



Head teachers face demotion, salary cuts in new guidelines

Education ministry cracks down on absenteeism, illegal school charges, and poor supervision, warning head teachers that failure to comply with new directives could cost them their positions and pay.

BY NOELINE NABUKENYA

The government, through the Ministry of Education and Sports (MoES), has issued tough new guidelines to head teachers, warning that failure to comply could result in demotion or salary sanctions.

Mr Cleophus Mugenyi, the commissioner for Basic Education and acting head of Basic and Secondary Education, said some head teachers have developed a tendency of neglecting their responsibilities while overloading teachers, a practice that ultimately harms learners.

"That tendency of walking around the school like a boss should end. We need your full engagement in all activities at the school," he said while addressing a Wakiso head teachers' meeting at Wakissha Resource Centre in Wakiso Town Council on Wednesday.

Among the new directives is a warning to government schools to stop extorting parents. While schools in urban districts are permitted to charge modest fees, they are not supposed to exploit families.

Mr Mugenyi revealed that a Universal Primary Education (UPE) school in Kajjansi Town Council is charging more than some private schools, prompting parents to petition the Minister of Education and Sports.

"They have the proof of receipts. One child pays Shs230,000 for lunch only, on top of school fees and other requirements that they have to buy from the school," he said, warning that such institutions will be investigated and head teachers held accountable.

In their letter, parents explained that the alleged extortion has led to high dropout rates, with some children required to pay half of the fees on reporting day.

"Government schools receive capitation grants, and moving forward, all head teachers must publicly display proof of funds received on school notice boards so that parents can track remittances to school accounts," says Mr Mugenyi.

Head teachers are now required to teach at least six lessons a week and must prepare schemes of work and lesson plans.

"You are asking teachers for their scheme of work; where is yours, sir or madam?" Mr Mugenyi asked.

He also directed school heads to ensure full accountability for all funds received from the government.

Schools must now organise mentorship programmes for teachers, emphasising that poor performance is not necessarily a sign of incompetence but a need for support, supervision, and motivation.

A section of head teachers during the meeting at Wakissha Resource Centre in Wakiso Town Council last week. PHOTOS/NOELINE NABUKENYA

"Avoid overblaming teachers. They are prone to mistakes just like you. Handle them professionally and encourage them to rectify those mistakes once committed," the commissioner advised. Individual head teachers will also be held accountable for poor Primary Leaving Examinations (PLE) results, with some facing demotion if performance does not improve. He said it was unacceptable for learners to continue failing while administrators remain in position.

Similarly, head teachers from schools repeatedly implicated in examination malpractice will lose their jobs.

Absenteeism

Absenteeism was another major concern raised during the meeting. Head teachers were urged to lead by example.

"As a head teacher, you are the first to be present at the school and ensure your teachers are also at school on time," he said.

Chronic absenteeism has been reported in rural schools in Namayumba, Mende, and Masuliuta sub-counties, where some head teachers fail to stay at their duty stations due to challenges such as lack of electricity and water.

During recent visits to some of these schools, officials found cases where head teachers had spent an entire week away. They have now been urged to serve with passion and remain present even on weekends when duty calls.

Learner absenteeism was also cited. According to the recently released 2025 PLE results, Makindye Ssabagabo Mu-

nicipality recorded the highest number of absent candidates in the country.

The Chief Administrative Officer, Jude Mark Bukunya, was tasked with withholding salaries of teachers who miss classes without valid reasons.

Schools were further urged to comply with child protection laws by avoiding corporal punishment and harsh disciplinary measures, particularly in private institutions.

"There are alternative ways of managing undisciplined learners. You will be haunted if we receive such complaints," Mr Mugenyi warned.

The ministry also called for the adoption of distributed leadership, noting that some schools rely entirely on the head teacher, paralysing operation in their absence.

In addition, all schools have been directed to teach learners how to sing national anthems in their local languages from Nursery to Primary Three.

Mr Mugenyi asked the acting District Education Officer for Wakiso, Ritah Nanyanzi, to provide schools with an accurate Luganda version of them.

"Being their mother tongue is easy for them to understand by the time they transition to the time they know the meaning of the said.

Set clear targets

To improve performance, teachers were advised to set targets, implement improvement plans, and closely monitor progress.

Mr Musa Birungi, the charge of Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) at the ministry, urged schools to prioritise sanitation.

He said standards require schools to have adequate water and handwashing points.

"Engage parents to help keep our children in school. With all these stakeholders making it," he said.

Schools were also encouraged to create a more conducive learning environment.

Addressing security, Mr Juma Kiindiki, District Commissioner of Kasangati, urged schools to remain vigilant and thorough.

"Our intelligence shows there are some groups that burn schools in the country. District schools also have a role to play in other and may harm to children."

Ms Nanyanzi said she would ensure the directives are implemented.



TIP

Caution. Individual head teachers will also be held accountable for poor Primary Leaving Examinations (PLE) results, with some facing demotion if performance does not improve. It is unacceptable for learners to continue failing while administrators remain in position. Mr Cleophus Mugenyi, the commissioner for Basic Education and acting head of Basic and Secondary Education



From the left: Mr Cleophus Mugenyi, Commissioner for Basic Education, Mr Musa Birungi, and Ms Ritah Nanyanzi, District Education Officer for Wakiso District. PHOTOS/NOELINE NABUKENYA