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Kampala, Uganda

In any correspondence on
this subject please quote: ADM/48/118/01

October 31, 2017

CIRCULAR No.16/2017

CAO/Town Clerk

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Re: Mandatory Response Required – Protection of children from all forms of violence including corporal punishment

The Children's Act (Amendment), 2016, section 106A, states that:

- 1) A person of authority in any institution of learning shall not subject a child to any form of corporal punishment
- 2) A person who subjects a child to corporal punishment commits an offence and is liable to imprisonment for a term not to exceed three years or a fine not to exceed one hundred currency points. A currency point is equivalent of 20,000 Uganda Shillings.

The Ministry of Education and Sports (MoES) to support schools to adhere to the new law has drafted the *National Strategy and Action Plan on Violence Against Children in Schools (VACiS)*, the *Reporting, Tracking, Referral and Response (RTRR) Guidelines on Violence Against Children in Schools*, and the *Alternative to Corporal Punishment Guidelines*.

In addition, the MoES has developed the "Journneys" program to address violence in schools. *Journneys* is a mandatory program. There are three *Journneys* activity hand books.

The *Journneys Activity Handbook for Teachers and School Staff* provides activities that head teachers are to lead in their schools as part of their administrative responsibility for RTRR. The *Journneys Activity Handbook for Pupils* encourages pupils to form teams to carry out activities that build on five essential social and emotional learning competencies related to the life skills in the Thematic Curriculum. The *Journneys Activity Handbook for Community Members* guides designated community leaders in organizing activities to improve the broader school climate.

The MoES requires that District Education Officers (DEOs) and head teachers ensure that sufficient time is dedicated to undertaking the *Journneys* program. This is because the activities in these handbooks are currently the MoES response to the *National Strategy and Action Plan on VACiS* and the *RTRR Guidelines on Violence Against Children in Schools*. *Journneys* helps head teachers to address school violence and create a more positive and supportive school climate.

To ensure that head teachers understand the *Journneys* program implementation requirements, the MoES makes the following recommendations:

- **Importance of compliance:** DEOs convene Head Teachers' meetings with SMC chairpersons to emphasise the importance of the Journeys and direct them to ensure implementation of the Journeys program with the teaching and non-teaching staff and team activities for pupils in the school, and encourage SMCs work with parents.
- **Mobilize District Officials:** DEOs hold meetings with College Principals and Deputy Principals for Outreach (DPOs) to discuss how to implement and monitor Journeys,
- **Identify Time:** Allocate time on the school timetable to implement Journeys. One hour per week with teachers, and one pupil activity per week during extracurricular activity from 3:20 – 4:00 p.m.
- **Participate in Zonal Meetings:** CCTs and district education staff hold zonal meetings to guide head teachers to understand, commit, plan and implement Journeys and to assess progress.

Our goal is to enhance the protection of children within Uganda's educational institutions and provide our personnel with the guidance and support to protect children from harm and themselves from prosecution.

Thank you,

NS Lyazi

R. Nsumba Lyazi

FOR: PERMANENT SECRETARY

Cc: Commissioner Basic Education
 Gender Technical Advisor
 Head Teachers
 DEOs
 DISs
 CCTs
 RDCs
 Chairperson LC5 _____