

SOLOMON ISLANDS GOVERNMENT



GOVERNMENT COMMUNICATION UNIT

MEDIA RELEASE

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MOST SCHOOLS TO RESUME CLASSES ON APRIL 27

The National Government through the Ministry of Education and Human Resource Development (MEHRD) has announced a partial resumption of classes in most provinces in the country on April 27 except for schools that were located in emergency zones.

The emergency zones include Honiara City, Guadalcanal Province, and Western Province including Gizo, Noro, Munda, Shortland Islands and Choiseul Province including Taro and surrounding areas.

This resumption was announced by the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry Dr. Franco Rodi in a notice to education authorities after careful consideration of Government's preparedness and response plans to combat the threat of coronavirus in our country.

The resumption of Term 1 classes in schools in the country will happen in two key stages for Forms 3, 5 and 6 students in all secondary schools in the Provinces (except schools in Honiara, Guadalcanal, Gizo, Noro, Munda area and community high schools near Taro/Choiseul Province headquarter and Shortland) will resume classes on Monday 27 April, 2020.

Dr Rodi had advises all Form 3, 5, and 6 students to return to their schools starting this week beginning 20 April, (except schools in Honiara, Guadalcanal, Gizo, Noro, Munda area and community high schools near Taro in Choiseul Province and the Shortland Islands.

Teachers in the year levels mentioned should return to schools beginning this week on 20 April, (except teachers in schools in Honiara, Guadalcanal, Gizo, Noro, Munda area and community high schools near Taro in Choiseul Province and Shortland Islands.

The date for the restart of classes in schools in located in emergency zones will be announced by MEHRD on a later date and all students in other year levels such as Early Childhood Education, Primary (years 1 to 6) Form 1, 2 and 4 are to remain at home until further advice.

The resumption date for all Rural Training Centers and post-secondary education institutions including the Solomon Islands National University (SINU) and the University of the South Pacific (USP), Solomon Islands Campus will be announced through their senior management teams.

Education Authorities, school principals, teachers, students and parents are informed that the decision to restart classes (except schools in Honiara, Guadalcanal, Gizo, Noro, Munda area and community high schools near Taro and Shortland) for the selected year levels in schools in the provinces is made on the following reasons:

Current Form 3, 5 and 6 students have important high stakes External Examinations to take at the end of the year and need to catch up with topics they need to cover in order to prepare for the examinations.

Honiara and Guadalcanal, part of Noro and more recently the border between Bougainville/PNG and Shortland/SI are potential areas that persons infected/carriers of the covid-19 is likely to enter and spread the disease and so schools in these areas are to remain closed till further advice.

To minimize overcrowding of schools and to enforce stringent health and hygiene practices amongst few students such as social distancing, hand washing and to cater for water and sanitation facilities. This is important during the current state of emergency when orders and regulations are being enforced by the Government agencies and to condition the behavior of small population of students at the schools so that they are well prepared for any potential outbreak of the coronavirus.

It is important to understand that the Ministry has made a decision to restart classes in schools in stages and the recommendation with advice from the Ministry of Health and Medical Services was approved by the COVID-19 Oversight Committee.

Since the closure of schools, students' learning have been impacted to a certain extent. If we prolong the reopening of classes in our schools, this would have serious implications not only the education of our students, but also the entire education sector.

"My Ministry has seriously considered certain indicators and or conditions to determine the restart of Term 1 classes in schools. These are as follows.

Our borders are closed and strict orders and regulations are being applied or imposed on visitors, shippers and nationals that wish to cross borders or to return to the country.

Medical facilities and equipment including testing kits for coronavirus are available now and these will be used by the Ministry of Health and Medical Services frontline officers, to detect and isolate and assist citizens needing medical attention should there be an outbreak of the coronavirus in the country.

Quarantine centers and or facilities have been built and are available for isolation.

Government Preparedness and Response Action Plans have been approved and being implemented to protect/safeguard citizens and the country against coronavirus.

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Measures taken under the existing State of Emergency is working and our people are responding well and adhering to them.

There is NO confirmed coronavirus case in Honiara or in the country.

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