



PRESS RELEASE

(For Immediate Release)

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FULL RE-OPENING OF ALL LEARNING INSTITUTIONS IN KENYA

In his New Year message to Kenyans for 2021, His Excellency President Uhuru Kenyatta, reiterated that **ALL** public and private learning institutions will fully re-open on the 4th of January 2021 for in-person learning starting from **Pre-primary level to Universities**.

The Ministry of Education wishes to assure Kenyans that all efforts have been made to ensure safe re-opening for all learners as announced by His Excellency the President.

Measures for the safe re-opening of all institutions have been informed by the important lessons learnt from the partial re-opening of schools for learners in Grade 4, Class 8 and Form 4. Out of the more than three million learners covered under the partial re-opening that started in October 2020, all reported COVID-19 cases were swiftly managed successfully with the help of technical assistance from the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Interior and Co-ordination of National Government and respective County Governments.

As part of the preparations for re-opening, the Ministry of Education, in consultation with all relevant education stakeholders, including the National Parents Association, released a revised Academic calendar in November 2020 which school administrators are advised to strictly adhere to.

Further to this, the Ministry of Education has released ***"Guidelines on Health and Safety Protocols for Re-opening of Basic Education Institutions amid the COVID-19 Pandemic"***.



To address the challenge of face masks as required in the Guidelines, all parents **MUST** provide face masks for their children. However, the Ministry of Education, in collaboration with various partners including the Ministry of Health, will avail 7 million masks for the most vulnerable children, including those from low-income backgrounds. Overall, masks are part of the school uniform hence parents and guardians are expected to acquire them for their children.

The Government has released Kshs. 4.6 billion to reach the school accounts of **ALL** public primary schools from Monday 4th January 2021 as capitation grants to facilitate implementation of health protocols including supply of running water, handwashing soap and/or sanitiser. A further Kshs. 14.9 billion for public secondary schools will be released in the course of this week.

Further, in support of re-opening, the Ministries of Education and Interior and Co-ordination of National Government will step up efforts towards ensuring that the provision of desks under the Economic Stimulus Programme is completed within two weeks.

The Teachers Service Commission has recruited 5,000 more teachers to ease the burden among the teaching staff and a further 12,000 interns will be sent to schools this term to attend to our learners.

To ensure the teachers' health is given utmost priority, the TSC has introduced a comprehensive medical insurance cover to all public school teachers who may contract COVID-19. This includes airlifting of needy cases from far flung parts of the country to ensure that they get medical attention expeditiously.



The Ministry of Transport, Infrastructure, Housing and Urban Transport has negotiated with all public service vehicle operators through the Matatu Owners Association to work with the Inspector General of Police to ensure bus fares are not raised and that only sober drivers are allowed on the roads. Rail transport will also be enhanced with an extra intercounty train introduced in the areas serviced by the rail. Additionally, vehicles have been asked to comply with all Covid-19 measures as they transport learners to schools.

Further to these measures, the Ministry wishes to advise as follows:

1. **ALL** public schools **MUST** ensure that **ALL** learners are enrolled back to school irrespective of their fees balances;
2. Learners from private schools which have closed down, **MUST** be provided with opportunities for admission in public schools as guided by the Ministry of Education;
3. National examination candidates whose schools have been closed will be enrolled in various schools from where they will sit their examinations as guided by the Ministry of Education, through the Kenya National Examinations Council.
4. National examination candidates who transfer from private schools for reasons including inability to pay school fees will be enrolled in public schools but will be required to sit their examinations in the examination centres where they registered.
5. Schools are encouraged to strengthen their COVID-19 Response Committees and maintain structured engagements with nearest health facilities, the County Rapid Response teams, National Government Administrative Officers and the Children's Department to strengthen surveillance mechanisms;



6. Schools should continue to compile lists of **ALL** learners with underlying conditions with a view to instituting additional measures to protect them from COVID-19 infections;
7. Schools should continue to enhance mechanisms for providing psycho-social support for both teachers and learners;
8. All pregnant and teenage mothers **MUST** be allowed to resume learning in line with the Ministry's School Re-entry Policy;
9. Learning institutions are advised to sustain and expand emergency isolation centres to handle any possible COVID-19 cases as they did during the partial re-opening.
10. Boards of Management shall continue to hold planning meetings to strategise on prevention and mitigation measures and will be required to monitor effectiveness of the measures put in place;
11. All institutions shall continue to engage with Parents/Guardians/Care-givers to build confidence about COVID-19 preventive and control measures that have been put in place to ensure a safe learning environment;
12. Schools shall continue to maintain updated bio-data of all learners, staff and contacts of their Parents/Guardians/Care-givers for easy management of COVID-19 related emergencies; and
13. This being the term for national examinations, **ALL** events in schools involving external persons shall remain banned.

In the spirit of the Presidential directive that there be a multi-agency approach to account for all learners during the re-opening, the Ministry directs field officers to jointly work with the Ministry of Interior and Co-ordination of National Government through the National Government Administrative Officers, the



Ministry of Health and respective County Governments to ensure that **ALL** learners return to school.

I also call upon all stakeholders including County Governments, teachers, parents/guardians/care-givers to support the Governments initiative to ensure safe re-opening and learning for all learners in all education institutions. The Ministry wishes to thank and congratulate all teachers for their gallant efforts in continuing to provide a safe learning environment during the COVID-19 pandemic era, especially during the partial re-opening of schools last term.

We wish to remind all learners that everyone is rooting for their success. Their President, His Excellency Uhuru Kenyatta, wants them to excel; their teachers want them to succeed as do their parents, Ministry of Health, police and even their chiefs. Everyone is putting their best foot forward because we all want our learners to succeed in their studies.

A lot of work and resources have gone in to the preparations to have them return to school and learn effectively. Therefore, all learners must ignore the naysayers who are out to distract them with cheap politics. Neither should they get distracted by teething problems. Anyone who is not for the learners will try to remind them, their schools, teachers and parents the reasons they will fail in the midst of these extraordinary circumstances. But there are more people in support of the learners than there are against them. We will seize this moment together, we will walk with them through thick and thin, and though we lose some battles, we will win this war together



The Government will do everything in its power to ensure that the health and safety of learners remains the foremost consideration.

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