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The Republic of Uganda  
Ministry of Education and Sports

Ministry of Education and Sports  
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16<sup>th</sup> May 2025

## **CIRCULAR No. 7/2025**

### **To:**

The Executive Director, KCCA  
All Chief Administrative Officers (CAOs) /Town Clerks (TCs)  
All District/City/Municipal Education Officers  
All Headteachers of Primary and Secondary Schools  
All Principals of Education Institutions  
All Boards of Governors and School Management Committees

### **GUIDELINES FOR SAFE CONDUCT OF ENTERTAINMENT AND CO-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES AND ELECTION OF STUDENT LEADERS IN PRE-PRIMARY, PRIMARY, AND POST-PRIMARY SCHOOLS AND INSTITUTIONS**

The Ministry of Education and Sports has observed with concern the growing exposure of learners to inappropriate, exploitative, and unsafe entertainment co-curricular activities and election of student leaders. Reported incidents include vulgar performances, sexually suggestive content, inadequately supervised excursions, and the engagement of unvetted individuals and organizations with learners.

Such practices pose significant risks to the moral, psychological, and academic development of learners and contravene the principles of child protection and values-based education as outlined in the Constitution of the Republic of Uganda, 1995; Education (Pre-primary and Primary and Post Primary) Act Cap.247; Children Act Cap.62; and the Uganda National Child Policy, 2020.

It is against this background, that the Ministry has developed comprehensive guidelines to: provide a regulatory framework for the planning, approval, and supervision of entertainment, co-curricular activities and election of student



leaders; Protect learners from harmful, exploitative, or developmentally inappropriate exposure; Promote safe, inclusive, and educationally purposeful activities that support holistic learner development; and Define clear roles and responsibilities for school authorities, parents, Local Governments, and external service providers.

In light of the above, I hereby direct all Headteachers and Principals of Education Institutions, School Management Committees of Primary Schools and Boards of Governors of Secondary Schools to strictly observe the guidelines. The guidelines highlight the following issues:

1. All educational institutions—public and private—must comply with these guidelines with immediate effect.
2. All externally organized entertainment and co-curricular activities involving learners must receive prior approval from the Chief Administrative Officer for Pre-primary and primary schools and the Permanent Secretary for post-primary institutions/institutions of higher learning.
3. Written consent from parents or guardians must be obtained for any off-campus or externally organized activities. Institutions must ensure adequate teacher supervision at all times.
4. All entertainers, motivational speakers, or organizations engaging with learners must be vetted and cleared by the school administration and respective local education authorities.
5. Activities involving sexualization, indecency, vulgarity, or the exploitation of learners are strictly prohibited and will attract legal consequences.
6. Every institution must establish a Vetting Committee to assess the content, participants, and logistics of proposed activities before granting approval.
7. Every institution must establish a students' leaders election management committee and follow the provisions in the guidelines during the electoral processes of student leaders.



8. Any violation of these guidelines must be reported immediately to the nearest education office. Disciplinary action will be taken against institutions or individuals found culpable.

All headteachers and principals of schools and institutions are strongly advised to guard against flouting the above guidelines. Stern disciplinary action shall be taken against any Head of Education institution operating contrary to the guidelines.

Parents and the general public are advised to report any school contravening these guidelines.

The purpose of this Circular, therefore, is to issue the attached guidelines for your implementation.



Dr. Kedrace R. Turyagyenda  
**PERMANENT SECRETARY**

**Copy:** The First Lady and Minister of Education and Sports  
The Minister of Local Government  
All Ministers of State for Education and Sports  
All Ministers of State for Local Government  
The Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Local Government  
The Inspector General of Police  
All Resident District Commissioners  
All District Chairpersons  
All Heads of Department





**MINISTRY OF EDUCATION AND SPORTS**

**GUIDELINES FOR  
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CO-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES AND ELECTION  
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AND POST-PRIMARY SCHOOLS AND INSTITUTIONS**

**MAY 2025**

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## Foreword

Co-curricular activities are an essential part of the school curriculum for a holistic education that develops the head, the heart and the hands to create a well-rounded person. The Ministry of Education and Sports recognizes this and actively promotes co-curricular activities in all education institutions, both Government and Private. Every year, the Ministry issues the annual Educational Institutions National Physical Education and Sports Calendar, and guides and supports education institutions to enable the learners participate.

The Ministry also supports and promotes performing arts skills development through the annual Music Dance and Drama (MDD) festivals, organized right from the institutional level up to the national level. Education institutions are also encouraged to involve learners in other co-curricular activities, both in and outside the schools, which offer a rich educational experience, and ensure that election of student leaders is safe, fair and promotes democracy and integrity.

