



2021

REOPENING GUIDELINES FOR SCHOOLS IN SOUTH SUDAN

**GOVERNMENT OF THE REPUBLIC
OF SOUTH SUDAN**

**Ministry of General Education and
Instruction**

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List of Abbreviations

ALP: Accelerated Learning Programme

ASEP: Accelerated Secondary Education Programme

BoG: Board of Governors

CED: County Education Department

CGS: Community Girls' Schools

ECD: Early Childhood Development

EU: European Union

GESS: Girls' Education South Sudan

IMPACT: EU Teacher Incentive Programme

MoGE&I: Ministry of General Education and Instruction

NGO: Non-Governmental Organisation

PES: Payam Education Supervisor

PTA: Parents Teachers Association

SMC: School Management Committee

SMOE: State Ministry of Education

UNICEF: United Nations Children's Fund

Acknowledgements

Reopening Guidelines for Schools in South Sudan were prepared by the Ministry of General Education and Instruction (MOGEI) and partners working in education sector. They intend to guide schools on how to reopen in a safe manner in the context of late start of the Academic Year 2021/2022.

The process of development of these guidelines was participative and supported by many members of MoGE&I's team, donors and implementing partners. These guidelines were printed with the support of the UNICEF and distributed to the States, Counties and schools by the Girls' Education South Sudan (GESS) Programme.

Foreword by the Ministry of General Education and Instruction

The COVID-19 pandemic has disrupted the South Sudan Academic Calendar and led to a delay in reopening of schools. After consultations with the COVID-19 National Taskforce, it was agreed that the Academic Year 2021/22 (AY 2021/22) and classes should commence on 03 May 2021.

This booklet is primarily prepared to inform the State Ministries of Education, County and Payam Education Offices, Headteachers and teachers on the implementation of the Academic Year 2021/2022.

The Ministry of General Education and Instruction (MoGE&I) would like the School Reopening Technical Working Group (SRTWG) for the valuable work it undertook in the past few months in preparation for the safe school reopening. The Ministry would also like to thank its partners for the active participation in discussions and support for the Technical Working Group.

Copies of this booklet on the Reopening Guidelines for Schools in South Sudan will be distributed to the State Ministries of Education (SMoE), County Education Departments (CED) and Payam Education Offices (PEO) and schools as part of orientation on School Registration and Safe Reopening of Schools. I urge all stakeholders and partners to support the implementation of these Guidelines and contribute to combating the spread of COVID-19 and keep our children and school

communities safe and support teachers to restart classes in the context of the New South Sudan National Curriculum.

We look forward to your cooperation,

Hon. Awut Deng Acuil, MP



The Minister
Ministry of General Education and Instruction (MoGE&I)
27 April 2021

Executive Summary

The COVID-19 pandemic has disrupted the South Sudan Academic Calendar and led to a delay in school re-opening. After consultations with the COVID-19 National Taskforce, was recommended that the Academic Year 2021/22 (AY 2021/22) and classes were scheduled to begin **03 May 2021**.

Registration process will be organised simultaneously with the start of the lessons and will end on 22 May 2021. The guidelines are meant to guide the State Ministries of Education, County and Payam Education Offices, as well as Headteachers and teachers on the implementation of the Academic Year 2021/2022.

Arrangement of learning

In the Academic Year 2021/22, all learners will be advanced to the next class. For instance, learners who registered in Primary 1 (P1) in 2020 will be advanced to Primary 2 (P2) in 2021/2022 academic year. However, learners who will repeat the class will be those who did not sit or did not pass the Certificate of Primary Education (CPE) or Secondary School Certificate in Secondary Education (SSCSE) exams.

Management of class overcrowding

Recommended class size remains 50 learners in primary schools and 45 learners in secondary schools. This is in line with the recommendations made in previous academic years and in line with the IMPACT practice in which teacher-learners ratio of 1/50 was achieved.

Classes larger than 50/45 must be divided into streams of up to 50/45 learners to maintain quality of learning and physical distancing as advised by the Ministry of Health's COVID-19 guidelines.

It is forbidden to elevate engagement of non-payroll teachers if streams of 50/45 learners were already achieved through the EU IMPACT programme.

Free from harm outdoor spaces can be utilised for learning.

