreational area		Subject to soil, site, topography and enrolment
Refuse area		15

<b>SIZE NORMS FOR ADMINISTRATION AREAS - ANNEXURE C</b>	
<b>ADMINISTRATION AREAS</b>	<b>Unit size (m<sup>2</sup>)</b>
	<b>Minimum size</b>
Principal's office	20
Deputy Principal's office	15
Administration office	20
Reception area	15
Storage area (for administration purposes)	15
Strong room	10
Printing room	15
Staff room	60
Head of Department's office	15
Staff kitchenette	12
Staff toilets	Annexure G

**ANNEXURE D**

**NORMS FOR SCHOOL SANITATION  
TABLE D1**

		PRIMARY SCHOOLS														
	TOTAL ENROLMENT	Girls' toilets	Girls' basins	Boys' toilets	Boys' urinals	Boys' basins	Unisex Grade R Toilets	Grade R basins	Unisex Disabled toilets	Unisex Disabled basins	Female staff toilets	Female staff basins	Male staff toilet	Male staff urinals	Male staff basins	Total toilets
Micro	0 134	3	2	1	2	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	11
Small	135 310	5	3	1	3	1	3	2	1	1	2	1	1	1	1	17
Medium	311 620	9	5	2	6	2	4	3	1	1	3	1	1	2	1	28
Large	621 930	11	6	3	7	3	6	4	2	2	3	2	1	2	2	35
Mega	931 1500	14	7	3	10	4	9	6	3	3	5	3	2	3	3	49
Mega	1501 2000	16	7	3	12	4	11	7	4	4	7	4	3	4	4	60

**TABLE D 2**

SECONDARY SCHOOLS															
	TOTAL ENROLMENT		Girls' toilets	Girls' basins	Boys' toilets	Boys' urinals	Boys' basins	Unisex Disabled toilets	Unisex Disabled basins	Female staff toilets	Female staff basins	Male staff toilet	Male staff urinals	Male staff basins	Total toilets
Micro	0	200	3	2	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	9
Small	201	400	6	4	2	4	2	1	1	2	1	1	1	1	17
Medium	401	600	9	5	2	6	2	1	1	3	1	1	2	1	24
Large	601	1000	12	6	3	7	3	2	2	3	2	1	2	2	30
Mega	1001	1500	14	7	3	10	4	3	3	5	3	2	3	3	40
Mega	1501	2000	16	7	3	12	4	4	4	7	4	3	4	4	49