Given that most co-curricular activities happen in environments that are less controlled than the normal classroom environment, there needs to be appropriate control mechanisms so that the intended learning takes place. It has also become increasingly apparent that social media and easy access to global media content, through ICT, are influencing the types, content and management of co-curricular activities in many schools. If unmitigated, this influence has the potential for unintended negative consequences, endangering the safety and wellbeing of our learners, in addition to undermining the real benefits of co-curricular activities.

The Guidelines for Safe Conduct of Entertainment, Co-Curricular Activities and Election of Student Leaders in Pre-Primary, Primary and Post-Primary Schools and Institutions respond to the above concerns by providing a framework for appropriate and safe co-curricular experiences.

I call upon heads of all institutions, under the scope of these guidelines, to take keen interest in the specific guidance provided and to apply them in the implementation of co-curricular activities and election of student leaders.

I count on your cooperation in adhering to the guidance in these guidelines so that co-curricular activities and elections of student leaders in education institutions contribute to the quality and relevance of the school curriculum for better learning outcomes. The Head Teacher will be held accountable for adherence.



Dr. Kedrace R. Turyagyenda

**PERMANENT SECRETARY**

## **PART A: PRELIMINARIES**

### **Background to the Guidelines**

The Guidelines for Safe Conduct of Entertainment and Co-Curricular Activities in Pre-Primary, Primary, and Post-Primary Schools and Institutions have been developed to address the increasing need for structured, safe, and morally guided entertainment and co-curricular activities in Ugandan educational institutions. While these activities play a critical role in the holistic development of learners, many schools face challenges related to ensuring safety, moral appropriateness, and cultural sensitivity when carrying them out. The Ministry of Education and Sports has been receiving reports of inadequately supervised activities across all educational levels; pre-primary, primary, secondary, and Tertiary, leading to safety concerns, and moral dilemmas.

Previous interventions, such as issuance of circulars, aimed at improving the conduct of entertainment and co-curricular activities in education institutions have had limited effect, highlighting the need for a more structured framework. These guidelines are intended to build on these past efforts to comprehensively address gaps in the current safety and moral guidance.

The development of these guidelines involved extensive consultations with a diverse range of stakeholders, including the Association of Secondary Schools Headteachers of Uganda (ASSHU), Associations of Private Education Institutions, District/Municipal Education Officers, performing artists, sports associations, and faith-based organizations. This was intended to ensure that all relevant voices are heard and broader perspectives on the guidelines, especially those of foundation bodies and parents, are included.

The guidelines are developed in line with the Ministry's mandate "to provide technical support, guide, coordinate, regulate and promote quality education, training, and sports to all persons in Uganda for national integration, development, and individual advancement." Through this mandate, the Ministry is committed to fostering environments where learners can thrive to their full potential, academically, emotionally, socially, and morally.

The primary purpose of these guidelines is to strike a balance between providing enriching educational experiences through entertainment and co-curricular activities and ensuring the safety and well-being of all participants. They aim to create structured, morally appropriate, and culturally sensitive environments for entertainment, sports, and other co-curricular activities within schools and institutions.

### **Objectives of the Guidelines:**

1. To ensure that schools and institutions provide safe, enriching, and permissible types of entertainment and co-curricular activities that contribute positively to the educational experience.
2. To promote morally acceptable and age-appropriate entertainment materials, including music, movies, films, and live shows, thereby fostering a supportive environment for learners' growth, creativity, and enjoyment.
3. To establish a structured framework for planning and conducting co-curricular and extracurricular activities that support the holistic development of learners, guiding schools.
4. To guide and empower learners, parents, and teachers on the benefits, purpose, and potential risks of co-curricular and extracurricular activities, and to encourage their active involvement in a way that enriches the school community.
5. To safeguard learners against exposure to persons, materials, conditions, and situations that could be detrimental to their well-being and moral development, thereby creating a balanced environment that allows learners to benefit from the positive aspects of these activities while minimizing risks.

In summary, the objectives of these guidelines are to provide a balanced, safe, and enriching environment where learners can enjoy extracurricular and co-curricular activities, supported by effective guidance and supervision for **promoting positive engagement among learners, parents, and teachers**. These guidelines aim to enhance student well-being and uphold legal and ethical standards while nurturing a culture of participation and responsible enjoyment.



