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THE REPUBLIC OF UGANDA

**Ministry of Education and Sports**

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**Kampala, Uganda**

In any correspondence on  
this subject please quote **ADM 235/280/01**

17<sup>th</sup> February 2021

## **PRESS INFORMATION BRIEF**

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**To : The Uganda Media Centre**

In a bid to diffuse any speculation or false information that may circulate in the media, (Print or Electronic), please receive the following highlights to keep the Public and the Members of the Press informed about the various ongoing plans by the Ministry of Education and Sports prior to the opening of schools on the 1<sup>st</sup> March 2021.

This precedes the guidelines that shall be issued to Education Institutions with a view to Effectively guide each institution.

### **Issuance of Guidelines to Education Institutions prior to opening of schools**

The Ministry of Education and Sports has developed the draft Guidelines for schools as they reopen on the 1<sup>st</sup> March 2021. These guidelines however must be aligned with the Health Guidelines and Standard Operating Procedures (SOP's) to be issued by Ministry of Health by Tuesday, 23<sup>rd</sup> February 2021. The Guidelines will be issued immediately thereafter.

### **Lost time strategy**

The Ministry is in discussions with stakeholders over the strategy to recover lost time following the unprecedented COVID 19 pandemic and the subsequent lockdown on the 20<sup>th</sup> march 2020. This strategy to guide schools on how to address

the issue of catching up with the time lost in the most practical way will be issued to schools together with the guidelines for re-opening schools next week.

The Ministry will also clarify every issue raised on the Day and Boarding schools' arrangements in the guidelines.

### **Fees**

The position of the Ministry of Education and Sports is that Schools must not increase school fees under the circumstances.

School Management Committees and Boards of governors are advised to review their budgets to address the concerns raised by parents on the issue of fees based on the length of the term that the learners will be in school.

Students in different classes will be in school for different lengths of time in accordance with the school calendar issued by the Ministry.

The Permanent Secretary will sanction changes in school dues on a case by case basis under unique circumstances on the advice of the Directors and Commissioners.

### **In case of COVID Cases reported in a school**

The Ministry has learnt many lessons from the experience and subsequent inspection of Education Institutions while candidate classes studied during their 2<sup>nd</sup> term.

The plan for the next intake is to strengthen surveillance mechanisms by increasing and monitoring the reporting lines and protocols. These protocols will be strictly followed so as to ensure safety of all learners in school.

### **Nursery School/ECD/Vaccination of Teachers**

SDG Goal 1 (Eradicate poverty) states that **Early childhood** development interventions increase adult productivity and income, and reduce inequities. The Ministry of Education and Sports is cognizant of this fact.

This therefore is to inform the public that the Ministry of Education and Sports is in the final stages of concluding the Early Childhood Development (ECD) policy that will outline best practices and procedures for providing ECD services in the country.

ECD centres (Nursery Schools) have therefore not been closed permanently as has been purported in the press.



The Health Scientists have advised the Ministry to delay the re-opening of ECD centres/Nursery schools primarily because Children/toddlers, (whose immunity is still low), are super spreaders of the COVID 19 virus. It is feared that a child contracting the COVID 19 virus may carry the virus with a very high viral load thereby putting their teachers at great risk.

It is therefore envisaged that the time for re-opening of ECD Centres is dependent on how soon teachers in these Nursery schools will be vaccinated.

### **Teachers disagreement / clash with the Ministry; Daily Monitor of 17<sup>th</sup> February 2021**

The Ministry of Education does not clash with the teachers they serve.

There are discussions that were held with the teachers where varying opinions were aired. In a discussion, it is normal to have different opinions. The Ministry has not yet had a position on any of the discussions held with the teachers on that day.

### **Schools sending circulars demanding exorbitant dues.**

The Ministry of Education and Sports has learnt that some schools are demanding that as many as 3 masks at 12,000/- per mask be purchased at the school. By any standards, such a price is too high. The Ministry has further learned that schools are demanding Jerrycans of sanitizer from the students upon reporting to school.

Those schools should stand warned, they could be de-registered.

### **International Schools standards being different from Standards for local schools with regard to which classes report for school.**

The International Schools have manageable numbers of learners. Social distancing in such schools is much easier than in other schools with much larger numbers.

Further to this, the Ministry has received reports that International Schools have subjected their teachers to COVID 19 testing. In the same vein, the Ministry of Health teams have inspected International schools that are currently open with a view to determine their readiness to open for the learners who have already reported to study. This follows the Presidential directive where the Ministry of Health was

directed to inspect International schools. The schools operating now have been granted authority to do so.

### **Study Materials**

Distribution of study materials (to schools) started on Monday, 15<sup>th</sup> February 2021. These materials will be distributed to schools and NOT to homes as earlier implemented.

Guidelines on how they will reach learners in these schools are being prepared.

Government through the Ministry of education received GPE funds for development and distribution of learning materials for primary and lower secondary schools. The GPE funds were not enough for all learners. GOU funds are filling the gap.

These shall be distributed to learners in both government and private school.

Special needs learners' materials are ready for distribution as well.

All materials **are free and no condition** should be tagged to learners before learners can access these materials.

Should there be any further clarification required, please contact the under signed.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Patrick Muinda', with a stylized flourish extending to the left.

**Patrick Muinda**

**FOR: PERMANENT SECRETARY**