

GROOMING IN KENYAN HIGH SCHOOLS: PART ONE.

The Grooming Begins in the Staffroom

It begins slowly. Not all of a sudden. It often looks and feels like love, and not the abuse that it is.

Because grooming doesn't always look like abuse. Grooming is the softest violence with the loudest consequences. It is the predator wearing the mask of a mentor. It is the teacher who always seems to find a reason to keep a female high school student behind after class. It is the Biology teacher who calls her to the lab during preps. The CU patron who says, "*God has given you a unique spirit. You're not like the others.*"

It's the extra privilege. The whispers behind closed doors. The lingering hand during prayers. The beyond normal interest in her life. It is the one teacher who praises her in class, pulls her aside to 'talk', and builds her trust. The one who calls her to the staffroom under the pretense of discussing student leadership but somehow ends up asking about her family. Her holidays. Her body.

GROOMING BEHAVIORS

Before children are sexually abused, they are often groomed by abusers. Do you know the signs?

Special attention or gifts
Isolating the child from others
Filling needs and roles within the family



Treating the child as if he or she is older
Gradually crossing physical boundaries, even in public

Learn the signs, stop the abuse.

At first, it feels like nothing. Then it starts to feel nice. Safe. Like someone finally sees her. Like maybe she really is special. Who doesn't want to be seen? Especially when you're a teenager, and your body is changing faster than your mind can catch up. When your sense of self is still raw and messy and when approval from the adults around you starts to feel like proof that you matter.

And when he touches her waist by mistake, or tells her not to mention their talks to anyone, she doesn't think something wrong happened. No. She thinks, "*this is just between us.*"

She tells herself, "*We're close. He trusts me. I am not like the others.*"

By the time he crosses the line, she's already accustomed to the intimacy. She doesn't flinch. She doesn't scream. Worst of all, she expects it. Because this is how grooming works. It doesn't feel like abuse while it's happening. It feels like attention, like closeness. Like a privilege other girls don't have.

We have all been teenagers before. Someone reading this might still be a teenager. And teenage girls are searching for identity. For safety. For worth. Predators know that. Furthermore, in a society that tells girls their worth is in being desired, and 'rewards' them for being noticed, chosen or favoured, how would she know this attention is not affection? Who is going to tell her that it is abuse?

Let's stop pretending: this is not an innocent misunderstanding. This is sexual abuse. Grooming is a crime. It is the premeditation before the assault. It is manipulation as weapon. It is calculated. It is cruel. And it happens within the walls of the very schools meant to protect our daughters, our girls.

grooming

noun

Grooming is when someone builds an emotional connection with a child to gain their trust for the purposes of sexual abuse, sexual exploitation or trafficking.

Alliance Girls. July 2025.

On July 4th, 2025, Christine Mungai cracked open what many former students had long whispered. In a searing exposé with **Africa Uncensored**, she revealed that **Peter Ayiro**, long-serving teacher and Christian Union patron at Alliance Girls High School, had been grooming and preying on girls for years.

Not strangers. Not outsiders. A man with access, trust, and a school-issued key, as well as backing. A man described as charming and well-liked by the schools. Some of what the students said include;

"His office was one place I could walk in-and-out of freely. As a teenage girl in boarding school, it was just nice to get good attention. I didn't think much of it at the time."

This is the heart of grooming. We can see how grooming thrives in familiarity. It offers comfort first. The victim never sees the harm coming, because it feels like safety.

"As a 15-year-old, I thought that if he's willing to be this open and vulnerable with us, then those accusations about him being inappropriate with students must be lies."

The psychological trap. We can see how grooming disarms its victims by manufacturing trust. It makes the abuser look like the only honest adult in the room.

"He convinced us that he could see into our souls. That he knew who was spiritually strong and who was slipping into the world. He'd talk about how some girls, after leaving school, had abandoned the faith and stopped talking to him. He made it seem like not staying in touch with him meant you were backsliding."

Spiritual grooming. This binds a girl's loyalty to the abuser by making disobedience feel like a betrayal of God, not man, which can be heavy for girls who have been raised in church.

