



MEDIA STATEMENT

**To: All Media
Att: News Editors
For immediate release**

3 October 2023

MEC CHILOANE DEVASTATED BY LEARNER DEATHS AND ILL-HEALTH FROM ALLEGED SPAZA SHOP SNACKS

Gauteng Education MEC Matome Chiloane wishes to express his devastation over the unfortunate deaths of two Grade 1 boy learners from Kgauhelo Primary School and Karabo Primary School in Soweto who passed away on Sunday, 1 October 2023, after allegedly consuming biscuits and juice purchased from a spaza shop.

Two other Grade 1 girl learners from Ikemeleng Primary School are currently in a critical condition and are receiving medical care at Chris Hani Baragwanath Academic Hospital after allegedly eating these snacks from the same spaza shop as well.

These learners all reportedly ate biscuits and drank juice that they purchased from a specific spaza shop in their vicinity. It is alleged that their health began deteriorating after eating these goods, which resulted in two of them being hospitalised and two others passing away.

Police are investigating the circumstances surrounding these incidents.

We request the community's support and understanding during this challenging period, also pleading for parents to be extra vigilant of what their children consume and safeguard of their wellbeing.

"This incident serves as a grave reminder to parents and guardians to exercise utmost caution when it comes to the safety and wellbeing of our learners. It is imperative that we remain vigilant and ensure that our children are not exposed to harmful substances. We will continue to work closely with law enforcement agencies to investigate this matter thoroughly. We wish to extend our sincerest condolences to the affected families, and wish the two hospitalised learners a speedy recovery," said MEC Chiloane.

For more information, contact the Gauteng Department of Education's Spokesperson, Steve Mabona on 072 574 3860 or Spokesperson for Gauteng Education MEC Matome Chiloane, Xolani Mkhwemte on 084 513 9285

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