## **Scope of the Guidelines:**

The guidelines are intended to guide pre-primary, primary, secondary schools, and education institutions, both public and private, on how to conduct entertainment, co-curricular, extracurricular activities and visitation days in alignment with values, morals, and general good conduct. Recognizing the range of activities that take place in educational settings, the guidelines address:

1. Entertainment Events permitted in education institutions, detailing how they should be organized and supervised to ensure safety and appropriateness.
2. Co-curricular and Extracurricular Activities permitted in schools, providing structured guidance on how these activities can be organized and supervised to promote holistic development. Co-curricular activities, which support the curriculum, and extracurricular activities, which extend learning beyond academic requirements, are both covered to foster a well-rounded educational experience.
3. School Trips and Tours suitable for different categories of learners, with specific guidelines on organization and supervision to maximize educational value and safety.
4. School Visitation Days, where parents/guardians come to school to check on their children's learning progress and appreciate the learning environment provided for the children by the school.

These guidelines ensure a balanced approach to managing all types of activities that contribute to learners' academic, social, and moral development while setting a framework that addresses current needs and values within Ugandan society.

## **Target Users for the Guidelines:**

Users of the guidelines are categorized as follows:

1. **Primary Target Users:** Learners, teachers, tutors, instructors, caregivers, and school administrators, who directly implement and participate in the entertainment, co-curricular, and extracurricular activities.

2. **Secondary Target Users:** School proprietors and Foundation Bodies, Parents Teacher Associations (PTAs), School Management Committees (SMCs), Boards of Governors (BoGs), District Education Officers, Inspectors of Schools, school communities, community leaders, and families, who play a supportive and supervisory role in the implementation of these activities.
3. **Tertiary Target Users:** Members of Parliament, Ministers, Development Partners, Cultural and Religious Leaders, NGOs, Community-Based Organizations (CBOs), Police, Judiciary, Local Councils, and relevant Ministries, who provide policy direction, oversight, and support to ensure the effective and safe conduct of these activities **in alignment with national values.**

### **Justification for the Guidelines:**

The guidelines are formulated within the broader framework of Uganda's educational and legal policies, which prioritize the safety, moral development, and holistic education of learners. They align with several national policies and legal instruments, ensuring that all activities within educational institutions are conducted in a manner consistent with the country's values and legal standards.

**The Uganda Constitution (1995)** mandates the government to promote free and compulsory education and protect children from exploitation and harm, providing a foundational legal context for these guidelines. **Specifically, Article 30 of the Constitution emphasizes the right of children to education**, which forms the basis for creating safe and nurturing educational environments.

**The Children Act (Amendment 2016)** emphasizes the protection of children from abuse, neglect, and exploitation. **Sections 4 and 5 specifically address the rights of children to protection and care**, reinforcing the need for guidelines that promote safe entertainment and co-curricular activities within educational settings.

**The Education (Pre-Primary, Primary and Post-Primary Education) Act (2008)** governs the management and conduct of educational institutions in Uganda, highlighting the importance of moral and ethical development alongside academic achievement.

**Section 3(2) emphasizes that education must be directed towards the development of the child’s personality, talents, and mental and physical abilities to their fullest potential**, ensuring that entertainment and co-curricular activities contribute positively to this development.

**Additionally, the Uganda National Cultural Policy (2006) recognizes the role of culture, arts, and sports in national development. It underscores the importance of fostering cultural identity and unity**, which is critical when organizing entertainment and co-curricular activities. This policy ensures that such activities are conducted in ways that promote national values and cultural heritage.

**The National Sports Policy (2024) emphasizes the importance of sports and recreation in the holistic development of learners. It advocates for the integration of sports into educational curricula**, ensuring that all sports-related activities are organized in a manner that upholds ethical standards and the well-being of participants.

In essence, these guidelines are anchored in Uganda's legal and policy frameworks, ensuring they are relevant, enforceable, and aligned with the country's broader educational and developmental goals.

**By explicitly referencing specific provisions within these frameworks, the guidelines provide clarity and ensure that all stakeholders understand their responsibilities and the expected standards for co-curricular and extracurricular activities in schools.**

