

## PRESS RELEASE

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For Immediate Release

### GHANA SCHOOLS TO OPEN OR NOT TO OPEN?

According to Malcolm X **“tomorrow belongs to those who prepare for it today.”** Unfortunately, the current Covid-19 Pandemic crisis which has claimed over 300,000 lives globally never honoured any country with advance information of its form, character and potency.

This has no doubt brought many sectors including the hospitality, travel, health, education among others to their knees and not without its unpleasant legacy of economic uncertainty, amplified anxiety and spiralling fear on humans.

Currently, leaders of countries are strategising on how to re-open schools in the midst of uncertainties, concerns and opposition from Teacher Unions, Parents and Education workers. Are their concerns justified?

A few weeks ago UK Education Secretary defended the decision of reopening schools in June 2020, saying that **school is the safest place for children from difficult or unhappy homes, as he urged teachers to return to the classroom.** This I consider as an unfortunate devaluation of Schooling by regarding it as a stronghold for the vulnerable rather than a nurturing place of great futures. Thankfully, this decision has been criticised by the unions and the British Medical Association.

Elsewhere the re-opening of schools has rather led to unexpected outcomes. In France, about 70 COVID-19 cases have been linked to schools after one-third of children recently went back to school.

In the case of Ghana, even though it can be justifiably claimed that due to low national COVID-19 cases as compared to other countries, it may not necessarily imply that children will not be put at risk when schools are re-opened.

**-MORE-**

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Before schools are asked to re-open we at Neogenics Education Group have **10 key questions** to ask our decision makers on behalf of the vulnerable Ghanaian child and worried Ghanaian Parent;

1. How do we know if parents will want to send their children back to school soon due to health concerns?
2. How do we know if teachers are prepared to put their lives on the line?
3. How many children may be held back and enrolled into their family workforce to sell and support their parents due to Covid-19 financial loss?
4. How many pupils really want to return to school as a result of disinterest in education altogether due to the lack of engagement by their schools? Historically we are told that after pandemics girls are unlikely to return to school for various reasons.
5. What measures are in place to avoid possible local/national viral resurgence?
6. How many teachers and school staff have adequately been trained and resourced to identify and manage symptoms of Covid-19, stigmas and Corona Virus related anxieties suffered by children?
7. How many schools (especially boarding schools) are **Post-Pandemic Ready** with capabilities and systems to start welcoming pupils?
8. Does each school have enough statistical data to know how many teachers and pupils have been exposed to carriers of the virus or are asymptomatic?
9. To what extent will the commuting of children to and from school impact on public health?
10. What are the options and alternatives for head teachers who might receive absence notices from staff claiming they are experiencing mild symptoms of Covid-19 and will want to self-isolate?

Until the quality of responses to the above 10 questions meet national expectation, we will not advise the Ghana Government to Re-open schools now.

**-MORE-**

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On that note Noegenics Education Group will want to advocate the best fit alternative as the way forward;

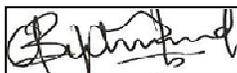
**THE CURRENT 2019/2020 ACADEMIC YEAR SHOULD BE ANNULLED AND ALL CHILDREN MADE TO HAVE A FRESH START IN SEPTEMBER BY REPEATING THEIR CURRENT YEAR/CLASS.**

Our reason for this may sound strange. But it is a notable fact that a child's absence from school experience has a significant impact on their future successes and life chances. **Research shows that 8 days of absence from school reduces a child's best chance of success by 4%, 19 days by 10%, 29 days by 15%, 38 days by 20% and 48 days by 25%. Children in Ghana by end of May 2020 would have been absent from active learning for almost 50 schools days. Your judgement is a good as ours!** Majority of our children may hardly remember any of the learning they experienced in school from September 2019.

Government should engage all teachers in both Private and Public schools in a mass National ICT education drive by taking advantage of the increased national interest in ICT to equip parents, teachers and children across the country. This will offer everyone with the minimum ICT skills needed for the education system of Ghana to thrive and leapfrog to Global standards.

This is the time to do this! There is no better time than this. It is a golden opportunity to roll out a national ICT strategy before September 2020 academic year. Hopefully by then COVID-19 would have been substantially subdued and cease to be a threat to our lives.

**ANNUL THIS ACADEMIC YEAR!**



**Grant Bulmuo**  
**(Lead Consultant)**

**-THE END-**