



National Student Financial Aid Scheme

MEDIA RELEASE

January 03, 2019

NSFAS to stop SMS communication with students due to phishing scams

The National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS) will no longer be communicating directly with students via the SMS channels during the 2019 academic year, with immediate effect, and advises students to only use the myNSFAS Online Self-Service Portal to view application status or any other information relating to funding.

Over the past two weeks, first-time applicants, returning and continuing students have been targeted in phishing email and text message scams that aim to compromise personal data. NSFAS identified scams in which fraudsters lure students into providing confidential information via a link to a site controlled by the attackers. The email or text message scam is designed to look like it is a regular message issued by the NSFAS Contact Centre.

“Unidentified attackers are posing as NSFAS representatives and sending out emails requesting applicants and progressing students to update their account information by clicking on an embedded link. We would like to warn all the applicants, students and parents to be aware of these fraudsters and take extra care when dealing with their personal information online or over the phone. Any SMS messaging regarding funding received following this message will be from fraudsters and NOT NSFAS.

We are seeing an increase in fraudulent activities, possibly due to the increase in the number of applications for 2019. We advise every student that NSFAS will never ask for your account details, password, PIN or OTP over the phone or via email,” says Dr Randall Carolissen, NSFAS Administrator.

Henceforth, NSFAS will only communicate with applicants and progressing students via the myNSFAS Online Self-Service Portal or via the NSFAS Contact Centre. Call Centre Agents will ensure that suitable precautions are being taken and key security questions are asked to positively identify the person contacted and to build trust. Other official notices will be published on the NSFAS official website www.nsfas.org.za or the official Twitter page @mysnfas.

NSFAS is working with the law enforcement agencies to investigate the matter.

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OFFICE OF THE ADMINISTRATOR

The appointment of Dr Randell Carolissen as the Administrator to the National Student Financial Aid Scheme is in terms of Section 17A (3)(a) of the NSFAS Act (Act 56 of 1999 as amended), effective from August 21, 2018 as published in the Government Gazette by the Minister of Higher Education and Training, Mrs Naledi Pandor, MP.