State House toughens on illegal UPE, USE charges

By Rhyman Agaba

The State House education desk has warned headteachers of government-aided schools against charging illegal fees, saying operations to arrest culprits have kicked off.

Jimmy Nambiro, the private secretary to the President in charge of education, said his office is actively enforcing the President Yoweri Museveni's directive banning extra charges in schools offering Universal Primary Education (UPE) and Universal Secondary Education (USE).



Nambiro on Tuesday at his office in Nakasero, Kampala.

ILLEGAL FEES COMPLAINTS

The move follows repeated complaints from parents, who accuse school heads of demanding illegal fees despite the clear government policy on free education that bans the same.

"We have kicked off operations to ensure that headteachers and school administrators who continue to charge illegal fees are held accountable," Nambiro told *New Vision* in an interview

THE PRESIDENT'S APPEAL

President Museveni has consistently directed that all schools operating under UPE and USE should not charge additional fees, arguing that such practices undermine the Government's efforts to provide free and accessible education to all Ugandan children.

In May 2024, the President cautioned government-aided schools against imposing illegal charges.

His warning echoed earlier directives dating back to July 2010, when he proposed establishing a public hotline for reporting schools that violate the free education policy.

According to Nambiro, the extra charges—often approved by school management committees or Parent-Teacher Associations (PTAs)—have contributed significantly to high school dropout rates, particularly among children from families of low-income earners.

Beyond illegal fees, Nambiro also raised concerns about examination malpractices in schools, particularly during national examinations.

Nambiro lauded the First Lady and education minister, Mrs Janet Mueveni, for her efforts in improving the education sector.

He tasked parents with stepping up their efforts by at least providing uniforms for the learners and advised them to tap into government programmes like the Parish Development Model to uplift themselves from poverty.