## **PART B: THE GUIDELINES**

### **Guideline 1.0: Entertainment Events in Schools/Institutions**

- 1.1 All entertainment events shall not disrupt study time and shall be planned for and included in the school's annual events programme of the school / institution.
- 1.2 Each school/institution shall establish **Extra-curricular Committee** to guide, review, and manage all entertainment and other extracurricular activities in the school/institution. The Committee shall be chaired by the Headteacher/Principal, and **its membership** shall include the Deputy Headteacher/Principal (Admin.), SWM, SMT, the entertainment prefect/minister (for secondary and institutions), and representatives of parents and learners.
- 1.3 Movies, films, dramas, music, and other types of shows and performances shall first be approved by the relevant authorities, such as the National Media Council, the Uganda Communications Commission, and the Ministry of Education and Sports before they are considered to be shown in schools. **It is crucial that all approved forms of entertainment are age-appropriate for learners.**
- 1.4 Songs/music to be played or sung during entertainment events in schools shall first be vetted by the school/institution's entertainment committee to avoid obscene and immoral language and messages.
- 1.5 Indecent dressing, including skin-tight clothing, miniskirts, transparent dresses, or generally clothing that leaves underwear and usually covered parts of the body exposed, shall not be allowed.
- 1.6 The time of performance entertainment from and within the school shall strictly be daytime and shall not go beyond 6:00 p.m. No school entertainment shall take place in school during holidays.
- 1.7 There shall be no alcohol, drinking of alcohol, smoking, or use of any drugs and substances at school and entertainment events, and no person should come to school events when under the influence of alcohol or drugs. Detection of any such shall lead to immediate termination of the event, followed by disciplinary action against the culprits.

- 1.8 Learners are expected to be orderly during and after the entertainment. In the course of the entertainment, teachers shall be stationed among the learners to monitor and supervise discipline.
- 1.9 The school will arrange for entertainment that is suitable, age-appropriate, and aligns with the educational and ethical values of the institution.
- 1.10 The school shall provide all necessary facilities, equipment, and resources required for the entertainment event. The school shall ensure that no individual vehicles, motorcycles, or choppers are hired by students to the school premises during the entertainment events. The school administration shall plan and organize the entertainment events, while ensuring that they **do not become a financial burden on parents.**
- 1.11 In the event that the entertainment event involves payment over and above the normal school fees/dues, the school management shall obtain school Board/Committee approval and thereafter incorporate it in the school budget circulars prior to the commencement of school calendars. The Ministry shall also ensure that the number of co-curricular activities prescribed in the academic curriculum is reasonable in both quantity and cost.
- 1.12 Encouraging or allowing learners to pair up or make couples during the entertainment events, in imitation of marriage or romantic relationships, is **strictly forbidden.**
- 1.13 The school administration shall not allow parents, and any other persons, to give success gifts to their children candidate classes in the form of money or material goods at school.
- 1.14 The school administration shall, at all times, **forbid the ostentatious display of wealth, opulence and luxury** by the learners in schools, including at school entertainment events.

## **Guideline 2.0: School Co-Curricular Activities**

All co-curricular activities shall be organized and held in education institutions premises or other Government gazetted institutions or venues.

- 2.1 Schools shall select from the permissible co-curricular activities and approved by the Ministry of Education and Sports (**Annex 1**). The Headteacher, on behalf of the Governing Body of a school, shall give authorization before any co-curricular activity is organized and conducted in the school. These activities should align with those prescribed in the academic curriculum approved by the Ministry of Education and Sports.
- 2.2 Each co-curricular activity shall have a teacher or teachers in charge. No group of students shall be allowed to conduct a co-curricular activity in or outside the school without the close supervision of a teacher.
- 2.3 The school shall inform parents before the term begins about the co-curricular activities their children will be engaged in at school. Activities outside the district shall require written parental consent. Letters requiring parental consent shall state the nature of the activity, the date, the venue, and the teacher(s) in charge with telephone numbers.
- 2.4 Whenever the school hires part-time professionals to train learners in specialized co-curricular activities, such as MDD and games, the school shall explain such a person's role and limitations and work closely with teachers. Certified trainers recommended by national associations should train learners.
- 2.5 When transporting learners for outdoor activities, the school administration must ensure that the means of transport used is the type permitted to carry passengers, is in sound mechanical condition, and carries only the recommended number of passengers. Every vehicle transporting learners must have at least one teacher on board.

The teacher/teachers shall monitor the driver at all times to ensure compliance with traffic regulations, including speed limits. The teacher/teachers on board shall ensure that the student-to-student and student-to-no-student behaviour upholds the ethical code of conduct.

- 2.6 When organizing any co-curricular activity outside the school, the school administration shall notify the police about the venue, number of learners, mode of travel, and contacts of the teacher in charge and that of the head of institution. The school should also have the contact of the officer in charge of the nearby police station/post.

- 2.7 The school shall have in place a first aid kit and first aid-trained personnel or a medical worker to travel with the learners. In case of an accident, either on the playing field or on the road, quick first-responder action shall be taken and the police informed as soon as possible.
- 2.8 No special fees shall be charged to learners involved in co-curricular activities unless the activities incur costs outside the prescribed fees/charges. Co-curricular activities that do not fit within the UPE and USE funding model should not be prescribed at the public basic and secondary education levels. The Ministry of Education and Sports should ensure that co-curricular activities are accessible to all learners, particularly those in UPE and USE schools.
- 2.9 On top of the special rules governing the co-curricular activity, the school rules and regulations governing the learners shall apply.
- 2.10 Acts of hooliganism during co-curricular activities shall be prohibited. Organizers of sports activities shall seek the services of the police to ensure law and order.

