

SCHOOL REOPENING: FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1. School Reopening

When will the schools reopen?

As the Government continues to monitor the Covid-19 pandemic and the challenges it poses to different sectors, it has been decided that the earliest schools may reopen is September 2020. The detailed school calendar will be shared in due course.

What happens when schools reopen?

Primary and Secondary Schools

The school calendar year will start in September 2020 and end in May-June 2021. This accelerates the already planned adjustment to a September-June school year.

When schools closed, Term 1 was almost ending, so it will be repeated to ensure all students are on the same page going forward.

The exact dates for national exams will be communicated later.

Higher Learning Institutions (HLIs)

When HLIs closed, there were only two months remaining in the academic year. HLIs will resume the interrupted term in September 2020, and conclude the 2019-2020 academic in November 2020. They will reopen in December 2020 for the new intake and ensure they take necessary measures to follow the school calendar year that ends in May-June 2021.

Disbursement of living allowances (bursary) for Government -sponsored students will resume when schools re-open in September.

What about private schools that have continued teaching students online?

All schools that follow the National Program will follow the school calendar year as determined by the Ministry of Education.

How does this decision affect international schools in Rwanda?

International schools will continue to follow international study programs without compromising existing health measures and guidelines.

Should parents continue to pay school tuition fees?

Schools that follow the national program are advised not to charge fees while they remain closed because of Covid-19 mitigation measures.

Tuition fees that were paid for Term 1 were used in the January – March period and will not be refunded.

Parents who had paid for a full school year will only be expected to pay for one term.

What should schools do to get ready for reopening?

Schools are advised to ensure they take necessary hygiene measures in preparation for reopening, including ensuring adequate washing facilities and making necessary renovations to enhance hygiene.

2. TV, Radio and E-Learning

What alternative ways has the Government put in place to facilitate students at home to continue learning?

When schools closed in March 2020, the Ministry of Education in partnership with telecom companies immediately zero-rated e-learning platforms in a bid to facilitate students to access them at no cost. Additionally, radio and TV, with a much wider coverage, have been leveraged to air lessons. The schedule for these lessons is shared periodically on the Ministry's online accounts and on radio.

Students should continue to actively follow TV, radio, and e-learning activities until schools reopen.

To complement the learning, a USSD-based quiz on different subjects is available at *134#.

A few private universities have their e-learning platforms ready and zero-rated. Higher learning students are encouraged to reach out to their respective universities to enquire about e-learning facilities at their disposal.

What about students who don't have access to TV, radio, or internet?

MINEDUC recognizes that the overall coverage of radio, TV, internet, and device ownership is limited and that a significant portion of the population does not have access to the above. Moreover, content for students with disabilities is not yet readily available. MINEDUC is working with partners to increase access to e-learning.

When schools reopen, there will be special measures to ensure those who did not have proper access to e-learning facilities are not left behind.

3. Teachers

What facilities have been put in place for teachers during the lockdown?

Just as e-learning platforms have been availed for students, teachers are encouraged to use them and to prepare lessons.

Additionally, there are various trainings and assessments that are being organized for teachers. More information will be communicated in the coming days.

What facilities have been put in place to support teachers and private schools?

Teachers who are members of Umwalimu SACCO can get new loan facilities or restructure existing loans according to the terms and conditions set by the cooperative.

In line with the Government's economic recovery plan, private schools will be considered as businesses. This means they can apply for appropriate relief packages. Private schools are encouraged to use the facility to ensure they respond to the basic needs of their teachers.