

Newspapers in Education

With second term starting, anxiety of schooling resumes

With the start of the second term, this week, many parents are starting to suffer anxiety attacks. For some there is the pressure of completing last term's tuition balances, before the start of the second term. Yet others are concerned about raising the new tuition fees, which in many schools, are set to increase this term.

For those in the candidate classes, the pressure to excel in national exams at the end of the year, makes more demands. Tuition fees must be paid on time, along with registration fees to the Uganda National Examination Board, to ensure participation in the decisive exams at the end of the year. Those in these candidate classes are also preparing for preparatory exams, usually known as Mocks.

Some parents are also looking to ensure that students are well dressed, equipped with sufficient scholastic supplies, such as uniforms, as well as assorted materials, such as confectionaries. Beyond this many schools also have stiff requirements, which must be met before learners are admitted. These include mundane items such as reams of paper, bags of cement, special clothing items like pajamas and other consumables. These needs come with increased

demands on already stressed parents, who are looking to support their children in school, as they start the second term.

Equally worrying is the fate of those who may, for one reason or other, seek to change schools, in order to embrace a better learning environment. Many schools are unwilling to admit new students in the second term, so some are left with the prospect of repeating a class, or staying at home, and wait for the end of the year. This, if unchecked, can result in school dropout cases, that continue to puzzle education planners in the country.

When all these boxes are ticked, there is still the hectic process of transporting learners back to boarding school. Many parents and learners will have to endure terrible traffic jams to get to school, since most schools open on the same day or within the same week. The traffic challenges come at a time when many are also enduring high fuel prices and increased transport fares.

This pressure, if not properly managed, can affect the wellbeing of parents, learners and even teachers. It is therefore important for schools and families to adopt practical ways of managing stress during this period. Families should al-

so avoid borrowing beyond their ability to repay simply to meet unrealistic expectations.

Schools, too, need to exercise understanding and flexibility. Sending away learners because of small fee balances only increases emotional stress and interrupts learning. School administrators should maintain open communication with parents and where possible allow flexible payment arrangements.

Students are equally affected by the pressure that comes with reopening. Some return to school worried about academic performance, while others carry emotional stress from challenges faced at home during holidays. Guidance and counselling departments should therefore play a stronger role in helping learners settle mentally and emotionally at the beginning of term.

There is also need for schools to reconsider unnecessary requirements that continue to burden parents. Education should not become more difficult because of avoidable costs and excessive demands. Above all, families and schools must pay attention to mental wellbeing. Stress that is ignored can lead to poor performance, conflict and emotional breakdowns. Best of luck with the second term.

The NIE welcomes comments and suggestions from readers, especially secondary school students. If you would like your suggestions, complements published, send them to our regular email address - niecontent@ug.nationmedia.com

NIE MAGAZINE

Managing Director: Susan Nsibirwa

Ag General Manager Editorial: Allan Chekwech

Managing Editor: Allan Chekwech

Education Editor: Moses Talemwa

Sub-Editor: Tonny Musani

Contributors: Sylvia Katushabe, Karim Muyobo, Patricia Kihunde, Patricia Nataka, Shabbah Nakirigya, Jane Nafula



SEND YOUR QUESTIONS OR COMMENTS TO

niecontent@ug.nationmedia.com