CIRCULAR

28th June, 2022

TO: ALL PROPRIETORS / ADMINISTRATORS

OF EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS OF LEARNING

SUBJECT: SECURITY AND SAFETY GUIDELINES TO EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS OF LEARNING

1. INTRODUCTION

From 5th January, 2022 to the 27th June, 2022, a total of 40 (forty) fire outbreak incidents have taken place in 39 schools and institutions, unfortunately seven (07) lives of learners have been lost. Investigations have so far established that out of the 40 fire incidents, 17 (seventeen) were intentional (deliberately) set, 04 as a result of negligence, 04 accidental i.e., electric short circuit. The causes for 15 fire incidents have not been established. Some culprits have been arrested. Further, investigations have established the following patterns and causes: -

1. **Patterns**

* The schools mostly affected are boarding and privately owned except for Teso College, Kabalega S.S.S, Lubiri S.S.S and Iganga S.S.S.
* The fires mostly occur in dormitories and when the students are not in dormitories with the exception of New Crest of Kibedi Junior School And St. Mary Prepartrix Girls S.S.S. in Entebbe.
* The first witness of the fires are mostly students.
* The fires mostly occur between 08.00 a.m to 12.00 noon during the day and between 8.00 p.m to 10.00 p.m and 5.00 a.m to 06.00 a.m during the night.

1. **Causes**

* Intentional / Arson caused by
* Criminal Conduct of students to settle personal scores e.g. in reaction to disciplinary action by school administration or as a result of quarrels among students.
* Copycat by students in one school or the other doing what they have heard done in another school.
* **Accidental causes**
* Use of illegal electric equipment by students
* Reckless use of electrical equipments
* Unattended to electrical appliances
* Careless handling of combustible-lighting or cooking materials e.g. paraffin, wax, candles and fire wood
* Unsafe hot electrical metal welding, cutting and repair works
* Failure by the school administration to implement basic requirements and minimum standards of the Ministry of Education and Sports (BRMS) as well as non-adherence to the existing laws

**N.B: These fires are preventable if measures are put in place and adhered to.**

II **Measures**

**The following measures must be instituted immediately:**

**Education Institutions must:**

1. Activate safety and security committees for staff and learners as required by BRMS. For students all classes to be represented. For staff, all departments and independent units to be represented on the security committees.

The major role of the committees is to draw up and oversee implementation of safety and security policy for the respective institutions

1. **Have controlled access to premises by putting in place;**
2. A secure and non-porous perimeter fence high enough to prevent illegal entry and exit. In addition to institutions that can, surveillance and monitoring equipments such as closed-circuit TV (CCTV) Cameras and alarms.
3. Controls at the entry / exit points e.g. registers, reception areas for visitors and their meetings with students and staff. Institutions should desist from allowing visitors to go beyond designated areas. As much as possible, institutions should use technical means such as surveillance systems. Police shall assist institutions in identifying suitable and cost-effective surveillance /monitoring equipment
4. **Ensure Security within the premises**
5. Have guards at dormitories preferably 02 per building, 01 at the front and 01 at the back, on a 12 hour shift and install surveillance and monitoring cameras (equipment) where possible.
6. Have proper identification of all the people at the school by providing identification tags for teachers and uniforms for support staff.
7. Restrict entry to key installations like student dormitories, kitchen, water sources, food stores etc.
8. Have specific teachers and students to be in charge of security at the schools operating on 24 hour basis.
9. Keep school dormitories under lock and effectively guarded when students are in class
10. Confine sick students in sick bays or selected holding areas, under close monitoring by the staff
11. Conduct regular and snap checks of the students’ possessions and key installations to be able to detect dangerous materials like match boxes, inflammables, acids and drugs before they may be used by some undisciplined students.
12. **Manage undisciplined and criminal minded students and teachers.**

Detect and identify undisciplined and criminal mined students or members of staff and report as appropriate to the nearest Police Unit, any other security officer or L.C. Official.

1. **Institute crime prevention measures**
2. Hold regular meetings with members of staff, other workers and students as per BRMS to mitigate possible grievances that may result into crime such as strikes and riots.
3. Have suggestion boxes
4. Set up Crime Prevention Clubs, with the assistance of the nearest Police Units to champion security matters in their respective school communities
5. Education Institutions should ensure close cooperation with the neighbouring communities and nearest Police Units to promote pro-active strategies in combating the various types of crime in institutions.
6. Provide guidance and counseling services to address various stress related issues like HIV / AIDS, poverty, domestic problems, drug abuse etc.
7. **Recruit and train guards**
8. Recruit adequate numbers of trainable security guards for key installations depending on the size of the institution.
9. Ensure that such guards are vetted by security authorities and given basic training in First Aid, Firefighting, Patrol techniques, observation, self-defense and making entries in Gate Registers etc.
10. In this regard, the Police shall develop a training manual and assist in the training of guards.
11. **Put in place fire safety measures**

1. Have fire fighting equipments e.g. portable extinguishers, hose reels, fire hydrant, buckets filled with dry sand and water placed in strategic areas.
2. Have trained fire wardens selected amongst the teaching staff, support staff and students.
3. Have a fire detection system. This can be smoke detectors, heat detectors or break glass fire system
4. The Educational Institutions should organize regular fire drills, at least at the beginning of every term.
5. Every institution should develop a special communication system in case of an emergency. This can be a whistle, horn, drum or alarm
6. **Have emergency plans and preparations**

Draw up Emergency plans for the respective institution, with the assistance of the Police, in case of catastrophe such as fire. Such plans must specify evacuation routes, treatment centres, collection areas and emergency exits among others.

1. Ensure structural safety measures

The institutional structures should conform to provisions of the existing legislation with respect to design, construction, maintenance and change of use.

1. Provide a separate accommodation for each sex and age group; 03 square meters to 04 square meters floor space per student.
2. Lighting: window area should be atleast 10% floor area and ventilation; vents area should be atleast 1% of floor area.
3. Provide lockable cupboards.
4. Only single and double decker beds must be used in schools and students should not sleep on the floor.
5. Every boarding institution should provide adequate facilities for laundry, drying clothes (wire lines), ironing cloth and maintenance of shoes / clothes.
6. Provision of at least 02 emergency exits for each dormitory.
7. Spacing between beds should be 0.6 meters apart and 03 meters off the wall.
8. Accommodation wall heights should be 03 meters high.
9. Primary school children must have attendants all the time residing within the dormitory building.
10. The dormitory matron should; be examined medically every six months, be with minimum academic qualifications of primary seven and be with minimum age of 30 years.
11. Dormitories / halls of residence should have adequate and safe lighting and general cleanliness.
12. Sockets and circuit breakers must be located in laundry.
13. Every dormitory should have an occupancy permit issued by competent authority.
14. Internal walls should not be painted with oil paint.
15. Maintain at all times unobstructed passage of atleast 0.6 meters between lines of beds.
16. All doors and windows should open outwards for ease of opening from within in case of emergency.
17. Have a safe alternative power source for emergency e.g. solar, chargeable lamps
18. Have lightening arresters / conductors installed on every building.
19. Each classroom should have a provision for emergency exit

