



LIMPOPO
PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

DEPARTMENT OF
EDUCATION

03 November 2024

Media Statement -

TO ALL MEDIA

RE: Limpopo Executive Council Addresses Surge of Food Poisoning Incidents in Schools

The Limpopo Executive Council (EXCO) convened on 30 October 2024 to address the alarming surge of food poisoning incidents reported across schools in the province. This critical issue, which has raised significant concern among parents, educators and health officials, was previously discussed in a Special Executive Council Meeting held on 27 October 2024.

In its commitment to ensuring the health and safety of the learners, the Executive Council has resolved to implement a series of urgent measures aimed at tackling this crisis effectively. Key recommendations from the meeting include:

1. Establishment of a Joint Operating Committee (JOC): A coordination body will be formed under the Office of the Premier, bringing together all relevant stakeholders—including the Departments of Co-Operative Governance, Human Settlements and Traditional Affairs (COGHSTA), Education, Health, Limpopo Economic Development, Environment and Tourism (LEDEDT) and Social Development - to devise a unified strategy in response to this matter.
2. Vendor Accountability: All food vendors serving schools will be required to maintain verifiable documentation demonstrating the origins of their products. This includes receipts and invoices detailing suppliers, purchase dates and product descriptions. This measure will enable authorities to trace product origins and hold suppliers accountable for food safety.

3. Ban on Unsafe Snacks: A ban will be imposed on the sale of snacks from brands identified to contain foreign objects or lacking expiry dates. This is a crucial step in safeguarding the children from potential harm.

4. Exemption for Compliant Vendors: Vendors who possess the necessary health and safety documentation will be exempt from the temporary suspension issued by the Department of Education, provided they are registered with the respective School Governing Body (SGB) and have signed a responsibility clause.

5. Review of Food Safety Protocols: All day-care centres, including drop-in centres and old-age facilities, will be required to develop or review their food safety protocols to ensure compliance with health standards.

6. Application of Measures to Government Facilities: These recommendations will extend to all government facilities that sell food within their premises or within a prescribed distance from their entrances.

The Executive Council commends the proactive actions taken by local mayors and stakeholders in addressing these challenges. It is imperative that government knows the vendors operating within school zones and take decisive action against those whose products compromise the children's safety.

Furthermore, EXCO will prioritise unannounced inspections or raids of food warehouses and vendors to ensure compliance with health regulations and will engage with the Limpopo Economic Development, Environment and Tourism (LEDET) business teams to support local mayors in this initiative. It is for this reason that EXCO has encouraged all vendors to be fully compliant.

"We reaffirm our commitment to the health and well-being of our children and will continue to work collaboratively to prevent further incidents of food poisoning in our schools. The safety of our learners is non-negotiable and we are dedicated to implementing these measures swiftly and effectively," concluded Limpopo Premier, Dr Phophi Ramathuba.

END/

Issued by the Limpopo Provincial Government

For media enquiries, please contact:

Ndavhe Ramakuela
Provincial Government Spokesperson
0822005357/067 267 2063
Ramakuelan@premier.limpopo.gov.za