



THE REPUBLIC OF UGANDA

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION & SPORTS

PRESS STATEMENT

On

**Measures to Prevent and Control the Spread Ebola Virus
Disease in Schools in Uganda**

Hon Janet K Museveni

MINISTER OF EDUCATION & SPORTS

08TH November, 2022

Press Statement on Measures to Prevent and Control the Spread of EVD in Schools in Uganda

The Ministry of Health declared an outbreak of Ebola Virus Disease (EVD) on the 20th September 2022 after a case was confirmed in Mubende Regional Referral Hospital. As far as children are concerned, they are at a high risk since they require daily contact with peers and their caregivers on a daily basis. According to the World Health Organisation (WHO), children who contract the Ebola virus are at higher risk of dying from the disease than adults.

On 26th October 2022, Ministry of Health confirmed that there were 6 cases in school-aged children who attended classes at 3 different schools in Rubaga Division of Kampala. One of the children died from the disease and 170 contacts were identified from these cases.

Among children, a total of 23 cases had been confirmed, of which; 8 had died while 5 had fully recovered and 16 were under isolation by 4th November, 2022. Overall, 11 school children have been diagnosed with EVD. Five schools in Kampala Capital City Authority, Wakiso District and Mubende District were confirmed as having had some of the children who were infected with EVD.

Minister

One child in Baby Class was stable condition and recovered, 1 Primary Six child died, while 3 children in P.2, P.4 and P.7 are in stable condition. In Mubende, 1 child in P.5 recovered and was discharged and in stable condition, while 1 pupil in P.4 is still sick and admitted.

Measures put in place to Control the spread of Ebola in Schools

Ministry of Education and Sports, worked closely with Ministry of Health has so far implemented the following measures:

- 1) Evacuated and admitted all cases confirmed in different health facilities upon detection;
- 2) Cordoned off affected schools, restricted entry and continued to trace all contacts of children and teachers in high-risk areas;
- 3) Decontamination of classes and sanitary facilities that hosted EVD positive children;
- 4) Home isolation and physical follow up on affected children;
- 5) Engaged parents/guardians of children affected by EVD on home-based care options;
- 6) Continue to conduct daily fever and symptom surveillance and reporting using the MoH toll free line.



Ministry of Education and Sports EVD Schools Interventions

- 1) Developed and issued EVD Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) to all schools (*MoES Schools Circular No. 21/2022*);
- 2) Carried out sensitization campaigns among District Education Officers and Head Teachers;
- 3) Banned visitation to all schools (*MoES School Circular No. 22/2022*);
- 4) Procured and distributed temperature guns to schools in Mubende and Kassanda districts; *and Kampala*
- 5) Directed and warned all boarding schools against sending children back home on a short-term holiday during the Primary Leaving Examinations (PLE) period so as to limit unnecessary movements that could increase the spread of the virus (*Circular No. 24/2022*);
- 6) Issued a press statement on safety measures for schools to control the spread of the EVD during PLE.
7. *we put up a temporary examination centres in Rubaga for the cases and contact-candidates.*

Early closure of Term III to decongest schools

Cabinet considered and approved a proposal from Ministry of Health to reduce Third term by two weeks so as to decongest schools that are likely to increase vulnerability of children to EVD infections. Closing schools earlier, will reduce areas of concentration where children are in daily close contact with fellow children, teachers and other staff who could potentially spread the virus.

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Therefore, the Ministry of Education and Sports wishes to inform to the public as follows:

1. Pre-Primary, Primary and Secondary schools will close for Third Term holidays on **Friday 25th November 2022**.
2. The District /City/Municipal Education officers and head teachers should take note and act accordingly
3. The schools will be required to conduct final/promotional exams a little earlier effective next week.
4. Schools should communicate and prepare learners mentally and physically to adjust to this change in the school calendar.
5. Upon completion, children will be required to immediately return safely to their homes in a staggering manner to avoid congestion and congregating.
6. The school administration will also be required to decontaminate all school facilities and make them safe for children's return next year 2023.
7. The Ministry of Education and Sports together with Ministry of Works and Transport will issue guidelines on measures to follow during transportation of learners in order to avoid congestion at bus and taxi parks.
8. The Ministry of Health will issue guidelines on the safe return of learners to their homes in the districts of Mubende and Kassanda before the close of Third Term.



The Government of Uganda together with Partners have made significant improvement in the fight against EVD. Consequently, the number of cases has since then reduced especially among children.

We appreciated all community members for being vigilant and taking responsibility of our health and the health of our school children. We are grateful to Ministry of Health for spearheading the fight against EVD. We would like to appreciate and thank WHO, UNICEF and all other partners for being true friends of Uganda. Special appreciation goes to Media fraternity for giving accurate and timely educative information to the people of Uganda

For God and My Country

 

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