

Schools to reopen on January 10, says minister

By Vision Reporter

All children of school going age will return to school come January 10, the education ministry has confirmed.

As part of the plan, the ministry says, even children enrolled at early childhood development centres, also known as nursery schools, will report on the same day.

Earlier, *New Vision* had reported that schools would reopen on January 3 based on a previous tentative calendar. However, higher education state minister Dr Chrysostom Muyingo on Friday confirmed that schools will reopen a week later on January 10.

"You are aware that we have been opening the education sector in phases. In September, we opened medical and health training institutions, followed by universities and other tertiary institutions on November 1," he said.

"Now, the rest of the classes, including primary and secondary, will fully reopen on January 10," Muyingo added.

He said the ministry has concluded its plans to reopen and that it is ready to implement them.

In addition, he said, the plan will be shared with Parliament and later the public.

"We are now asking you parents to prepare. Schools will be reopening just after the festive season and, therefore, we need to be ready. Do not squander funds, spend sparingly and save for reopening," Muyingo said.

"This is the time to buy books,



Muyingo

school uniforms, shoes and prepare our children schools reopening. We also ask parents to offer guidance and counselling to our children. This will prepare their minds to return to school," he said.

The minister made the remarks on Friday, while presiding over the inaugural graduation at Basasira Technical Institute in Nakasongola.

Muyingo, who was the chief guest at the function, also emphasised the need to embrace technical and vocational education, noting that it addresses skills gaps among the youth.

In addition, he said, it will drive innovativeness and job creation for

PRIVATE SCHOOLS

Hasadu Kirabira, the officer in charge of research at the National Private Educational Institutions Association-Uganda, said: "We are ready. We have advised schools to find a way to access funds and prepare for reopening."

"We have tried engaging the Government to avail a recovery fund, but the indicators show that we have to help ourselves. We are currently engaging commercial banks to provide a start-up fund for private schools and we will pay later with a lower interest," he said.

the unemployed youth.

VACCINATION CARDS A MUST

To both the teaching staff and support staff of schools, Muyingo emphasised the need to get vaccinated against COVID-19.

He added that vaccination will be a requirement for the education sector to fully reopen.

"Take vaccination seriously. It is part of the plan to reopen all schools," he said.

The minister also appealed to children aged 18 and above to get vaccinated.

"Leaders should encourage our people to get vaccinated," Muyingo said.

STATISTICS

Recently, while receiving a 1.5 million masks donation at Kololo Ceremonial Grounds, First Lady and Minister for Education and Sports, Mrs. Janet Museveni, gave the status on vaccination of education sector priority groups.

She said it is encouraging that

institutions

For government-aided schools, he said, the Government had already sent capitation grants through the respective local governments to help them on reopening.

COVID-19 SURVEILLANCE

Muyingo said the education ministry concluded a nationwide training of COVID-19 focal persons, who will be in charge of inspecting academic institutions.

The personnel, dubbed, the COVID-19 National Trainers of Trainers, will also be in charge of training other teachers, schools heads and district local governments on reporting COVID-19 cases.

These will also be in charge of training teachers at respective regions on COVID-19 surveillance.

For boarding schools, only mild cases will be cared for at the school isolation centres, which are required to be interconnected with a nearby health facility, the plan says.

GOVT AIDED-SCHOOLS

Jimmy Turyagyeenda, the secretary general of the Association of Secondary School Headteachers, said schools have started preparing.

"We have agreed that we start engaging our teachers as the dates for reopening draw near," he said.

Turyagyeenda, who also doubles as the headteacher of Ntare School in Mbarara city, said by the time the ministry issues the official school calendar, they will be ready to reopen.