

GOVT DROPS THE BALL

Break the rules. Several schools have been holding glamorous prom parties, with students arriving in luxury vehicles and wearing expensive outfits.

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The head teacher Gayaza High School, Ms Robinah Katongole Kizito, said the school followed the ministry's guidelines and they did not hold their prom party last term.

"As Gayaza High School, we have followed the guidelines, as directed by the Ministry of Education and Sports," Ms Kizito said.

Ms Diana Twesigye, a parent at one of the schools in Kampala backed the guidelines, insisting that they would avoid unnecessary pressure on parents who struggle to meet school expenses.

However, not all schools followed the guidelines this year. Several schools have been holding glamorous prom parties, students arriving in luxury vehicles, and coupling, wearing expensive outfits among others, in avoidance of the ministry's restrictions.

"The ministry should regularly monitor these schools, some have already gone against them, there is need to take action against the institutions that have ignored the guidelines," Ms Twesigye said.

But in an indication that the matter is not firmly concluded, there are also calls for parents and school administrators to promote affordable and disciplined school activities that do not expose students to unnecessary spending and pressure.

It may explain why the ministry's permanent secretary has not yet taken action against schools that avoided the ministry's guidance.

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Schools in the spotlight over lavish prom parties



Government position.

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A student in Victorian-themed fashion during a prom party. PHOTO/COURTESY

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Background about prom parties

Prom parties had become one of the most talked-about trends in secondary schools over the last few years. Borrowed largely from American high-school culture, the events have been organised mainly for Senior Four and Senior Six finalists as a celebration before they leave school.

The prom culture is often called "sosh" (short for social) or prom night. Students dress in expensive suits and gowns, arrive in luxury cars, dance, take photographs, and sometimes invite musicians or MCs. Some schools even organise red-carpet entrances and awards. The trend became especially popular in elite and urban schools around Kampala, Entebbe and Mbale districts.

2024 prom

Schools such as Elite High School gained national attention in 2023 after students arrived at prom events in helicopters and luxury vehicles. That sparked debate across the country about morality, class pressure and extravagance.

By 2025, the Ugandan government stepped in.

The Ministry of Education and Sports introduced strict guidelines aimed at controlling what it called excess and inappropriate behaviour during school social events. In some traditional schools, especially single-sex schools in western Uganda, "joint sosh" events between boys' and girls' schools were common. But some institutions have cancelled them entirely and replaced them with supervised trips or picnics following government guidelines.