

Education Parents said they are not ready to pay the fees as the government had announced that there will be no



Parents help their children carry boarding items during the admission of JSS learners to Moi Nyeri Complex School in Nyeri County on January 30. JOSEPH KANYII NATION



Parents say schools are charging illegal

Some head teachers are charging as high as Sh7,000 to admit learners to Junior Secondary

BY WINNIE ATIENO AND LUCY MKANYIKA

Tens of learners remain at home due to lack of admission fees imposed by some head teachers in public junior secondary schools (JSS) in complete defiance of the government.

The Nation has learnt that some head teachers are charging as high as Sh7,000 to admit learners to JSS.

Those mostly affected are parents who have transferred their

children from private and feeder schools that are not mandated to host JSS.

Parents said they are not ready to pay the fees as the government had announced that there will be no charges for students in JSS.

Taita-Taveta Parents Association chairperson Alius Mberi said many parents with learners reporting to JSS have complained of being forced to pay the admission fees.

"The government said JSS education is free. Why are the schools charging us?" asked Mr Mberi.

Taita-Taveta County Director of Education Victoria Mulili said the government had given a clear directive that JSS education in public schools is free. She said the government will allocate a Sh15,000 capitation fee for each learner joining junior secondary to facilitate free learning.

She warned that parents should not be charged any fees for their children unless such schools were offering boarding facilities.

"The government made it illegal for any public schools to charge any fees. (Education) Cab-

inet Secretary (Ezekiel) Machogu will fund the learners," she said.

In Mombasa, some schools without enough infrastructure asked parents to top up tuition fees.

The National Assembly Education Committee has now waded into the matter and wants the Teachers Service Commission (TSC) to take action against the administrators imposing the fees.

Committee chairperson Julius Melly said legislators were concerned by the illegal increase in fees.

"Parents are being charged up to Sh8,000 for day schools. We were asking them if this pupil was in class six in the same school hosting JSS and he or she was not being charged any fees, all of a sudden you've produced a fee structure when the child has transitioned to JSS," said Mr Melly.



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Turning a blind eye

He further wondered why the Ministry of Education is turning a blind eye to the complaints.

"But what is the Ministry of Education doing about it? Are they not able to implement government policies? Hadn't they issued a guideline barring school heads from charging fees because there is capitation?" he asked during an interview on phone.

However, some of the school heads said the charges are not school fees but admission fees.

The administrators said they are grappling with massive challenges including lack of teachers to teach JSS learners, classrooms, slow distribution of textbooks, uniform unavailability and delayed disbursement of capitation.

Kenya Primary Schools Head Teachers Association deputy chairman Fuad Ali said they have not received reports of school heads charging extra fees.

DISPARITY
Learners locked out by high fees



Parents say they were being charged as high as Sh7,000 to have their children admitted in public junior secondary schools