

B1 RES OWICH

GULU. Schools in Gulu City operating illegal boarding facilities risk losing their licences for violating Ministry of Education and Sports guidelines, city authorities have warned.

The warning follows reports that several schools in the city are running unauthorised night boarding facilities despite lacking the required licences and safety clearances.

Gulu City Town Clerk Innocent Ahimbisibwe said investigations had established that some schools were providing overnight accommodation to learners without approval from the Education ministry.

In a May 6 letter copied to the Resident City Commissioner, the mayor, City Police Commander, and the secretary for health and education, Mr Ahimbisibwe directed the affected schools to immediately stop the practice.

Gulu City cracks down on illegal school boarding facilities

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"This letter serves as a formal warning regarding the unauthorised operation of boarding facilities in Gulu City following a recent incident at Layibi Central Primary School," the letter reads in part.

"I learnt that some schools are offering overnight residential services and dormitories to learners without the required licences, permits, or safety certificates from the Ministry of Education and Sports," it adds.

Mr Ahimbisibwe warned that schools found flouting the guidelines would face legal action, including closure and possible criminal charges.

"To avoid further legal action, including revocation of your licence and po-

tential criminal charges, you are directed to cease residential services immediately by stopping overnight boarding operations," he warned.

PROPOSAL

In January 2024, education stakeholders appearing before the Education Policy Review Commission proposed restrictions on boarding schools, particularly for lower primary learners. The educationists argued that young children are more vulnerable in boarding settings and called for stricter regulation of dormitories to improve safety.

diately by stopping overnight boarding operations," he warned.

According to city authorities, both government-aided and privately owned schools are implicated in the illegal practice.

Most of the learners reportedly staying in the unauthorised boarding facilities are Primary Leaving Examination (PLE) candidates preparing for national examinations later this year.

However, several school administrators contacted by *Daily Monitor* declined to comment on the matter for fear of sanctions from authorities.

The Town Clerk further directed school managements to notify parents and guardians before the start of second term and ensure affected learners

either return home or are relocated to licensed boarding schools.

"Ensure all learners living in alleged boarding facilities vacate the premises with immediate effect unless permission is obtained from the Ministry of Education and Sports," the directive states.

Authorities also emphasised that schools have a responsibility to guarantee the safety and welfare of learners under their care.

The crackdown comes amid growing national concerns over the safety of boarding schools, especially following a series of deadly fire outbreaks in schools across the country that have claimed lives and destroyed property worth millions of shillings.