Registration of pregnant and nursing learners

Pregnant and nursing learners shall all be permitted to register in school, attend lessons and continue their education without any discrimination. No pregnant or nursing learner shall be refused access to education or final examination and all pregnant and nursing learners shall be proactively encouraged to continue their education. This is in line with the 2008 Child Act and the General Education Act, 2012.

Headteachers, School Management Committees (SMC) or Board of Governors (BoG), teachers, school mothers/mentors and the Parent-Teacher Association (PTA) members shall actively follow-up on the registration of pregnant and nursing learners.

Registration of learners with disabilities and functional difficulties

Learners with disabilities and functional difficulties shall be permitted to register in a school of their choice. This will typically be a school closest to their residence. All schools which will register learners with disabilities and functional difficulties, and which require support to arrange learning process for these learners, shall work closely with their SMC/BoG, PES and Disability Champions to rapidly achieve that. All learners with disabilities and functional difficulties shall start attending lessons on 03 May 2021 just like all other learners.

Implementation of the New South Sudan National Curriculum

Upon school reopening P1 to P7 and S1 to S3 classes will follow the new South Sudan National Curriculum. Learners in P8 and S4 classes, however, will follow the old curriculum. For P8 and S4 classes, the new South Sudan National Curriculum will be implemented in 2022.

The medium of instruction in pre-primary and from P1 to P3 classes is a national language selected by the school. The medium of instruction from P4 to S4 is English. National languages will continue to be taught as subjects from P4 to P8.

Safeguarding, psychosocial support and wellbeing

School staff, SMC/BoG, school mothers/mentors and teachers shall pay additional attention to psychological needs of learners who are returning to school distressed, especially those returning to school after recovering from COVID-19 infection and after the quarantine period. Learners who lost their relatives due to COVID-19 infection, or due to other causes shall be supported and provided with access to a mentor or school mother.

Schools shall introduce a zero-tolerance policy on bullying, corporal punishment, GBV and discrimination. All school-based violence shall be condemned.

Learners should be mentored through difficult situations they are experiencing and provided with support to stop bullying behaviours.

Managing COVID-19 preventive measures in Schools

Health and hygiene

- 1) All learners and school communities shall be informed about COVID-19 preventive measures, and the importance of reducing the risk of COVID-19 infections.
- 2) All school staff and learners must be trained on handwashing protocols. Clean water and soap for washing hands must be provided in all schools.
- 3) Staff and learners shall wash their hands prior to entering the school compound, before and after each lesson, before and after having food and after using toilets.
- 4) School staff, learners and any visitors should have their temperature checked prior to entering school compound and should wear a facemask.
- 5) School staff and learners shall be informed that reusable facemasks shall be washed daily and regularly changed to maintain their functionality and safety.

- 6) All school visitors, inclusive of parents, must be authorised by the head teacher. Unauthorised or unannounced visitors shall not be permitted at the school compound.
- 7) Record and contact details of all visitors entering the school compound must be kept in a visitor's book.

School compound and school environment

- 8) School compound and all school infrastructure, inclusive of buildings and furniture, must be sufficiently aired and cleaned prior to school re-opening, and daily after the school re-opens.

Timetable

- 9) School assemblies and parades are temporarily suspended. This is to reduce gatherings of large number of persons in one physical space. All school announcements shall be made through a class teacher to individual streams/classes.
- 10) Breaks between the lessons and lunchtime shall be arranged in such a way that learners from different streams/classes do not mix and that physical distancing is enabled.
- 11) Sport and extra-curricular activities are permitted, however COVID-19 preventive measures such as monitoring participants' temperature, handwashing and mask wearing must be observed during these activities.

Food and drinking water

- 12) Schools with a school-feeding programme shall follow the safety measures set by the Ministry of Health and communicated separately by WFP or other partner supporting the school feeding.
- 13) To avoid the spread of the virus and other communicable diseases, food, drinks, utensils, cups, bottles, and other personal items shall not be shared.
- 14) Potable water must be provided for learners and teachers. Cups used for drinking of water must not be shared. All learners and teachers must carry their own cup or a bottle.

Inspection of COVID-19 protocols at school

- 15) SMC/BoG should form a sub-committee on health and hygiene. This sub-committee shall perform daily and periodic inspections of COVID-19 preventive measures and protocols.
- 16) Any suspected or diagnosed COVID-19 cases at the school must be immediately isolated in a safe room arranged in the school.
- 17) All suspected and diagnosed COVID-19 cases shall be reported to the **Payam Education Supervisor** (pre-primary, primary, Community Girls' School and Accelerated Learning

Programme); and to **an Inspector of the County Education Office** (ASEP and secondary).

