



basic education

Department:
Basic Education
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

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Mr P Colditz
Chief Executive Officer
The Federation of Governing Bodies of South African Schools
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By email: ceo@fedsas.org.za

Dear Mr Colditz

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE NATIONAL DEWORMING PROGRAMME DURING 2019

South Africa is a signatory of the World Health Assembly Resolution 54.19 (May 2001), as well as the Resolution on Neglected Tropical Diseases (NTDs) (WHA 66.12), which calls for regular, synchronised treatment of Soil Transmitted Helminth (STH) or worms in high-risk groups (5 to 14 year old children) and aims to achieve NTD elimination by 2025.

Deworming is an intervention that supports learners to perform to the best of their abilities. Research indicates that deworming learners result in improved health status, increased productivity, educational performance, life expectancy, savings and investments.

- Research in the US has indicated that worm infections lower literacy levels by 13% and lower earnings later in life by 43%; and
- Research in Kenya has indicated that school based mass deworming decreased absenteeism by 25% (Stewart Kabaka, 19-21 October 2011).

Since 2016, more than **17 million learners** were dewormed cumulatively through the donation of deworming tablets by the World Health Organisation (WHO). The National Deworming Programme is delivered through the Integrated School Health (ISHP) and National School Nutrition Programmes (NSNP).

For 2019, 9.1 million deworming tablets were provided by the WHO. Deworming will take place during the second round of the Human Papillomavirus Vaccination campaign (6 August to 20 September 2019). The target for 2019 is **all 5 to 14 year old children** (Grades R to 7); this includes children in special and private schools, quintile 1 to 5 schools, as well as out-of-school children.

Parental support is kindly requested to ensure that all targeted children are dewormed by:

- Advocating and orientating parents on the benefits to deworm their children and to approve the consent form for their children to receive the deworming tablets. Children may not participate in the programme if the parents have not consented;
- Supporting the implementation of the deworming programme by providing support on the deworming day, e.g. helping the children to queue awaiting to be dewormed and administering the deworming tablets (mebendazole) to learners; and
- Submitting the total of learners that were dewormed to the principal who will submit the data on SA-SAMS.

The school health nurses will provide vaccinations to Grade 4 learners and will:

- Issue the mebendazole tablets to educators and receive the unused tablets;
- Provide advice to educators and treatment to learners, regarding side effects such as nausea and cramps associated with administration of the deworming medication.

As successful implementation of this programme is dependent on close collaboration between the parents and the Departments of Basic Education and Health, please encourage your members to collaborate on the implementation of the deworming programme. Note that province specific implementation plans are being developed. Kindly contact the provincial or district co-ordinator of the ISHP or NSNP for more information regarding implementation.

Thank you in advance for supporting this programme which is to the benefit of our children and communities. Should you require additional information, please contact the above mentioned official.

Yours sincerely



MR HM MWELI
DIRECTOR-GENERAL
DATE: 02/05/2019