### **Guideline 3.0: School Visitation Days**

- 3.1 Schools, both day and boarding, shall plan for, programme, and hold visitation days as extra-curricular activities when parents may come to school to check on their children's learning progress and welfare. School visitation days shall be guided by the following:
- 3.2 Visitation days shall be part of the schools' annual programme of activities and shall be communicated to parents in end-of-term circulars.
- 3.3 Every schools shall hold no more than one visitation day in a school term.
- 3.4 In the planning and programming of visitation days, Headteachers shall liaise with other Headteachers of neighbouring schools and related schools to avoid inconveniences to parents and the public caused by having many schools holding visitations on the same day.
- 3.5 Where a school plans to have an open day or a speech day in a particular term, the visitation day may be planned to fall on the same day.

3.6 Visitation days shall not be held as “feasting days” and the following shall not be permitted during visitation days:

- i. Bringing cooked or otherwise processed food into the school by parents/relatives.
- ii. Cooking or otherwise preparing food in the school by parents/relatives.
- iii. Bringing alcohol or any other banned substances into the school, even for self-consumption by parents/relatives.
- iv. Camping in the school compound by large groups of families/relatives/friends and/or holding parties.
- v. Playing music or videos.

3.7 Not more than four persons may be allowed to enter school on visitation day for the same learner.

3.8 Only persons registered with the school as parents/guardians of that learner may be allowed into the school to visit him/her. In case the registered parents/guardians are not able to visit their child on visitation day, they may authorize in writing a responsible relative or friend to represent them on that day. The school shall verify and confirm with the parents/guardians on the indicated telephone number that such a person has been authorized to represent them on the visitation day.

3.9 The school shall issue each parent/guardian a visitation card that shall be presented before a parent/guardian/representative is allowed entry into the school.

3.10 School authorities shall ensure that parents/guardians or their representatives and any other person accompanying them are dressed decently before they are allowed into the school on visitation days.

3.11 Schools shall not charge parents/guardians money for visitation days, including money for meals, and shall not permit outside catering service providers to sell meals to parents/guardians or to the learners during visitation days.



- 3.12 Visitation days shall start from 9:00am and should not go beyond 6:00pm.
- 3.13 During the visitation days, parents/guardians may not take their children out of the school compound. Unless authorised on medical grounds.
- 3.14 School authorities shall ensure that the school staff is around to supervise the visitation and to be consulted by parents/guardians regarding their children's progress.
- 3.15 Schools shall provide a copy of these guidelines to the parents/guardians, immediately and at the admission of their children and shall, from time-to-time, remind and sensitize parents/guardians about the guidelines.

#### **Guideline 4.0: School Tours and Trips**

- 4.1 The school shall specify the kind of trips/tours acceptable and approved by the Governing Bodies, ensuring that all trips align with the educational objectives of the school and consider the **financial implications for learners and their families**.
- 4.2 In normal circumstances, learners' fieldwork supporting curriculum implementation is encouraged to take place in and around the school premises to minimize the possible challenges learners may encounter farther away from school.
- 4.3 Every school trip/tour shall have a teacher or teachers in charge. No group of students shall be allowed to go for a tour without the close supervision of a teacher.
- 4.4 Proposed sites for school visits shall be communicated to parents and other concerned stakeholders prior to the trip. **All trips must be evaluated for educational value and safety.**
- 4.5 When transporting learners during school tours, the school must ensure that traffic regulations are complied with, paying particular attention to the mechanical condition of the vehicle as well as the recommended number of passengers. The school shall ensure that the driver at all times has a valid driving license.

- 4.6 When organizing a school tour, the school administration shall notify the police of the place of visit, number of learners, mode of travel, and contact information for the teacher in charge and Headteacher. This notification serves as a safety precaution, enabling the police to follow up in case of any incident. The school should where necessary, also have the number of the nearby police officer in charge.
- 4.7 Students should dress decently while on school tours, and should be in school uniforms.
- 4.8 Unbecoming behaviors like drinking, smoking, drug abuse, dancing on the road, abusing other road users, etc., shall not be tolerated. There should always be a teacher in the vehicle transporting the learners to ensure maximum discipline.
- 4.9 School rules and regulations shall apply during school tours.
- 4.10 Learners' movement for trips and tours shall be planned by the school management so that travel does not go beyond 6:00pm. Clear stopovers and sleepovers shall be factored in prior to departure from school.
- 4.11 Nursery or Kindergarten learners shall not be permitted to undertake school trips/tours. Similarly, lower primary children may undertake school trips/tours only under special circumstances, with maximum caution from school management.
- 4.12 The Ministry shall provide strict controls on study tours/trips to prevent financial exploitation of parents/guardians.

