

EDITOR'S PICK

Mengo SS uses MDD to nurture careers

With the school term ending, schools are increasingly turning to co-curricular activities to nurture talent, build confidence and prepare learners for life beyond the classroom. At Mengo Senior School, this shift was on full display last week as they held an inter-house Music, Dance and Drama (MDD) competition. /P20



Kushemererwa uses technology to build French speakers

Mr Michael Kushemererwa is a seasoned educator specialising in the French language who has extended his expertise into the digital space. Through his online instruction, he guides learners from basic proficiency to advanced mastery. /P19

attending
holiday lessons.
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The puzzle of holiday coaching and resting

Turn a deaf ear. Teaching during the holidays, according to the sector guidelines, is punishable by either closing the schools or withdrawing licences of the headteachers or both. But many schools have continued with the vice, claiming coaching offers better supervision and yields results.

BY SYLVIA NAMAGEMBE

As schools close the first term of this academic year, what should be a period of rest for students is increasingly turning into an extension of the academic calendar, with many schools rolling out holiday coaching programmes and extra academic work.

In several schools, especially for candidate classes such as primary seven, senior four, and senior six, holiday packages now include structured revision schedules, secretive physical or online classes, and continuous assessments.

In 2007, the Ministry of Education and Sports banned holiday coaching sessions in schools, to allow learners time to rest. Teaching during the holidays, according to the sector guidelines, is punishable by either closing the schools or withdrawing licenses of the headteachers or both.

Despite the ban, some schools continue to prioritise in-person holiday coaching often discreetly, arguing that it offers better supervision and results.

A Wakiso-based science teacher, who only preferred to be identified as Paul, said physical presence allows teachers to closely monitor learners' progress.

"The patterns of an idle holiday can set students back when they return next term. If parents accept the program for the benefit of the child's performance, especially the candidates, we offer it because they can easily be guided, corrected immediately, and kept focused," he said.

He added that online learning presents challenges.

"Many get distracted or do not even log in at all. Others lack access to stable internet and devices, making physical coaching more prac-

tical and inclusive," he explained.

The differing approaches have sparked debate among parents, students, and policy-makers over what role school holidays should play in a learner's academic journey. However, some schools are adopting online ventures, citing flexibility and reduced costs.

Ms Racheal Namaweje, a teacher at Emirates High School, said virtual learning allows students to balance revision with rest. She explains that the school uses recorded sessions and assignments to keep learners engaged without overwhelming them.

"Online sessions are shorter and more focused. A learner can attend a two or one-hour class and still have the rest of the day to relax. The holiday packages provided are always brief to just keep the minds awake in revision to avoid a setback and to specific candidature classes," she said.

She noted that digital platforms also reduce logistical costs for parents.

"There is no transport, no feeding costs, and it is safer because learners remain at home," she added.

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