



MINISTRY OF EDUCATION

Ministerial Policy Statement 2/2021

SUSPENSION OF CLASSES FOR FOUR (4) WEEKS FOR SCHOOLS IN THE NATIONAL EDUCATION SYSTEM DUE TO COVID19.

Purpose

Given the recent surge in the number of COVID 19 cases across the country, the government will announce a National Isolation Strategy with the specific instructions to contain the surge.

Schools pose a huge challenge given the practical difficulties we have to apply and comply with the COVID 19 preventive measure like social distancing. It is possible that nationwide school suspensions or closures can help contain the spread of the virus, thereby reducing its impact on individuals, groups, health systems, and the economy as a whole.

Direction on Suspension of Classes

Therefore, consistent with Sections 27 and 91 of the Education Act 1983, I as the Minister responsible for education give direction for the suspension of schools in the General Education Sector for four (4) weeks. Specifically, it is from 22 March 2021 to 19th April, 2021. According to the Education Calendar, it will be Week 8, 9, 10 of Term 1 and the Term 1 Holiday week.

Lord willing, we will resume for normal classes on Monday 19 April, 2021.

This approval for suspension will apply to

- (a) provincial institutions (namely, pre-schools, elementary schools, primary schools, high schools, secondary schools and vocational institutions) and

- (b) national institutions, namely national high schools, Inclusive Education Resource Centers and FODE (tutorials).

The approval for suspension means that there will be no formal classes, tests, and examinations conducted at a school.

Protocols for Provincial Schools:

1. Each Provincial Education Board in consultation with the respective Provincial Government and Health authorities will determine the smooth implementation of this suspension of classes;
2. Teachers who do come to schools during the suspension to set students homework and other tasks must strictly follow pandemic control and preventive measures at all times. Schools gates must be locked and secured; and
3. School heads and Teachers during the suspension are to work on plans to recover lessons once schools resume, set termly programs, lesson plans, homework, tests and examinations.

Protocols for the National High Schools and Inclusive Education Resource Centers:

1. All national high schools will be locked down, and boarding students must strictly follow COVID19 prevention directives;
2. Students who can return home, can be allowed to do so, but they will not return until classes resume;
3. Huge school gatherings involving more than 20 students are prohibited;
4. For every teacher and student who will remain in schools, the whole community must be properly educated and they participate in practical drills on control and preventative measures; and
5. Contacts with outsiders must be limited and highly controlled.

Protocols for Teachers Colleges and Technical Colleges

The directions to be given by the Department of Higher Education, Research, Science and Technology should be adhered to.

Protocols for Private Schools:

All private schools are urged to follow COVID19 prevention directives and suspend classes for the period of suspension too. All respective boards of private schools must implement directives of the National Pandemic Control Centre and this Office.

Lessons during the suspension period:

The Department will use three modes namely, Radio, Television and the internet to deliver lessons for key subjects during the suspension period. Details will be made known in a Secretary's Circular.

A Secretary's Circular will also suggest plans schools will take to recover lessons lost during the suspension. We will also make an assessment and advise if there will be any change to the national examination dates soon.

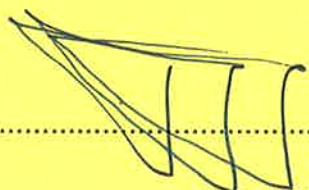
Emergency Contacts:

If there is a suspected case in a school community, the individual(s) must be immediately isolated, and you call the local medical center and authorities.

Conclusion

It is with a heavy heart that I am compelled to issue this direction, but it is done for the greater good and welfare of our students, teachers and the community at large. I urge all of us to follow all the basic preventative measures to stay away from the virus and protect others as well.

Please listen to the local radio and watch out for other messages and directions we will send out to schools related to this suspension of classes.



HON. JIMMY UGURO MP
Minister for Education

