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Title: Rain brings severe disruptions to Charles Duna Primary

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● **New Brighton school has no proper stormwater drainage**

Rain brings severe disruptions to Charles Duna Primary

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The lack of a stormwater drain recently forced Charles Duna Primary School to stop classes, and, with more rain anticipated for the region, fears of further disruptions have surfaced at the New Brighton school.

On Monday, the school's 28 teachers could not hold classes for their 1,068 pupils from several impoverished areas across the metro.

This, after heavy rains wreaked havoc over several days, causing flooding in parts of the metro, including New Brighton.

At the school, large pools of water drenched the premises due to the absence of drainage, threatening the safety of pupils and teachers.

Teachers have also expressed concern about the impact of the disruptions on midyear assessments.

Charles Duna grade 2 teacher Wendisa Moss said pupils were forced to sit idle for hours at the Nangoza Jebe Hall after not being able to attend classes.

"Classroom interactions were thwarted as we couldn't conduct teaching and learning.

"It was a mess," Moss said. "As a teacher, it has affected my planning. The curriculum is moving and I have to move along with it.

"Other activities which the school accommodates, including extramural and sports, have also been disrupted.

"We are effectively needing to recover by picking up the pace.

"However, teacher workloads inevitably increase, such as carrying out normal term tests."

Grade 7 isiXhosa and creative arts teacher Victor Hulani said classes resumed on Tues-



WATER EVERYWHERE: Charles Duna Primary School in New Brighton after the recent rain

day after municipal trucks were deployed to suck up excess rainwater.

However, yesterday morning, he said pools had formed again after rainfall the previous night.

"Teaching and learning have gone ahead, but we are afraid of further flooding in case of further rain.

"We're crossing our fingers it doesn't [rain] and we are forced to call classes off again.

"Because the school doesn't have a stormwater drain, it cannot deal with a similar event.

"It would be catastrophic."

Hulani said the school management team had since 2018 been engaged with the municipality, and the education and public works departments, on the issue.

"It is a great concern for us because of how long we have been reporting it.

"Surveyors assessed the area

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"But the excuse we received from public works was that a budget was unavailable to install the infrastructure."

Municipal communications director Sithembiso Soyaya said the local government did not get involved in school infrastructure matters.

However, he said the municipality dispatched trucks as part of disaster management in the city to clear the water.

"In any natural disaster, the municipality establishes a joint operations committee (JOC)

to look into service delivery and how communities are affected," Soyaya said.

"We responded to calls to [assist the school] to mitigate the impact on our residents.

"School infrastructure is an education department mandate, not the municipality's."

Wards 17 and 14 councillors, respectively, Ludwe Mnyandu and Mbulelo Quphe, said with more cold weather expected this winter the issue needed to be prioritised by the education department.

Their request for trucks to be dispatched to suck up the excess rainwater disrupting the schooling programme was granted.

"The school does not have a drainage system, which impedes children from moving, even as far as going to the toilet, in the case of a flood.

"It's an issue which should be taken up with education

officials and other [relevant] departments.

"This year's winter is likely to be cold and rainy, and should this happen again, it will pose a serious challenge," Mnyandu said.

Education department spokesperson Malibongwe Mtima said the department was working on a plan to ensure the situation did not occur in future and was checking the availability of resources.

"This may include bringing a building works inspector to assess the [feasibility] of having stormwater drains."

Mtima said the education department would continue working with the municipality to mitigate the impact of natural disasters on teaching and learning.

"It is the first time the school has been flooded on this scale.

"However, we will ensure it doesn't happen again."

