



2026

**OPENING 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

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- 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  
MoGEI: 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

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The Ministry of General Education and Instruction (MoGEI) and partners working in the education sector prepared Opening Guidelines for Schools in South Sudan to guide the schools on how to open the schools in a safe and smooth manner and when to start the Academic Year 2026.

The Opening Guidelines include the Unified Academic Calendar for schools which directs the schools to start the Academic Year 2026 on **02 February 2026**. The Unified Academic Calendar should be respected by all schools, also private schools delivering educational services in the country.

The MoGEI will be monitor observance of the Unified Academic Calendar to ensure correct implementation and to enable schools to complete planned teaching.

The process of development of these guidelines was participative and supported by many members of MoGEI's team, donors and implementing partners. In collaboration with the Ministry of General Education and Instruction and partners, the Girls' Education South Sudan (GESS) Programme printed and distributed these guidelines to all States and Administrative Areas, Counties and schools, and other stakeholders.

**Honourable, Kachuol Mabil Piok**  
**Undersecretary**  
**Ministry of General Education and Instruction**  
**Juba, The Republic of South Sudan**

*P. Kachuol Mabil Piok*  
*Dec 18, 2025*

## Foreword

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The Unified Academic Year for South Sudan, with schools opening in February and exams in December, remains in effect. The Academic Year 2026 will commence on **02 February 2026**. School Opening Day will be organised on 02 February 2026, and lessons will start immediately.

Back-to-School Campaign will commence before the start of the Academic Year and not later than January 2026. Promotion and exams will be organised accordingly to the exams calendar.

This booklet is primarily prepared to inform the State Ministries of Education, County and Payam Education Offices, Head Teachers and teachers about the implementation of the Academic Year 2026.

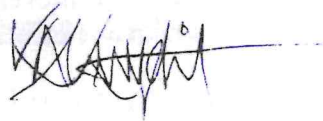
The Ministry of General Education and Instruction (MoGEI) would like to thank education sector partners for the valuable work they have been undertaking throughout the past Academic Year and during the preparations for the Academic Year 2026.

Copies of this booklet: The Opening 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 and should become part of orientation on learner registration and safe opening of schools.

I urge all stakeholders and partners to support the implementation of these Guidelines and contribute to advancement of education in South Sudan.

I wish all the learners and teachers a successful and productive Academic Year.

We look forward to your cooperation,



Hon. Kuyok Abol Kuyok

The Minister,  
Ministry of General Education and Instruction (MoGEI)

17 November 2026

## Executive Summary

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The Unified Academic Calendar, with schools opening in February and exams in December is in effect and should be adhered to by all types of school, including private. It is published to assist schools to organise the Academic Year and to complete the National Curriculum.

Should heatwave or other difficult to predict and prevent calamities occur, schools should minimise their negative effects on learning.

It is an absolute priority that during Academic Year 2026 no instruction days are lost due to late registration or delayed school opening, and that the National Curriculum is implemented in full.

The Academic Year 2026 will commence on **02 February 2026**. School Opening Day will be organised on 02 February 2026 and lessons will start immediately.

Back-to-School Campaign will commence before the Academic Year and not later than January 2026. Examinations will be held as per the Exams' Calendar in December 2026.

These guidelines are meant to guide the State Ministries of Education, County and Payam Education Offices, Head Teachers, **including Head Teachers of private schools** and teachers about the implementation of the Academic Year 2026.

## Arrangement of learning

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The Academic Year 2026 will commence on Monday, 02<sup>nd</sup> of February 2026 and will end on Friday, 19<sup>th</sup> of December 2026, after exams.

In the Academic Year 2026, learners will be promoted to the next class based on their performance. Exams of the Academic Year 2026 will be held between **30<sup>th</sup> November and 18<sup>th</sup> of December 2026.**

## Management of class overcrowding

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Recommended class size remains **20 learners in pre-primary schools, 50 learners in primary and 45 learners in secondary schools.** This is in line with the recommendations made in previous academic years and in line with the directives of the Ministry of General Education and Instruction.

**Groups of learners larger than 20/50/45 must be divided into streams of up to 20/50/45 learners** to maintain conducive and safe learning environment.

## Registration of pregnant and parenting learners

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Pregnant and parenting learners have the right and shall all be permitted to register in school, attend lessons, and continue their education without any discrimination. No pregnant or parenting learner shall be refused access to education or final examination and all pregnant and parenting learners shall be proactively

encouraged to continue their education. This is in line with the 2008 Child Act and the General Education Act, 2012.

Head Teachers, 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 parenting learners.

### Registration of learners with disabilities and functional difficulties

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Learners with disabilities and functional difficulties have the right and 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 **02 February 2026** just like all learners.

### Implementation of the New South Sudan Curriculum

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Upon school opening, pre-primary, primary and secondary schools, as well as programmes within the Alternative Education System will follow the South Sudan National Curriculum.

