

South Africa begins second phase of reopening of schools

July 6 2020, by Mogomotsi Magome



A pupil has his hands sanitized on his return to school in Johannesburg, Monday July 6, 2020, as more of learners were permitted to return to class. Schools were shut down in March prior to a total country lockdown in a bid to prevent the spread of coronavirus and are now slowly being re-opened. (AP Photo/Denis Farrell)

Thousands of South African students are returning to school Monday after nearly four months when their classes were closed to combat the spread of the new coronavirus.

Students in grades 6 and 11 are starting classes Monday, as the second stage of a phased reopening of schools. The first group of pupils, from grades 7 and 12, returned to classes last month.

Returning learners were required to produce indemnity forms signed by their parents granting them permission to resume [classes](#).

South Africa's government last week won a [legal challenge](#) permitting it to proceed with reopening schools. The lawsuit had said that schools should remain closed because of the danger of the disease spreading among learners and teachers.

However, in recent days the government has postponed plans for further [grades](#) to return to class amid a quickening speed in the rise of confirmed COVID-19 cases. South Africa has 196,750 cases as of Monday, more than 40% of all the cases reported by Africa's 54 countries. South Africa has recorded 3,199 deaths.

At least 2,121 teachers in Gauteng province, which includes Johannesburg, South Africa's largest city, will not be returning to schools as they have underlying illnesses that would put them at higher risk should they become infected.



A pupil's hands are sanitised on returning to school in Johannesburg, Monday July 6, 2020, as more learners were permitted to return to class. Schools were shut down in March prior to a total country lockdown in a bid to prevent the spread of coronavirus and are now slowly being re-opened. (AP Photo/Denis Farrell)

Since the first phase of the schools reopening last month, 968 schools have had to close due to outbreaks and 2,400 teachers and 1,260 learners have tested positive for COVID-19.

Parents who do not feel comfortable sending their children back to [school](#) have been encouraged to register them for online schooling provided by the education department.

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