

Mounting Problem At Nkumbulo Secondary School

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Nkumbulo Secondary School in KwaThema (East Rand) has been without water in the learners' toilets for months now. Parents have been informed by the learners, and they have promised to find out about the cause of the problem with sanitation at the school. The parents believe that the school should not even be operating without proper sanitation.

Upon further investigation it has been discovered that the school also does not have electricity. This affects the studies of the learners doing Computer Studies also known as Computer Application Technology (CAT). As a result, they are unable to go on with their studies and this is shown in their test results as students are constantly failing the subject.

Nearby school, Lea Ifa Secondary School, which is less than a 5 minutes' walk from Nkumbulo Secondary however is not experiencing the same sanitation problems, although they have flushing toilets and water in the school premises, the toilets are not properly maintained and cleaned regularly. And they have electricity on their premises.

Additionally, Nkumbulo Secondary has been the talk of the township as they also have high gang related violences in the school. In the beginning of September, three learners were stabbed in a rival gang-related attack, allegedly over a beanie and a gang member's girlfriend.

It is alleged that learners from Nkumbulo Secondary attacked those from Phulong Secondary School outside the school premises. It resulted in a blood bath, with learners sustaining severe injuries, and being rushed to the local clinic and hospital for medical treatment.

A parent, Mxolisi Kota said, "We have a code of conduct in our school signed by parents. But when they are implemented, parents defend their children." He added, "It is sad that in most cases, the culprits are repeat offenders. I believe it is about time that, in such cases, they get expelled."

The Gauteng Department of Education Spokesperson Steve Mabona said the department would deploy a new cohort of patrollers at various schools to assist with access control and would get an e-panic button. The school principal was not available for questioning when visiting the school on these issues.

Recently, the school had another incident that led to seven grade 9 learners suspended from school for seven days after being caught with a bottle of alcohol on the school's premises on Friday, 8 September 2023.

According to the learners, one of the suspended students brought the alcohol bottle from home. Allegedly, he stole it from his uncle who works at the factory and keeps some of these bottles at home to sell, and the student wanted to sell it to another of the suspended learners.

The other learners admitted in the presence of their parents, the principal Ms Kubeka, and three teachers Mr Morake, Ms Nkosi and Ms Magaqa, that they knew about the transaction that would happen at the school and decided to protect the other two learners.

The principal of the school was ready to expel the seven learners from the school. But the parents pleaded on their behalf, and an agreement was made that if the learners do not pass at the end of

the year, they will be excused from the school premises and asked to look for other schools to join. The parents' representatives and student representatives of the School Governing Body (SGB) were not present during the meeting that took place on Monday, 11 September 2023.

When asked to comment on the state of the school, Ward 77 Councillor Thulani Dunjane was not available due to a water crisis in the area, after there has not been water for over a week. Nkumbulo Secondary constantly has something unfortunate happening every week. And when speaking to the local police spokesperson with regards to the safety of learners in the school premises, they seem to be unaware of the situation and then said the schools does have security personnel hired by the Department of Education and unless contacted, there is nothing they can do or say about the matters occurring in the school.

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