

# **SEDIBENG AMMENDED INTEGRATED INITIATION SCHOOLS POLICY**

## **POLICY GUIDELINE FOR THE OPERATION AND MANAGEMENT OF INITIATION SCHOOLS WITHIN THE SEDIBENG REGION.**

### **AIMS:**

- To provide a policy guideline for the registration, operations, and management of the initiation schools;
- To outline the requirements needed and which should be adhered to with regards minimizing incidents and fatalities connected thereto;
- To provide guidelines which will be considered by the municipalities in drafting by-laws in this regard?

### **1. Definitions of terms.**

#### **Abduction or kidnap:**

- Means taking a person forcefully without his consent or in case of minor without the consent or permission from parents or guardian.

#### **Circumcision**

- Means the surgical removal of the foreskin by the traditional practitioner, medical practitioner or any person registered with the Health Professions Council of South Africa

#### **Culture**

- Means a traditional way of doing things and shall include habits, norms, mores, ethics and values.

**Health Officer**

- Means a person who holds such qualifications which entitles him / her to be registered as a medical practitioner, or environmental health practitioner or nursing personnel and appointed to exercise the provision of these guidelines according to their professional practices.

**Initiate**

- Means a person who has been admitted in the initiation school.

**Initiator**

- Means a person who opens and conducts the initiation school

**Initiation school**

- Means a registered cultural institution or a place where cultural initiation into manhood/womanhood (that may also involve circumcision), including teachings of cultural practices and behaviours are carried out.

**Instructor (Musuwe)**

- Means a person who looks after the initiates, teaching them folklore poetry and other crucial proceedings regarding man- and/or woman-hood

**Municipality**

- Shall mean a Municipality as referred in the Local Government: Municipal Structures' Act 117 of 1998

**MMC**

- Shall mean a Member of Mayoral Committee responsible for Health in the District

**Police Officer**

- Shall mean any person appointed by the South African Police Service or municipality as a police or peace officer.

### **Traditional Surgeon**

- Means a traditional healer who performs the circumcision and include any person who has been trained to do so and complies with the requirements.

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## **2 2. Applications and registration of initiation schools**

Application for the operation and management of the initiation school and circumcision.

(1) Any person who intends opening an initiation school for the purpose of circumcision shall submit a written application to the municipality concerned. An Initiator must be 40 years of age or older.

(2) The municipality (committee, headed by health and/or AIDS Directorate) shall upon receipt of such application, issue the prescribed application form as reflected in schedule 1 and schedule 2.

(3) Such application shall be completed and submitted to the municipality (committee) within thirty days prior the commencement of such school. No initiation school will commence before approval has been granted by the municipality concerned.

(4) The (committee, headed by health and/or AIDS Directorate), through Environmental Health Practitioner in the employment of the municipality concerned shall issue the applicant with a list of requirements, which must be complied with before a registration certificate can be issued. Such registration certificate is valid for six months and must be renewed every six months (as reflected under schedule 3).

(5) The Environmental Health Practitioner, in company with a health/AIDS department person, shall after conducting an inspection of the proposed initiation schools grant a registration certificate conditionally or unconditionally.

(6) A registration certificate shall be issued if minimum requirements pertaining to water, shelter and sanitation have been complied with. Such certificate will be valid for one calendar year.

(7) No person shall open, operate or conduct any activity pertaining to the operation and management of the initiation or circumcision school without being registered with the municipality.

### **3. Permission to conduct circumcision.**

Any medical practitioner, or traditional health practitioner and/or any person or traditional surgeon authorised in writing as competent by the municipality or MMC for Health may conduct circumcision.

### **4. Admissions to the circumcision school.**

- 4.1. Any person who is eighteen years (18) and older may be admitted to the initiation school
- 4.2. The parent or guardian of any initiate who is below the age of twenty one (21) years must give a written consent before being initiated. (See schedule 1 for the prescribed consent form.)
- 4.3. Any person below the age of 18 years, who submit himself/herself to the initiation school without the parents' consent, shall be detained temporarily (pending the approval of the parents and pre-medical certificate) before being initiated.
- 4.4. No person may abduct or kidnap any person to the initiation schools. Offence in this regard is liable to a fine or imprisonment on conviction
- 4.5. Any person who abducts or kidnaps any person to the initiation school commits an offence and will be liable to a fine or term of imprisonment, upon conviction.