### **Guideline 5.0: Foreign Tours and Trips**

This guidance is specific to school-organized foreign tours and trips, which may be in conjunction with a registered tours and travel company. The guidance does not apply to foreign tours and trips organized by private tour companies that may involve learners from different schools.

- 5.1 In principle, school tours and trips shall primarily have an educational purpose, which is beyond access in Uganda and ideally involve all learners in a particular class or classes, club, or team.

5.2 All school trips outside the country, whether educational or not, should be cleared by the Ministry of Education and Sports, and at least one teacher and two parents should accompany learners on a foreign trip.

5.3 The application for authorization to organize a foreign tour or trip shall be sought from MoES (under a special desk appointed by the PS) and shall indicate the following:

- a) Purpose and objectives of the tour or trip (exceptional justification)
- b) The dates of travel and itinerary
- c) Target participants
- d) Costs to be borne by parents/guardians per child
- e) Other sources of funding, if any
- f) The name and profile of the tours and Travel Company
- g) Rules and regulations during the tour/trip

5.4 The purpose and conduct of foreign tours or trips shall be in line with, not only Uganda's national values and ethics, but also educational programmes.

5.5 Only learners who are of the age authorized to travel without a parent or guardian shall be allowed to participate in school-organized foreign tours and trips.

**Learners below the age of 12 years shall not be permitted to go on group study tours, which means school-organized foreign tours and trips should not be authorized for learners in Pre-Primary and Primary schools.**

5.6 No other person, other than the school staff and parents chosen to accompany the learners, shall be included on the list of persons participating in a foreign tour or trip.

5.7 Schools shall not exert pressure on learners or parents to participate in foreign tours and trips organized privately by tours and travel companies.

5.8 School-organized foreign tours and trips shall only be with registered tour companies vetted by the Ministry of Education and Sports.

- 5.9 Parents/guardians and students shall complete and sign the school tour and trip permission slip and regulations acceptance form; that is, students/learners traveling should have full consent from their parent/guardian.
- 5.10 The travel expenses of teachers accompanying learners on a foreign trip shall be met by the school and shall not be defrayed from what parents/guardians have paid for their children.
- 5.11 Foreign tours and trips shall be organized during school holidays, except for programmed international students' events, such as sports competitions.
- 5.12 Schools participating in student exchange programs with schools in other countries must conduct due diligence on the schools they intend to partner with and ensure that the schools' ethical and moral values align with Uganda's national ethics and values. A due diligence report should be submitted to the Ministry.
- 5.13 Participation in foreign trips and tours shall not be mandatory for learners in any given school, and learners shall not be prejudiced for non-participation.

## **Guidelines 6.0: Election of Student Leaders in Schools**

### **6.1 Introduction**

The election of student leaders plays a crucial role in fostering a sense of responsibility, civic engagement, and leadership skills among students in schools. As future leaders, students need to be equipped with the skills and experience necessary to participate meaningfully in democratic processes. Recognizing this need, these guidelines have been developed to ensure that election of student leaders is conducted in a fair, transparent and inclusive manner.

The Legal and policy framework on Learner leadership includes the Education (Pre-Primary, Primary and Post-Primary) Act 2008 and the Basic Requirements, Minimum Standards 2010 and, for post-primary education institutions, the constitutions of Uganda National Students Association (UNSA).

The above legal instruments emphasize the importance of student leadership structures and promote student participation in decision making processes. It is against this background that these guidelines have been developed.

The purpose of these guidelines is to provide a structured framework for nomination, campaigning, voting and post-election processes, which aim to promote an environment where all students participate in the election of their leaders in a safe and positively formative environment.

## **6.2 Composition of the Prefecture and the Students' Council**

### **a) Prefecture**

A school prefecture refers to a structure of student leadership appointed or elected to assist the school administration in the management of school, especially in regard to the promotion of discipline, order and to build a positive school culture.

The prefecture shall have nine members including the following positions:

1. Head prefect
2. Deputy/Assistant Head Prefect
3. Other prefects in charge of:
  - a) Academic affairs;
  - b) Discipline;
  - c) Co-curricular activities;
  - d) Health, sanitation and environment;
  - e) Safety and security;
  - f) Religious affairs;
  - g) Entertainment; and
  - h) Time management.