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

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School staff, SMC/BoG, PTA members, school mothers, mentors and teachers shall pay additional attention to psychological needs of learners who are returning to, or attending school distressed, pregnant or after loss of a close one. Pregnant learners, learners who lost their relatives and otherwise vulnerable learners shall be supported and provided with access to a mentor or a school mother.

Schools shall introduce a zero-tolerance policy and child-friendly strategies for reporting and tackling bullying, corporal punishment, gender-based violence (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. There is zero-tolerance for bullying behaviours in schools.

Teachers are forbidden from using corporal punishment and any form of violence and intimidation.

## Teacher's professional conduct

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Teacher's conduct is regulated by The General Education Act, 2012 and the National Standards for Teachers.

It is reminded to all Head Teachers, teachers and staff working in schools that consumption of alcohol before or during the school hours and use of substances are strictly prohibited. Abuse of power and any forms of corruption are strictly prohibited.

Any form of sexual relationship between an adult working in the school and a learner are strictly prohibited, whether the learner is a minor or a legal adult.

Schools shall apply zero tolerance to any form of sexual harassment and inappropriate behaviour by an adult working in a school.

All instances of sexual harassment and sexual relationship between an adult working in a school and a learner must be reported to the National Ministry of General Education and Instruction, Directorate of Gender and Inclusive Education.

## Health and hygiene

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All schools should form an SMC/BoG sub-committee on health and hygiene. This sub-committee shall perform periodic inspections of hygiene and disease preventive measures and protocols at school and conduct hygiene awareness campaigns.

All learners and school communities shall be informed about common health risks, inclusive of **heat stroke, cholera and Ebola** and related preventive measures.

All school staff and learners must be trained on handwashing protocols. Clean water and soap for washing hands must be provided in all schools, near all classrooms and toilets.

Staff and learners shall wash or sanitise their hands prior to entering the school compound, before and after each lesson, before and after having food and after using toilets.

During outbreaks of communicable diseases, school staff, learners and any visitors should be informed of disease prevention protocols. During outbreaks of communicable diseases unauthorised or unannounced visitors shall not be permitted at the school compound.

Record and contact details of all visitors entering the school compound must be kept in a visitor's book.

## Management of heat waves

Should heat wave or other difficult to predict and prevent calamity occur, some, CED, PES, Head Teachers and SMC/BoG should follow instructions issued by MoGEI.

Efforts should be made to minimise adverse impact on learning and learning outcomes, while keeping learners safe and healthy. Unless directed otherwise by MoGEI, during heat waves

schools might recommend reducing learning hours. Should schools operate half-day, the lost learning time will need to be made up by other arrangements to enable completion of the National Curriculum.

### Green school and clean school environment

To reduce effects of climate change and raising temperatures, schools must make efforts to plant trees and heat-resistant plants around the school compound.

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

Schools should ensure that suitable personnel is appointed and accountable for school's safety and hygiene.

Classroom walls shall be painted with light colours to reflect the light and kept in good order, free from graffiti and vandal signs.

Should school engage learners in environmental and cleaning duties within the school, the school management is obliged to ensure that the duties assigned to learners are suitable for their age and that they are distributed equitably between boys and girls.

## Assemblies and school parades

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School assemblies and parades are conducted accordingly to the master timetable.

During outbreaks of communicable diseases school assemblies and parades shall be temporarily suspended. This is to reduce gatherings of large number of persons in one physical space.

During outbreaks of diseases, all school announcements shall be made through a class teacher to individual streams/classes, unless MoGEI issues specific directives.

## Sport and extra-curricular activities

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All learners shall have the right and access to sport and extra-curricular activities, without any discrimination based on their sex, pregnancy or disability status. Activities may need to be adapted to enable accommodation of vulnerable learners.

Sport and extra-curricular activities are conducted accordingly to the master timetable.

During disease outbreaks sport and extra-curricular activities may be permitted if they do not increase the risk of spreading the disease. All preventive measures such as monitoring participants' temperature, handwashing and other measures as directed by the Ministry of Health must be observed during these activities.

## Food and drinking water

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Potable water must be provided for learners and teachers. **Cups used for drinking of water must not be shared without washing.** All learners and teachers are encouraged to carry their own cup or a bottle.

Schools with a school-feeding programme shall follow the safety measures set for the programme by the Ministry of Health and communicated separately by WFP or other partner supporting the school feeding.

To maintain hygiene and avoid the spread of communicable diseases, food, drinks, utensils, cups, bottles, and other personal items shall not be shared by learners.

## Non-compliance with protocols and regulations

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Non-compliance with any of the regulations stated in these guidelines is an offence and may lead to a disciplinary action.

## Guidance on 2025 Academic Year

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According to Chapter IV of The General Education Act, 2012, Standards and Quality of Education, Paragraph 10, the beginning date of each Academic Year is set in February and the end date is in December. **The Academic Year 2026 will commence on 02 February 2026.**

To enable accomplishment of the syllabi of the South Sudan National Curriculum within the directives of the General Education Act, 2012 the school week in the Academic Year 2025 will remain five days a week and will run from Monday to Friday. The Academic Year and the School Holidays will follow the calendar presented below. Public Holidays will be observed as per the directives of the Ministry of Labour.

