

REPUBLIC OF KENYA

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION

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REOPENING OF LEARNING INSTIUTIONS IN KENYA

On Monday July 6th 2020, His Excellency the President Uhuru Kenyatta directed the Ministry of Education to jointly, with all the stakeholders in the sector, notify the public on the resumption of learning for Basic Education and Tertiary Institutions by today.

Following the directive, all the stakeholders who had participated in earlier consultations on the reopening of learning institutions have today held another meeting to discuss the feedback from the President to their recommendations.

We are happy to inform the country that the President accepted the stakeholders' recommendations presented to him ahead of his national address yesterday. Arising from the consultations and concurrence today, I wish to inform the country that – in consultation with the Ministry of Health and in conformity the COVID-19 mitigation measures – the stakeholders set up minimum reopening conditions as follows:

- a. Reducing physical contact in learning institutions by having fewer learners will have a great impact in reducing COVID-19 cases and fatalities associated with reopening of learning institutions
- b. Schools should only reopen when the daily percentage of confirmed positive COVID-19 cases have reduced consistently for at least 14 days (which is evidence that the country has passed the peak)
- c. Social/Physical distancing is the most critical factor in ensuring safety and health of learners for reopening of learning institutions
- d. Handwashing with soap and/or use of sanitisers, wearing of face masks and monitoring body temperature will be the minimum requirements for the health and safety of learners

The total number of confirmed COVID-19 cases in Kenya is on a steady rise, hitting 8,067 on July 6th 2020. The highest daily number of cases was reported on July 4th 2020 at 389.

Based on this disturbing trend, stakeholders have shelved an initial proposal to reopen basic education learning institutions in September for Standard Eight and Form Four candidate classes because of the following reasons:

- i. There will be Two Form One class cohorts in the 2021 academic calendar.
- ii. The country will experience equity challenges when only two basic education classes reopen and transition, while all other learners lose one year.
- iii. Although the 2020 Form Four cohort will have left, the total candidature is 752,836 against a candidature of 1,191,326 in Standard Eight. In view of the 100% transition policy, this means that there will be no classrooms for 438,490 learners in Form One. It will be therefore difficult to achieve the social/physical distancing measure.
- iv. All learners in Grade 1 to 4; Standard 5 to 7; and Form 1 to 3 in 2020, will remain in their current classes in 2021
- v. There will be no KCPE and KCSE examinations in 2021 because the current Standard 7 and Form 3 students will, practically, not be able to cover the curriculum load for 5 Terms in one year and sit for the examinations.
- vi. The number of teachers required will increase because secondary schools will have a challenge of having enough teachers, especially for optional subjects, to meet the demand of split classes. In Form One, the compulsory subjects are 11, which will necessitate employment of more teachers to handle the Form One double intake cohorts.

- vii. Inter-county movement of students in boarding schools will pose a challenge, especially for those travelling from Nairobi, Mombasa and other counties with high incidence of infection. This will contribute to a spike in the spread of infections.
- viii. Since the infection curve is rising as we approach September, many parents have expressed strong reservations to sending their children to school

Faced with this uncertain environment, the stakeholders have resolved to reopen all basic education learning institutions in January 2021. This is based on the assumption that the infection curve will have flattened by December, 2020. The implications of this resolution are that:

- i. There will be no KCPE and KCSE examinations in 2020
- ii. The 2020 Standard Eight and Form Four cohorts will sit their examinations in 2021
- iii. The 2020 school calendar year will be considered lost due to COVID-19 restrictions

These decisions made on institutions' reopening will apply to all children, including those in schools offering International Curriculum.

To ensure learners are engaged, the Ministry of Education will enhance remote learning (online, distance and e-learning) and explore innovative approaches to promote equity.

Teacher training colleges and TVET institutions will be allowed to reopen from September 2020 subject to strict adherence to the Ministry of Health COVID-19 protocols.

The Ministry of Education will issue a comprehensive circular on the reopening dates while the Kenya National Examinations Council will issue revised examination timetables.

Reopening of universities for face-to-face sessions will be on a case-by-case basis based on approved compliance with the Ministry of Health COVID-19 protocols. Universities should continue holding virtual learning and graduations for students who have successfully completed their programmes and met graduation requirements set by their respective Senates. Universities should consider phased reopening to achieve physical and social distancing, especially in halls of residence, lecture rooms and dining halls.

All institutions allowed to reopen must comply with COVID-19 regulations or risk closure.

All the decisions that we have made here with stakeholders regarding reopening of learning institutions may change as informed by reports from the Ministry of Health, prevailing circumstances and increased knowledge of the COVID-19.

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