

National News

Kagadi private schools face closure over licences

The crackdown follows the release of a list on April 6, this year, with authorities citing widespread non-compliance and poor infrastructure.

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More than 200 private schools operating without valid licenses in Kagadi District are set to be closed, effective next term, as the district moves to enforce compliance with regulations set by the Ministry of Education and Sports.

The crackdown follows the release of a list on April 6, this year, with authorities citing widespread non-compliance and poor infrastructure.

The decision comes in the wake of a recent scandal involving Titus Mukwasira, the director of Kabuga Demonstration Nursery and Primary School, who allegedly forged Primary Leaving Examination (PLE) results and recommendations for candidates, later sold the school and disappeared.

Education officials said the incident exposed serious oversight gaps and highlighted the need to strictly regulate private schools.

Kagadi District has a total of 503 primary schools, of which 136 are government-aided and 367 are privately owned. However, only 164 private schools currently hold valid operational licences.

According to district data, at least 200 private schools are operating illegally, while others have expired provisional licences or lack key requirements such as Education Management Information System (EMIS) numbers.

A total of 10 private schools this term did not reopen, after they were earlier given notice of non-compliance of hav-



Good Times school, one of the unlicensed schools that faces closure in Kagadi District. PHOTO/SEGUJJA BYOMUGABI.

ing a valid licence, while 19 schools that are still operating are not registered under EMIS.

District leaders said many of the affected schools fall short of the minimum standards required for operation. Ms Pauline Opodoi Apio, the chief administrative officer (CAO) of Kagadi District, said some schools lack basic facilities.

"How can a school operate without latrines, trained teachers, or enough space for learners? What kind of results do we expect? These conditions put learners at risk of disease outbreaks and compromise the quality of education," she said.

She decried pit-latrines shortage in schools, saying this forces learners and teachers to share the few available.

"This is not just about education; it is about health and dignity. Overcrowding in sanitation facilities increases the risk



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of disease outbreaks," Ms Opodoi added.

The Resident District Commissioner (RDC), Ms Caroline Nanshemeza, said enforcement of the closures will begin at the start of the second term.

"Parents have already paid school fees and learners are preparing to sit for end of term exams. We have allowed this

term as a grace period. However, no unlicensed school will be allowed to reopen next term," she warned.

She added that the district security committee had resolved that all schools which do not meet the requirements must stop operations.

"There is no debate about this. Schools must meet the standards set by the Ministry of Education," she emphasised.

Under the Education Act (2008), all schools—whether pre-primary, primary or post-primary—are required to obtain an operational licence before commencing activities.

Inspectors said some schools were previously granted provisional licences, but failed to meet the conditions required for full licensing even after repeated warnings.

"We have given them several reminders and many have not complied. We

are now implementing the policy," said Mr Julius Alinda, the senior inspector of schools in Kagadi District.

The enforcement comes amid a broader challenge of limited access to government schools across the district.

According to district officials, more than 60 parishes and 16 sub-counties in Kagadi lack government-aided primary schools, forcing communities to rely heavily on private institutions.

Mr Peter Zilapa, secretary for health and education, acknowledged the gap but insisted that compliance cannot be compromised.

"Private schools are filling an important gap, especially in underserved areas. However, they must operate legally. Even if they are profit-driven, they provide an essential service and must meet the required standards," he said.

He added that district officials have written to the Ministry of Education requesting government support to expand access to public schools in underserved areas schooling options.

District officials said affected learners will be absorbed into licensed schools.

Private school proprietors argued that compliance is often hindered by financial constraints.

The Director of Ebenezer Primary School, Mr Jackson Kwesiga, said low enrolment levels limit revenue, making it difficult to invest in infrastructure and meet licensing requirements.

"Starting a school is an investment, but enrolment is often low. The little money we collect goes into salaries and operational costs. Some of us have loans to pay. We need more time to raise funds and meet the requirements," he argued.

Following the release of the list of non-compliant schools, some proprietors have responded and secured temporary one-year licences to allow them to meet the necessary standards.

The Kagadi District Chairperson, Mr Ndibwami B Yosia, acknowledged that private schools play a big role in easing congestion in government school.

He added that some government schools host more than 1,500 pupils with limited teaching staff, underscoring the importance of private sector participation in education.

Data from the district shows that Buyaga West and Buyaga East constituencies have the highest number of unlicensed schools. Kyaterekeru Sub-county leads with 16 unlicensed schools.