In A-Level schools, where the head prefect is in a higher level, the deputy/assistant head prefect shall be from O-Level.

In a one level mixed school, the deputy/assistant head prefect shall be of the opposite sex.

## **b) Students' Council**

The student's council is a student leadership body in schools and education institutions that represents the students to voice their opinions, participate in decision making processes and engage in leadership activities. In line with Section 30 of the Education (Pre-Primary and Post-Primary) Act 2008, all post-primary institutions should have students' councils.

The student council shall have a representation from each class as provided in the constitution of the Uganda National Students Association.

### **6.3 Qualifying Criteria for Student Leaders**

The qualifying criteria for student leaders are essential for ensuring that the candidates possess the necessary skills, values and commitments to effectively represent their peers. These include;

- a. Every learner who intends to stand for a leadership position shall be vetted. The vetting criteria for prospective student leaders shall;
  - i. Evaluate academic achievements to ensure the prospective candidate can balance leadership responsibilities with academic commitments.
  - ii. Assess previous leadership roles in school or community organizations clubs or sports teams, or look for active participation in community service or extracurricular activities that show a commitment to a broader community.
  - iii. Look for strong communication skills, empathy and the ability to work collaboratively with diverse groups.
  - iv. Ensure alignment with the institution's values, mission and goals. Look for evidence of integrity, responsibility and ethical decision making.
  - v. Evaluate their vision for their role and the initiative they plan to implement. Assess their ability to set realistic and impactful goals.
  - vi. Gather insights from teachers, mentors, or peers who can provide perspectives on the candidate's leadership abilities and character.

- vii. Assess their enthusiasm for the role and their motivation to make a positive impact within the student body.
  - viii. Consider their ability to manage time effectively, balancing academics, leadership roles and personal commitments.
  - ix. Evaluate how well they accept constructive criticism and their willingness to learn and grow from feedback
  - x. Look for creativity and innovativeness when proposing new ideas or solutions.
- b. The vetting criteria should be communicated clearly to all prospective candidates before the election process.
  - c. The criteria shall be fair, objective and shall not discriminate learners on the basis of race, ethnicity, religion, disability, gender or economic status.
  - d. The criteria shall uphold the mission, vision and values of the school.
  - e. Discipline shall be a key consideration in the criteria for vetting the learners aspiring to leadership position.
  - f. The criteria shall holistically consider all competences, and not just the academic performance of the learners aspiring to student leadership positions.
  - g. The criteria should encourage as many learners as possible to stand for leadership positions.

#### **6.4 Management of the Student Leaders Elections Process in Schools**

- a. Every school shall establish a standing Student Leaders Elections Management Committee, chaired by a Deputy Headteacher, and comprising the Senior Man Teacher, the Senior Woman Teachers, at least two other teachers appointed by the Headteacher and two students' representatives.
- b. Student Leaders Elections Management Committee shall;
  - i. Be responsible for organizing, conducting and supervising student leader's elections in the school.

- ii. Report to and be supervised by the headteacher.
  - iii. Initiate the development of clear standing guidelines on the rules and procedures governing the election of student leaders.
  - iv. Take the lead in educating and disseminating the guidelines governing the election of student leaders, prior to the start of the election process.
- c. The guidelines shall, among other things, provide for the following:
- i. Eligibility to apply for each student leadership position
  - ii. Application process
  - iii. Timelines
  - iv. Campaigns programme
  - v. Voting process
  - vi. Appeals process
- d. The guidance in No. c. above notwithstanding, participating in student leadership elections shall be free-of-charge. No fee shall be charged for application or for any other thing throughout the process.
- e. The period when the vetted candidates may campaign for votes from fellow learners shall not exceed one week.
- f. All campaigns shall be;
- i. At specific times and venue, as shall be communicated by the Committee, preferably at school assembly. In any case, no campaigning shall be allowed during class time, during co-curricular activities or at night.
  - ii. conducted in the presence of at least two teachers to ensure orderly and safe proceedings.
- g. During the voting process, the principle of one-learner-one-vote shall be upheld, and efforts shall be made to ensure transparency.



- h. All voting materials shall be provided for by the school administration, and lining up behind candidates may be used as an election method, where necessary.
- i. Declaration of results from the voting shall be by the chair Student Leaders Elections Management Committee at the earliest possible opportunity and shall, thereafter, be displayed on the school noticeboard.

### **6.5 Prohibition of Monetization of Student Leaders Elections**

To eliminate the growing trend of commercialization of student leadership elections in schools, and to promote a culture of ascending to leadership positions on merit, the following shall be observed.