The MoGEI set the start date of the 2026 Academic Year on **02 February 2026**. The end of the 2026 Academic Year is **18 December 2026, after the exams**. There will be **203** instruction days in the Academic Year 2026. There will be at least three days reserved for school-based in-service teacher training.

**Term one will begin on 02 February 2026** and will end on 15 May 2026 with **70 instruction days**. There will be term break between 18 May 2026 and 29 May 2026.

**Term two will begin on 01 June 2026** and end on 04 September 2026 with **68 instruction days**. There will be term break between 07 September 2026 and 20 September 2026.

**Term three will begin on 21 September 2026** and end on 18 December 2026 with **65 instruction days**. There will be a break after the Academic Year 2026. The holidays will start on 21 December 2026.

**The Academic Year 2026 will start on 01 February 2027.**

According to the new Assessment Framework, formative assessment will take place throughout the academic year.

Candidates of P8 and S4 classes will undertake their exams between 30<sup>th</sup> November – 04<sup>th</sup> December 2026 (P8) and 07<sup>th</sup> – 18<sup>th</sup> December 2026 (S4) respectively.

### **Public Holidays**

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

- Eid el Fitr, 19 – 20 March 2026 (Thursday - Friday), 2 instruction days
- Easter, 03 April – 06 April 2026 (Friday – Monday), 2 instruction days
- Labour Day, 01 May 2026 (Friday), 1 instruction day
- SPLA Day, 16 May 2026 (Saturday), 0 instruction days
- Eid el Adha, 27 - 29 May 2026 (Wednesday - Friday), 0 instruction days (Observed during term break)
- Independence Day, 09 July 2026 (Thursday), 1 instruction day
- Martyrs' Day, 30 July 2026 (Thursday), 1 instruction day
- Christmas Holiday, 25-26 December 2026 (Friday – Saturday), 0 instruction days
- New Year's Holiday, 01 January 2027 (Friday), 0 instruction days

### **Other important days celebrated by schools**

During each Academic Year there are important dates that schools celebrate and participate in. These days are not Public Holidays, but lessons on these days and celebrations are thematically focused to raise awareness of the learners to the topics these days are dedicated to. These special days include:

- The Africa Day of School Feeding (01 March)
- International Women's Day (08 March)
- World Heritage Day (18 April)
- World Book Day (23 April)
- International Museum Day (18 May)
- Menstrual Hygiene Day (28 May)
- World Environment Day (5 June)
- International Day of the African Child (16 June)
- National Girls' Education Day (07 July)
- International Literacy Day (08 September)
- World Teacher's Day (5 October)
- International Day of the Girl Child (11 October)
- Global Handwashing Day (15 October)
- World Toilet Day (19 November)
- 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence (25 November)
- World AIDS Day (1 December)
- International Day of Persons with Disabilities (3 December)

## 2026 Academic Year Calendar

Term	Start date	End date	Public Holidays	School Holidays	No. of instruction days
<b>Term 1</b>	<b>02 February 2026</b>	<b>15 May 2026</b>			<b>70 instruction days</b>
Eid el Fitr Holiday	19 March 2026	20 March 2026	Thursday – Friday	<b>2 instruction days</b>	
Easter Holiday	03 April 2026	06 April 2026	Friday - Monday	<b>2 instruction days</b>	
Labour Day	01 May 2026	01 May 2026	Thursday	<b>1 instruction day</b>	
SPLA Day	16 May 2026	16 May 2026	Saturday	<b>0 instruction days</b>	
Eid el Adha	27 May 2026	29 May 2026	Wednesday - Friday	<b>0 instruction days</b>	
<b>End of term Holidays</b>	<b>18 May 2026</b>	<b>29 May 2026</b>	<b>Saturday – Sunday</b>	<b>10 instruction days</b>	

<b>Term</b>	<b>Start date</b>	<b>End date</b>	<b>Public Holidays</b>	<b>School Holidays</b>	<b>No. of instruction days</b>
<b>Term 2</b>	<b>01 June 2026</b>	<b>04 September 2026</b>			<b>68 instruction days</b>
Independence Day	09 July 2026	09 July 2026	Thursday	<b>1 instruction day</b>	
Martyr's Day	30 July 2026	30 July 2026	Thursday	<b>1 instruction day</b>	
<b>End of Term 2 Holiday</b>	<b>07 September 2026</b>	<b>20 September 2026</b>	<b>Saturday – Sunday</b>	<b>10 instruction days</b>	

Term	Start date	End date	Public Holidays	School Holidays	No. of instruction days
Term 3	21 September 2026	18 December 2026			65 instruction days
End of Term 3 Holiday	21 December 2025	31 January 2027	Saturday – Sunday	42 days	
<b>Total</b>					<b>203 instruction days</b>

### 2026 Exams Calendar

Exams	Start date	End date	Public Holidays	School Holidays	No. of instruction days
Primary 8	30 November 2026	04 December 2024			5 days
Senior 4	07 December 2026	18 December 2026			10 days