### **5. Closure of initiation school**

The MMC for Health and/or the committee, headed by health and/or AIDS Directorate at local municipality level may close any school, which has been operating without being registered with the local authority. South African Police Services to be informed of closure.

## **6. Establishment of the initiation school advisory committee.**

- 6.1. The municipality shall establish an initiation school advisory committee within its area of jurisdiction, which shall receive all appeals and ensure the smooth management of the initiation schools. A chairperson is to be elected and to be accountable to the local municipality
- 6.2. The advisory committee may advise the MMC for Health to close any initiation school if in its opinion the initiates' health or safety is at risk.
- 6.3. The initiation school advisory committee shall be representative by at least one delegate of the affected stakeholders from the following:
  - (a) Representative from HIV&AIDS, medical, nursing, environmental health and emergency medical services.
  - (b) Representative from the South African Police Services.
  - (c) Representative of the Traditional Healers Association.
  - (d) Representative of the Department of Education.
  - (e) Members from the civic association.
  - (f) Three people representing association for initiation school fraternity.
  - (g) One person from the local hospital.
  - (h) Community Police Forum
  - (i) In case of rural area one person from Tribal Authority

## **7. Circumcision by a traditional surgeon at the initiation school**

- 7.1. The traditional surgeon shall ensure that the initiates submit a pre-medical examination certificate prior to the operation. The certificate must state clearly that the initiate is free from any medical condition (e.g. diabetes mellitus, HIV, STIs, TB, Hypertension etc, which may cause unnecessary complications after the incision

- 7.2. Any authorised traditional surgeon may conduct the incision and shall immediately after take the necessary measures to stop bleeding.
- 7.3. He shall thereafter treat the initiates with medicines as recommended by the medical practitioner to stop unnecessary bleeding and to prevent any possible sepsis.
- 7.4. The removed body parts/tissue (e.g. foreskins) shall be disposed of accordingly by either burial, incineration or burning as may be approved by the Municipality by-law
- 7.5. The instruments used for incising must be used once per initiate unless sterilised accordingly. The use of razor blades is recommended compared to a knife, which needs to be regularly sterilised.

## **8. Duration of the initiation school**

- 8.1. The initiation schools shall be conducted for a period of one month or such period, which will allow healing. Or more as determined by traditional practice
- 8.2. A school calendar of the Department of Education shall be followed and the initiation school shall be conducted during the school holidays unless if the initiates are not in attendance of any formal education.

## **9. Treatment of the initiates**

- 9.1. No initiate shall be subjected to any corporal punishment or unnecessary suffering or punishment.
- 9.2. Initiation school Instructor or any persons of at least 35 years or older, are free to teach the initiates the initiation school language, idioms and poems without any form of intimidation or interrogation.

- 9.3. No initiate shall be refused any water or food to the extent that it may result in starvation or dehydration.
- 9.4. Adequate sanitary facilities shall be provided by the initiator for the initiates.
- 9.5. Initiates must be protected against extreme temperatures especially cold during winter.
- 9.6. Initiates who appear to be developing septic wounds should be referred to the medical practitioner for further treatment.
- 9.7. Circumcision schools shall identify at least one of medical practitioner of their choice who should assist them for referral purposes and in case of some emergencies

## **10. Cultural ethics and inspection of the initiation schools**

- 10.1. The municipality, South African Police Service, and where necessary the Department of Education shall identify one or more persons from the medical, nursing or environmental health, police background who are well conversant with the proceedings of the initiation schools to conduct regular visits of the initiation schools.
- 10.2. The health officers shall during their visits take into consideration the environmental hygiene, medical and nursing aspects of the circumcision schools and general health conditions of the initiates.
- 10.3. Such officers shall at all times keep themselves well informed or up to date with the proceedings of the initiation schools to avoid any conflict which may arise.
- 10.4. Any serious matter shall be referred to the relevant authority or body for further action.
- 10.5. A Technical Committee comprising of only initiated men and/or women to be established to deal with technical aspects around the practice. This Committee to be accountable to the Advisory Committee and Local Municipality.

