



THE REPUBLIC OF UGANDA
MINISTRY OF EDUCATION AND SPORTS

**GUIDELINES FOR REOPENING OF EDUCATION
INSTITUTIONS AND IMPLEMENTATION OF COVID-
19 STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES (SOPs)**

SEPTEMBER 2020

Contents

1.	INTRODUCTION	1
2.	PURPOSE OF THE GUIDELINES	1
3.	STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES FOR INSTITUTIONS OF LEARNING DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC	1
4.	PHASED RE-OPENING OF EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS	1
5.	REOPENING OF INTERNATIONAL SCHOOLS	2
6.	GUIDELINE FOR TRANSPORTATION OF LEARNERS AND STAFF	2
7.	SAFE EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS OPERATIONS:	3
8.	EFFECTIVE UTILIZATION OF SCHOOL FACILITIES	5
9.	REORGANIZATION OF SCHOOL PROGRAMMES	5
10.	MANAGEMENT OF STAFF AND CAPACITY BUILDING	6
11.	PROVISION OF FACILITIES FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF THE SOPs	7
12.	SCHOOL FEES	7
13.	GENERAL APPEAL	7

1. INTRODUCTION

Uganda is implementing comprehensive national efforts to control the spread of Covid-19. As part of these efforts, H.E. the President, directed all education institutions to close effect from 20th March 2020. Education institutions have remained closed as Government continues to manage the spread of the pandemic. However, Government has been gradually easing the lockdown on different sectors as advised by the technical team of scientists and Ministry of Health. A decision has now been taken to allow education institutions to reopen in a phased manner under clear Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs).

Ministry of Education and Sports is issuing these guidelines to help education institutions take the necessary steps in mitigation of the risk of transmission and spread of the disease and to reduce the impact of the pandemic on teaching and learning. These guidelines, together with the standard operating procedures that have been issued by Ministry of Health, should guide managers of education institutions on what needs to be done to create a safe environment for both learners and staff within our education institutions.

2. PURPOSE OF THE GUIDELINES

The purpose of these guidelines is to provide actionable guidance for safe reopening and running of education institutions through effective implementation of *Standard Operating Procedures for Institutions of Learning during the Covid-19 pandemic*.

3. STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES FOR INSTITUTIONS OF LEARNING DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

Ministry of Health, in collaboration with Ministry of Education and Sports, developed *Standard Operating Procedures for Institutions of Learning during the Covid-19 pandemic* to provide practical guidance on establishing and operating a safe learning environment in education institutions in the context of ongoing Covid-19 pandemic.

All education institutions in Uganda are required to adhere to the requirements of the SOPs when they reopen.

4. PHASED RE-OPENING OF EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

- i. Education institutions shall reopen starting **15th October 2020 for candidate classes (P7, S4 and S6) and final year students in higher institutions of**

learning. Institutions shall follow a revised national education institutions calendar as shall be provided.

- ii. Education institutions shall resume full operations for all learners when Ministry of Education, working with Ministry of health, determines that it safe for institutions to operate at full capacity.
- iii. Special schools for learners with special needs may open and operate for all classes provided they have the capacity to adhere to the social distancing of at least two metres.
- iv. All primary and secondary schools that reopen shall operate either as day or boarding schools but not both.

5. REOPENING OF INTERNATIONAL SCHOOLS

The general guidelines on safety measures for reopening of education institutions shall apply to international schools in Uganda.

However, given that these schools follow the school calendar of their international affiliates and their candidate classes do not correspond to the standard education cycles in Uganda, international schools in Uganda may reopen with guidance from Ministry of Health.

6. GUIDELINE FOR TRANSPORTATION OF LEARNERS AND STAFF

- i. Parents are advised that under this emergency public health situation, they should, as much as possible, identify schools nearest their home to enroll their children for the meantime to avoid risks, unnecessary costs and inconveniences of long distance travel to schools.
- ii. Schools in urban centres, where many learners need to use public means, are advised as follows:
 - a. The school administration shall register all learners and their modes of transport to and from school.
 - b. Learners who walk to school or are transported by private means to schools may continue to do so; however, they may not use public transport on any occasion, even when they cannot walk or be privately transported to and from school by their parents/guardians.
 - c. Schools shall ensure that the private means vehicles and drivers are registered with the school and are the only ones allowed to transport the learners.

