Ebola: Govt issues school guidelines

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KAMPALA. As learners prepare to report back to school next week, the Ministry of Health has released a standard operating procedures (SOPs) to guide prevention and control measures against Ebola Virus Disease (EVD) in educational institutions during the current outbreak.

According to the circular, the SOPs are intended to support a safe learning environment while minimising the risk of Ebola transmission.

"Schools are environments where learners, teachers, support staff, parents, and visitors interact closely, making them vulnerable to the spread of infectious diseases if preventive measures are not observed," part of the statement reads.

The Ministry of Health explained that SOPs provide practical measures for school administrators, teachers, learners, non-teaching staff, parents, and visitors to ensure early detection, prevention, and appropriate response to suspected Ebola cases within school settings.

According to the ministry guidelines, all schools have been guided to provide hand washing facilities with clean running water and soap at school entrances, classrooms, dormitories, dining areas, toilets, and staff rooms, among others.

The ministry has directed education institutions to enforce mandatory hand washing for all learners, staff, and visitors upon entry and at regular intervals.

The other measures include establishing temperature screening points at school entrances, restricting entry for persons with Ebola symptoms, regularly cleaning and disinfecting classrooms, dormitories, toilets and bathrooms, dining halls, school vehicles and frequently touched surfaces, as well as ensuring proper waste management and disposal.

The ministry has also discouraged handshakes, hugging, and sharing personal items, urging schools and institutions to keep classrooms and dormitories well ventilated by opening windows and doors where possible.

The other measures are to minimise non-essential gatherings and assemblies, suspend activities, on advice from the Ministry of Health or relevant authorities.

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