- 18) The responsible State Ministry of Education shall be immediately notified about the suspected/diagnosed COVID-19 case. In case of difficulties in reaching PES, CEI, SMOE, the national **6666 phone line** can be contacted to facilitate further communication.

Non-compliance with COVID-19 protocols

- 19) Non-compliance with the safety and COVID-19 protocols is an offence and may lead to a disciplinary action.

Guidance on 2021 Academic Calendar

Chapter IV of The General Education Act, 2012, Standards and Quality of Education, Paragraph 10, sets the beginning date of each Academic Year in February and the end date in December. However, due to interruptions caused by the COVID-19 pandemics, the Academic Year 2021/2022 could not start as planned. **The 2021 Academic Year will commence on 3 May 2021.**

To enable completion of the syllabi of the new South Sudan National Curriculum within the directives of the General Education Act, 2012 and despite delayed school opening, the school week in the Academic Year 2021/2022 will remain five days a week and will run from Monday to Friday. However, school holidays will be shorter than ordinarily. Public Holidays will be observed.

The MoGE&I set the start date of the 2021/2022 Academic Year on 03 May 2021. The end of the 2021 Academic Year is 18 March 2022. There will be 207 instruction days in the Academic Year 2021/2022. There will be at least three days reserved for school-based in-service teacher training.

- **Term one will begin on 3 May 2021** and will end on 01 August 2021 with 62 instruction days. There will be one-week term break between 02 and 08 August 2021.

- **Term two will begin on 09 August 2021** and end on 31 October 2021 with 60 instruction days. There will be one-week term break between 01 and 07 November 2021.
- **Term three will begin on 08 November 2021** and end on 18 March 2022 with 85 instruction days. There will be one-week break after the Academic Year 2021/2022.

According to the new Assessment Framework, formative assessment will take place throughout the academic year. There will be no end-of-term exams.

Candidates who are repeating P8 and S4 classes will undertake their **exams in February 2022 (P8) and March 2022 (S4)** respectively. Exams' calendar for candidate classes will be published separately.

AY 2022 will begin on 04 April 2022.

Public Holidays

In line with the list published by the Ministry of Labour, the observed Public Holidays will be:

- Eid el Fitr, 13 May 2021 (Thursday), 1 working day
- SPLA Day, 16 May 2021 (Sunday), 0 working days
- Independence Day, 09 July 2021 (Friday), 1 working day
- Eid el Adha, 20 July 2021 (Friday), 1 working day
- Martyr's Day, 30 July 2021 (Friday), 1 working day
- Christmas Holiday, 25-26 December 2021 (Saturday-Sunday), 0 working days
- New Year Day, 01 January 2022 (Saturday), 0 working days.

2021 Academic Year Calendar

Term 1	Start date	End date	Public Holidays	School Holidays	No. of instruction days
Term 1	03-May-21	31-Jul-21			62 instruction days
Eid el Fitr Holiday	12-May-21	12-May-21	Wednesday	1 working day	
SPLA Day	16-May-21	16-May-21	Sunday	0 working days	
Independence Day	09-Jul-21	09-Jul-21	Friday	1 working day	
Eid el Adha	20-Jul-21	20-Jul-21	Tuesday	1 working day	
Martyr's Day	30-Jul-21	30-Jul-21	Friday	1 working day	
In-service, school-based Teacher Training Day	TBC	TBC	TBC	1 working day	
End of term holidays	02-Aug-21	08-Aug-21	Sunday – Sunday	5 working days	

Term	Start date	End date	Public Holidays	School Holidays	No. of instruction days
Term 2	09-Aug-21	31-Oct-21			60 instruction days
In-service, school-based Teacher Training Day	TBC	TBC	TBC	1 working day	
End of Term 2 Holiday	01-Nov-21	07-Nov-21	Sunday – Sunday	5 working days	

Term 3	Start date	End date	Public Holidays	School Holidays	No. of instruction days
Term 3	08-Nov-21	18-Mar-22			85 instruction days
In-service, school-based Teacher Training Day	TBC	TBC	TBC	1 working day	
Christmas Break and New Year Holiday	20-Dec-21	02-Jan-22	Sunday – Sunday	10 days	
Total					207 instruction days