- d. The schools, working with urban authorities, shall organize dedicated vans/buses on designated routes to transport learners, including learners with special needs, who cannot walk or be transported privately to school. Such transport should be within a radius of 5kms and shall observe the standard operating procedures for public transport as issued by H.E. the President.
- e. Teachers who are not accommodated at school and do not use private transport shall use the dedicated school buses/vans on designated routes as in ii (c) above.
- iii. Learners and teachers shall not be allowed to move to and from school on general public transport, including taxis, vans and buses.

7. SAFE EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS OPERATIONS:

The SOPs, a copy of which is attached, provide detailed requirements for risk reduction of the spread of Covid-19 in the operations of education institutions. Institution should fully internalize and adhere to the requirements in the SOPs.

The following are highlights, clarifications and additions for implementation of implementation of the SOPs to guarantee safety and protection of learners and staff in education institutions.

However, it is the primary responsibility of the heads of education institutions, working with School Management Committees, Boards of Governors or Governing Councils, to create a safe learning environment. The management of institutions should put in place all appropriate measures for prevention and management of Covid-19.

- i. Prior to reopening, the management of each education institution serving as quarantine centres shall undertake to ensure that if their institution is disinfected and confirmed as safe for resumption operations. The disinfection shall be done with support of the respective district Covid-19 taskforce.
- ii. The management of all education institutions shall hold a staff meeting to discuss the implementation of the SOPs within the institution and agree on appropriate classrooms and dormitory spaces to ensure physical spacing of 2 meters between learners in class and in dormitories
- iii. Each institution shall constitute a Covid-19 Committee of not more than seven (7) members, including two (2) learners and a member of the support staff. The role of the Covid-19 Committee shall be to initiate, implement and monitor measures for prevention of the spread of Covid-19.

- iv. It will also be the responsibility of Covid-19 Committee to collect, manage and pass on records of daily monitoring of learners temperature and other health conditions to the District Covid-19 Taskforce.
- v. The District Taskforce shall takeover situation management in case of suspected or confirmed case(s) in an education institution.
- vi. Each class/lecture room shall have a student monitor responsible for promoting compliance to Covid-19 control and safety measures
- vii. All education institutions shall ensure that all members of the school community observe recommended social distancing of at least 2metres, effective and frequent hand washing and proper use of facial masks that must be worn at all times. Each learner should have a minimum of two face masks.
- viii. Education institutions shall take every precaution to ensure that no learner, who is reported to have entered the country illegally, is allowed into institution premises. Such learners should be reported to the relevant authorities for necessary action.
- ix. Education institutions shall restrict entry to their premises by members of the public.
- x. All education institutions shall ensure that adequate security and safety measures, including provision of a fence/ barrier and guards to restrict entry to and exit from institutional premises.
- xi. Education institutions should provide extra support to safeguard vulnerable learners, including SNE learners, and learners with identified health conditions.
- xii. Institutions should establish or strengthen collaboration with Covid-19 District Taskforce and social service providers for continuity of critical services in institutions such as health screening, school feeding programs, guidance and counseling.
- xiii. Each institution should appoint a member of staff from the established Covid-19 taskforce to be a Community Liaison Officer (CLO). The CLO shall coordinate the institution's relationship and engagement with the community to promote observance of Covid-19 control measures.
- xiv. Institutions should guide and counsel learners against Covid-19 related stigmatization.

- xv. All education institutions should conduct behavior change and health education sessions for staff and learners and provide reminders on safety, in form of posters, on safe behaviour.

8. EFFECTIVE UTILIZATION OF SCHOOL FACILITIES

Implementation of the SOPs requires ample facilities such as classrooms, desks and hand washing equipment, which may not be readily available in all institutions. It is necessary that institutions effectively utilize the available facilities to implement the requirements of the SOPs.