**SCHEDULE 1:**

**APPLICATION AND CONSENT FORM BY PARENT OR GUARDIAN.**

I. \_\_\_\_\_ ID NO. \_\_\_\_\_ hereby give consent and permit \_\_\_\_\_ age \_\_\_\_\_ to attend initiation and be initiated at the initiation school for the duration of the prescribed period of the school.

I further declare that I am the parent /guardian of the said applicant and I reside at the following address:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

SIGNATURE : \_\_\_\_\_  
ID. Numbers : \_\_\_\_\_  
Date : \_\_\_\_\_

**SCHEDULE 2:**

**CONSENT BY THE APPLICANT**

I \_\_\_\_\_ ID NO. \_\_\_\_\_ and age \_\_\_\_\_,  
hereby give assent to be initiated at the initiation school for the duration of the prescribed  
period of the school.

Date of birth is \_\_\_\_\_

I further declare that I am residing at the following address.

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

SIGNATURE: \_\_\_\_\_

DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

## **SCHEDULE 3**

### **MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS WHICH MUST BE COMPLIED WITH**

A valid permit must first be obtained from the lawful title holder/landlord of a site to be used for initiation school purpose. This authorization should be submitted to the municipality during initial application. Any illegal occupation of land/ or property without valid permit will render the application unsuccessful.

1. A suitable shelter must be provided and be constructed in such a manner that initiates are protected from extreme temperatures especially against cold weather conditions.
2. Pure water supply should be supplied for drinking and cooking purposes for the initiates.
3. Suitable sanitary facilities in the form of well-constructed pit latrine or movable chemical toilets should be provided for use.
4. All body parts removed should be disposed of in a hygienic matter.
5. Refuse removal and disposal including used surgical instruments should be carried out as may be prescribed by Environmental Health Practitioner in the area namely incinerated.
6. Food should be prepared hygienically and kept separate from any area used for sleeping purposes.
7. Initiates should be given sufficient food at least twice a day and be allowed to drink water when necessary.
8. Initiates should be allowed to wear warm especially during cold weather.
9. Instruments such as razor blades used for the operation should be used once only and any other instruments may be sterilized after each initiate as prescribed by the medical practitioner.
10. The owner of the initiation school must identify at least one person from the medical profession to assist in case of emergency and for referral purposes.
11. Prescribed medication to stop and prevent unnecessary bleeding must be readily available.

- 12 A detention room for persons who came for circumcision without the consent of their parents or guardian.
- 13 A register must be kept of all initiates in the circumcision school.
14. A first aid kit, which includes antiseptics medicines for treating minor ailments, should be provided.
15. The various certificates should be kept in file for ease of reference.

**SCHEDULE 4**

**STANDARD PRE – INITIATION SCHOOL MEDICAL EXAMINATION**

**CLIENT'S PARTICULARS**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Surname: \_\_\_\_\_

ID: \_\_\_\_\_

Residential address: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**PARENTAL / GUARDIAN**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Surname: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Contacts: \_\_\_\_\_

ID: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**MEDICAL EXAMINATION**

**History taking and physical examination**

General and any allergies: \_\_\_\_\_

Any bleeding tendencies: \_\_\_\_\_

Anaemia: \_\_\_\_\_

Jaundice: \_\_\_\_\_

Lymphadenopathy: \_\_\_\_\_

Heart: \_\_\_\_\_

Lungs: \_\_\_\_\_

Abdomen: \_\_\_\_\_

Psychiatric Disorders: \_\_\_\_\_

Uro-genital: \_\_\_\_\_

Urine Test: \_\_\_\_\_

**OTHER**

HGT: \_\_\_\_\_

Refer for HCT: \_\_\_\_\_

Being a Registered Medical Practitioner / Clinical Nurse Health Practitioner certify that is fit to attend initiation school.

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Qualifications: \_\_\_\_\_

PRACTICE NUMBER: \_\_\_\_\_