



GAUTENG PROVINCE
COMMUNITY SAFETY
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

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Gauteng Community Safety embarks on school safety operations

The Gauteng Department of Community Safety has embarked on an integrated school safety intervention plan to rid schools of criminal elements in order to create a conducive learning and teaching environment.

Gauteng schools have in the recent past been marred by incidents of bullying, gangsterism, substance abuse and in some instances murder which sparked outrage in communities. The Department working with all stakeholders with an interest on safety have embarked on school visits to rid Gauteng schools of all social ills that continue to threaten learning. This intervention plan puts special focus on the 30 problematic schools as identified by the Department of Education.

The integrated school safety intervention plan includes school searches, school safety talk led by the departmental Safety Promotions Unit, Gender Based Violence education led by Ikhaya Lethemba unit, a one stop centre for victims of Gender Based Violence, Road Safety focusing on scholar patrol programme, introduction of "Adopt A Cop" by the local police station, Community Police Forum and Department of Education focusing on the importance of learners staying safe within their respective schooling precincts.

So far the department has visited Freedom Park Secondary School, Oos Rand Secondary School, Lefa-ifa Secondary school based in Kwa-Thema, Norkem Park High School, Geluksdal Secondary School and Langaville Secondary based in Tsakane. On Monday, 27th

January 2020, the police visited Reiger Park and Oos Rand Secondary schools in Ekurhuleni to conduct school searches. Dagga, illegal cigarettes and dangerous weapons such as scissors and knives were confiscated from learners. Meanwhile on the 23rd of January 2020, the police received a tip off from learners while they were conducting a raid at Lifa-ifa secondary school in Kwa-Thema that a 51-year-old is allegedly involved in selling dagga to school learners. The police acted swiftly to effect the arrest after he was found in possession of dagga.

The Head of Department (HOD) for Community Safety, Ms. Yoliswa Makhasi, has called on all stakeholders to intensify school safety in the province. "It is important that all stakeholders with an interest on safety should come together to create a conducive learning and teaching environment. The time has come to enhance classroom teaching and learner performance. All these can be made possible only when discipline is instilled amongst our learners and educators are respected at all costs." said Makhasi.

Gauteng schools are grappling with increasing disciplinary issues, while at the same time society is struggling to understand the complex factors that are creating these unruly behaviors amongst learners. The HOD has further urged the law enforcement agencies to work around the clock to change the status quo.

"We are intensifying our efforts to rid our schools of incidents of violence such as bullying, physical violence and sexual abuse. The random unannounced visits to schools is one such way of dealing with this scourge. Through the Adopt a Cop programme our police will familiarize themselves with the learners and the environment in which they learn as they will have an opportunity to interact with them on an ongoing basis as part of improving school safety. Our schooling environment has become a haven for learners to commit criminal elements and such incidents must be discouraged and never be allowed to continue unchallenged," added HOD Makhasi.

The HOD has further appealed with the Community Police Forums to make their presence felt in their local schooling precincts. "It is essential that we mobilise all sectors of society to be active participants in the fight against crime and urge them to take part in various safety programmes available in their respective communities. Community Police Forums and Community Patrollers are thus important components towards realisation of the safety of all residents including that of our learners as directed by the National Developmental Plan."

Following a series of violent incidents experienced in 2019, Gauteng government hosted a school safety summit in 2019 under the theme: “Safer schools to support learning and teaching.” While significant strides have been made towards school safety, more work still need to be done to rid schools of social ills.

END

Issued by the Gauteng Department of Community Safety. For media enquiries contact Ofentse Morwane on 066 476 0777. For media releases, speeches and news visit the website: www.gauteng.gov.za

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