- i. Each institution should re-arrange the sitting of learners using all available rooms within the school to ensure the required social distancing. This may include use of libraries, laboratories, dining halls, main halls where available.
- ii. Where classrooms have temporary partitions, institutions should remove the partitions to create larger rooms for ample sitting and aeration/ventilation.
- iii. Where available, main halls, dining halls and other large rooms should be prioritized for use as classrooms to ensure that available teachers cater for a sizeable number of learners per class. However, such rooms should accommodate only the appropriate number of learners that ensures the specified physical distancing.
- iv. A foot-operated hand washing facility shall be placed at strategic point of access to each block (and floor where applicable) used by learners and staff. Schools are advised to improvise with available containers and local materials to provide safe hand washing.
- v. Safe temporary shelters, such as tents, may be used as classrooms. Open air spaces, such as tree shades may be improvised as temporary venues for some classes.

9. REORGANIZATION OF SCHOOL PROGRAMMES

To minimize the risk of Covid-19 and ensure recovery of lost learning time, institutions should review their programmes and prioritize curriculum completion.

- i) There shall be no group and close contact co-curricular activities in all education institutions until further notice. Nevertheless, learners should be guided to engage in individual health exercise such stretching and push-ups while observing the social distancing of at least two metres.

- ii) All education institutions shall avoid general assemblies that bring together a large number of students.
- iii) There shall be no external mocks or other external examinations organized for students in secondary and primary schools.
- iv) Institution heads should ensure that all staff integrate COVID-19 awareness and prevention messages in every lesson.
- v) There shall be no career days, class days or official visitation days, in education institutions until further notice.
- vi) Mid-morning and lunch breaks shall be staggered and fully supervised by the teachers for adherence to social distancing, wearing of face masks and hand washing.
- vii) Institutions with large numbers of candidate/final year classes, which cannot be accommodated in the available classrooms at the social distancing of two metres, shall make arrangements to operate either:
 - a. Morning and afternoon shifts. Where this is applicable, the morning shift shall end at 12:30pm and the afternoon shift shall start at 2:00pm to allow for disinfection of the affected surfaces before the next shift or
 - b. An alternate-day attendance schedule where different streams attend on alternate days as may be deemed appropriate, in a bid to ensure that numbers are manageable.
- viii) For boarding institutions, after-class afternoon and evening programmes shall not involve team or group and close contact sports or activities; and they shall be supervised by a dedicated team of staff. Every dormitory shall have a resident tutor to supervise adherence to the SOPs.
- ix) Institutions should not keep learners beyond the official school closing time.

10. MANAGEMENT OF STAFF AND CAPACITY BUILDING

- i. Schools that do not employ a qualified and dedicated health worker shall establish a formal collaboration with a health facility within a radius of 5kms for quick response and management of emerging health issues.
- ii. Each education institution shall work closely with the district Covid-19 taskforce to organize basic training for its staff on management of Covid-19.
- iii. Institutions shall build staff awareness and knowledge on Covid-19 safety measures through regular sharing of accurate information and literature.

- iv. Education institutions shall use only full-time staff, who shall not be allowed to part-time in other institutions.

11. PROVISION OF FACILITIES FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF THE SOPs

- i. The Permanent Secretary shall provide detailed guidance to institutions that receive capitation grants from Government on how additional facilities for implementation of the SOPs may be acquired.
- ii. Proprietors of private education institutions are advised to mobilize resources to ensure compliance with the SOPs.
- iii. All education institutions' budgets shall be reviewed to give priority to improved hygiene management, including disinfection of frequently touched surfaces such as desk tops, door handles, light switches, door frames and book covers.
- iv. Government of Uganda shall supply two standard face masks to each candidate/final year student reporting back to school/institution. Learners should have at least one more face mask when reporting to school.

12. SCHOOL FEES

- i. Education institutions shall engage their parents/guardians to adopt flexible fees payment arrangements and allow payment in appropriate installments.
- ii. The management and governance of all education institutions shall review institutional annual work plans and budgets to realign them with the changes in education institution programmes and priorities.
- iii. Education institutions shall not increase fees.

13. GENERAL APPEAL

All heads of education institutions are reminded that the country is still at high of the Covid-19 and maximum care must be exercised at all times. Having accurate information and facts about COVID-19 will help diminish students' fears and anxieties about the disease and will ultimately help them cope with measures that are being undertaken to minimize the risks of infection.

Education managers are further reminded to build and maintain strong collaboration with health facilities and workers in their neighbourhoods and always seek for guidance and support from your respective district Covid-19 taskforce.