"He was kind of the first person who preached and made me feel the word of God come alive. That was my impression of him. That he was very spiritual, very morally grounded, very in tune with God. He projected this aura of superiority, like he was at Alliance Girls by choice, by destiny, and in service to the girls and the school community. It's like he had made this great sacrifice to teach us. I remember that distinctly. As a teenage girl, I just accepted that narrative as fact. And I felt grateful that this great man had chosen to spend time with us."

The myth of the noble man. By presenting himself as selfless and spiritually superior, Peter Ayiro conditioned girls to feel honoured by his attention and not question it.

"At the time, it was common and normal for Mr. Ayiro to show casual physical affection not just with me, but with all of us in the inner circle. He hugged us right outside the chapel, before or after C.U. and kept his hand around our waists. Other teachers didn't do that. But with him, it was common and normal. Sometimes, he'd hug us and his pinky finger touched our bum"

Normalization of boundary breaking. Grooming blurred the lines by making inappropriate behaviours feel ordinary. It was not solely about what Mr. Ayiro did, but about convincing the girls that it was okay when he did it.

"By the time he kissed me, it didn't feel alarming at all. He was 32, I was 18."

We can see how grooming is calculated consent-manipulation. It groomed not just the girl's body, but her mind until the abuse felt like a continuation of closeness, not just a crossing of a line. Peter Ayiro went on to marry one of the girls after she finished high school. Right in the

school grounds. This was not before he invited several others to sleep in his house, kissed some and had sex with others.

And the institution? It did what too many Kenyan schools do. It ducked. Delayed. Denied. Its not like the other teachers were not aware. They were. The administration knew what was going on for over 2 decades. The punishment? He was *suspended*. That's how softly this country handles the abuse of girls. Like it's an HR issue.

Why Our Girls Are Not Safe in School

Because predators don't just slip through the cracks. They are invited in. They're protected by staffroom brotherhoods and Board of Managements more interested in reputation than protection.

Because we teach girls to respect their teachers but never expect teachers to be aware that boundaries and professionalism exist. Because we train girls to obey but never question what happens when that obedience is weaponized by pedophiles.



What the Law Says and Why It Still Isn't Enough

Under **Section 8** of the **Sexual Offences Act**, any sexual contact with a person under 18 is defilement. There is no such thing as consent from a minor. Whether it happens while she's still in school or 'waited for after she finishes' it is still grooming. Still abuse. Still punishable by **20 years to life**.

Section 24 of the same Act states that a head-teacher, teacher or employee in a school takes advantage of their position and seduces a pupil or student to have sexual intercourse with him or her is guilty of abuse of position of authority and can be imprisoned for not less than 5 years

The **Children Act (2022)** promises every child protection from all forms of abuse and neglect. Schools are duty-bearers. They are legally bound to act, investigate, report.

But look around. How many schools have ever handed over a predator to the police? How many Board meetings end with "*Let's not ruin his career over this small mistake?*"

The law exists. It's just buried under a culture of silence.

So, Why Didn't She Say No?

Because he was her mentor. Because she was 15 and he was 35 and had the power to write her recommendation letter. Because his 'acts of kindness' or 'favouritism' took away her voice.

So the question is not why didn't she report. The question is: why was he even allowed near her in the first place?

This Is Only Part One.

Because Peter Ayiro is not the only one. Alliance is not the only school. And grooming is not just something that happens out there. It's happening now. As you read this. In your niece's school. In your neighbour's. In the same staffroom where your daughter's favourite teacher works. In school where girls are supposed to get an education.

So ask yourself: how many more schools will wait to be exposed before protecting their girls? When will we stop calling it mentorship and start calling it abuse? How many more predators will hide behind their reputation?

Next, in **Part Two**, we go deeper into the culture of cover-ups, the legal black holes, the schools where girls are expelled for being victims, the ministries that stay quiet, and the real price of silence. Because if we don't break this pattern, it will devour a generation.

For further reading:

1. Christine Mungai, 'The Teacher and the System, Part I' The Deep Dive Newsletter (Africa Uncensored, 4 July 2025) <https://africauncensored.substack.com/p/the-teacher-and-the-system> accessed 25 July 2025.
2. Sexual Offences Act, 2006
3. Children Act, 2022

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