- a. Overall, the school management shall make every effort to eliminate use of money, and other forms of inducement, in the election of student leaders and to promote a merit-based process.
- b. There shall be no application fees for standing in student leadership elections.
- c. All campaigns shall be at the time and venue stipulated by the committee. In any case, all campaigns shall be within the school compound.
- d. Candidates shall not use commercially produced campaign materials such as T-shirts, caps, Posters, keyholders or fliers among others.
- e. There shall be no hiring of vehicles, music bands, or involvement of any external groups during the campaigns including parents/guardians and national political parties.
- f. Candidates are strictly forbidden from inducing voters with monetary or material favors, including sweets and all other eats.
- g. Any candidate implicated in voter bribery, use of commercially produced materials or involving external groups shall be immediately disqualified from the process and disciplinary action shall be taken against him/her.

- h. School management and staff shall not solicit or allow the candidates to solicit for monetary or material support from parents/guardians, and the school administration shall make deliberate efforts to sensitize parents/guardians against giving their children money, eats, and materials things to induce fellow learners to vote for them.
- i. Before and during the campaigns, the committee shall sensitize the learners about the dangers of bribery in elections, and to that they are based on plain school leadership issues and not unattainable promises, lies and claims.
- j. Instances of non-compliance shall be made public through reports or announcements to encourage accountability and pressure schools to comply.

#### **6.6 Disciplinary Actions Against Students for Failure to Comply with the Elections Guidelines**

Any aspiring student leader who:

- i. Does not meet the eligibility criteria or who engage in misconduct during the election process shall be disqualified and issued a public condemnation notice.
- ii. Is found guilty of serious violations shall be banned from participating in future elections for a specified period and shall undergo mandatory training on ethical campaigning and democratic principles before they may be allowed to participate in student leadership elections again.

### **PART C: IMPLEMENTATION OF THE GUIDELINES**

- 1.1 The Permanent Secretary shall issue the guidelines through a circular to all schools and institutions.
- 1.2 The Guidelines shall be gazetted and published on the Ministry's website, and hard copies may be printed and distributed to schools and institutions. Soft copies shall also be shared on social media platforms of school/institution managers, DEOs, and other relevant stakeholder groups.

- 1.3 The Guidelines shall be disseminated to the target users through a variety of modes, including meetings and workshops, both online and face-to-face, planned for and organized by the relevant departments of the Ministry.
- 1.4 A special desk in the Ministry of Education and Sports has been created to manage compliance and enforcement of these guidelines.

### **1.0 Actions to be taken for Violation of the Guidelines**

- 1.1 For students, offenses and the corresponding punishments stipulated in the school rules and regulations shall apply.
- 1.2 Where students are involved in cases of criminal offenses, relevant laws, such as the Penal Code, shall apply.
- 1.3 Where a teacher does not adequately supervise learners during a school-organized entertainment, co-curricular event, or school tour/trip, the teacher shall be guilty of neglect of duty and shall be sanctioned in line with the disciplinary process in place.
- 1.4 A teacher who engages in sexual relationships with learners, including during school events or tours/trips, shall be submitted for dismissal from the teaching service, in line with the Teachers' Professional Code of Conduct, in addition, in addition to being subjected to other punitive measure under the applicable laws.
- 1.5 A driver who drives recklessly shall be charged under the relevant laws similarly, and shall not be allowed to drive a vehicle carrying learners.
- 1.6 School management (Proprietors, Headteachers, Teachers, or any other employee) that violates the prescribed guidelines/code of conduct shall be dealt with according to the prescribed disciplinary processes and the country's laws.
- 1.7 Education institutions/schools that fail to comply with the election guidelines shall;
- i. Be issued a formal warning by the Permanent Secretary/CAO/Town/Clerk/City/Supervisor Education Services, specifying the areas of non-compliance and timeline for corrective action.

- ii. Be subjected to increased scrutiny and monitoring during subsequent elections to ensure adherence to the guidelines.
- iii. May have their recognition or support from the relevant educational authorities revoked.

1.8. The guidelines shall be anchored in specific existing policy and/or legal frameworks to provide a robust mechanism for enforcement in case of violations.

## **ANNEXES**

### **Annex 1: Permissible Co-Curricular Activities for Schools and Institutions**

1. All Games and Sports Competitions on the Annual Schools Sports Calendar, which excludes Boxing
2. Music Dance and Drama events prescribed by the National Organizing Committees at the relevant levels
3. Debate and Public Speaking
4. Essay Writing Competitions
5. Arts and Crafts
6. Scouts and Girl Guides
7. School Club Activities
8. Science Fairs
9. Community Outreaches/Volunteer work
10. Religious Activities