

By Martin Kitubi

Whereas the Government had ordered all schools to reopen on January 10, the education ministry has offered a window to international schools to continue with studies.

According to the latest government directive, all international schools have been exempted from the deferred reopening and should continue with studies.

The development contained in a letter to heads of international schools followed a petition by the affected schools and their line embassies to the education ministry asking the Government to waive the order.

In the education ministry circular dated January 21, 2026, the ministry acknowledged the fact the international schools operate a different school calendar and that they had reopened for the 2026 school year prior to the ministry new dates.

"The Ministry of Education and Sports is cognisant of the fact that international schools operate under different academic calendars, which are aligned to the requirements of the respective examination systems undertaken by learners," the ministry said.

Govt clears international schools to reopen

According to available data, Uganda is home to about 70 international schools enrolling students on different education systems and curricula, such as the Cambridge International Examinations, the International Baccalaureate (IB), the French National Baccalaureate and the American System of Education.

"In light of the foregoing and considering the need to ensure continuity of learning and orderly administration of academic programmes, the ministry hereby authorises international schools to continue with term two instructional activities and proceed with ongoing examinations," reads the circular signed by the education ministry's Dr Cleophus Mugenyi, the head of basic and secondary education, on behalf of the permanent secretary, Dr Kedrace Turyagyenda.

According to the ministry, the international schools must adhere to the approved curricula, examination schedules and applicable regulatory and quality assurance requirements.



Turyagyenda

SCHOOLS SPEAK OUT

A section of international schools have welcomed the Government's position on allowing international schools to reopen.

Schools such as Kabojja International School, which offers both the Cambridge and IB curricula, indicated that the waiver by the ministry will allow them to prepare students for the end of year examinations.

Prior to the ministry announcement, Muhammed Njogeza, the admissions manager at Kabojja, said the school had welcomed learners for term two on January 5.

"It is essential to ensure uninterrupted learning in line with the international

academic calendar. Any disruption would affect syllabus coverage and planned instructional progress," he noted.

Njogeza added that it will enable them to avoid disadvantaging international students enrolled in Uganda and yet their colleagues elsewhere in the world are actively learning.

Another administrator of an international school who preferred anonymity said: "It was going to be a disaster for us to close. I want to thank the Government for listening to us and allowing us to reopen."

OTHER ACADEMIC INSTITUTIONS

However, for the rest of the academic institutions, including universities, the delayed reopening is still in effect, according to the ministry.

Subsequently, universities that had reopened or planned to reopen this month have since asked learners to wait until February 10.

NEW REOPENING DATES

On Friday, the ministry directed that

all private and public universities, as well as tertiary institutions that had opened for the 2026 school period close with immediate effect.

According to the Government, these will open alongside the general primary and secondary schools whose date has been deferred to February 10, from February 2.

Learners' safety during the ongoing elections was cited as the reason why the date for reopening was changed.

WHAT THE CHANGES MEAN

The development implies that the school calendar will be shortened by one week for the ordinary primary and secondary schools in the country, from 12 weeks to 11.

The number of school term days will also be reduced by eight days from 89 to 82 days during the first term.

However, universities and other tertiary institutions will be affected most with the changes. Many universities, both private and public, had this month reopened the second semester for the academic year 2025/2026.

The changes mean the universities and other tertiary institutions will have lost at least one month and two weeks this semester.