

TOP SCHOOLS LOWER SENIOR ONE CUT-OFF POINTS

PHOTO BY MPALANYI SSENTONGO

By Vision reporters

The 2025 primary school leavers and their parents can finally afford a smile.

For the first time in many years, it will be easy for children who scored between aggregate four and nine to join the top secondary schools in the country.

This follows the relaxation of cut-off points, where no secondary school had aggregate four as its cap.

For instance, King's College Budo, which for a long time had set aggregate four as the cut-off for boys to be admitted, lowered it to aggregate five for both girls and boys.

Trinity College Nabbingo and Nabisunsa Girls' School, which had a cut-off of aggregate six last year, have both relaxed to aggregate seven and eight respectively.

Elite High School, Entebbe, whose cut-off points were aggregate eight in 2025, have relaxed it to aggregate 10 this year.

The data on cut-off points is

part of the findings collected by *New Vision* at the Senior One selection and placement exercise underway at the Uganda Manufacturers Association show grounds in Nakawa, Kampala.

The selection exercise, which has attracted a total of 2,600 public and private schools, will ensure that 730,233 learners, who qualified to join Senior One, are admitted.

While 91,990 pupils passed in Division One in the 2025 Primary Leaving Examinations, compared to 84,301 in 2024, the majority of these scored between aggregate 10 and 12 this year.

Relatedly, many top schools – Immaculate Heart Girls School, Nyakibale in Rukungiri district and Nabisunsa Girls' Secondary School – will admit more learners for Senior One this year compared to 2025.

New Vision has learnt that some of the schools have either expanded their accommodation and classroom space, or requested the education ministry to admit



Minister Muyingo (right) interacts with John Kazibwe, the headteacher of King's College Budo, during the official opening of the Senior One placement exercise in Kampala yesterday. (Scan image using the Vision Digital Experience to watch video)

more learners compared to 2025.

According to the education ministry sources, the increase in enrolment is to ensure that all students seeking to join secondary school are admitted.

The Senior One selection exercise, which was officiated

by the higher education state minister, Dr John Chrysostom Muyingo, was attended by several dignitaries in the education sector, including MPs on the education committee.

SCHOOLS SPEAK OUT

A section of secondary school representatives interviewed by *New Vision* said the relaxation

of the entry requirements was a result of the fewer candidates who scored aggregate four and five.

Godfrey Atwiine, the deputy headteacher in charge of academics at King's College Budo, said the cut-off is generated electronically by UNEB based on the performance and the number of learners the schools can

admit.

"We are admitting a total of 270 learners. That is what the ministry has given us and the 270th learner had aggregate five and it explains why our cut-off is aggregate five," Atwiine said.

Much as Budo admitted candidates with aggregate five, there were 99 others with the same aggregate who could not be taken on due to space. Such candidates will be sold to other top schools.

Lawrence Onyango, the headteacher of Elite High School Entebbe, said the school has had to admit candidates with aggregate 10 to give opportunity to all learners.

"We will also take on as many as 600 learners for Senior One to give an opportunity to many children who want to join secondary school," Onyango said.

Julius Byaruhanga, the deputy headteacher of Immaculate Heart Girls School, Nyakibale in Rukungiri, said the school will admit 400 learners, compared to 380 in 2025.

While the likes of Immaculate Heart Girls School will admit more students this year, others – such as Kibuli Secondary School and Mengo Senior School – will admit less than what they took on last year.

For instance, Mengo Senior School, which admitted 700 learners in 2025, will take on 601 this year, while Kibuli SS will admit 400 learners, down from 460 in 2025.

GUIDELINES ON ADMISSION

Data from the education ministry shows that 657,000 learners of the 730,233 who passed PLE will transition to Senior One, while the others will be allowed onto the Technical and Vocational Education and Training pathway.

Of those who qualify for Senior One, 273,000 Primary Seven leavers will be placed in the 1,524 government schools, while 384,000 others will be admitted at 3,200 private secondary schools.

The education ministry has barred secondary schools from subjecting primary school leavers to fresh interviews.

Frances Atima, the chairperson of the education ministry placement committee, announced that learners will have 14 days from the reporting date of March 2, within which to report to schools, or have their slots given out.

WHAT EDUCATION MINISTER SAYS

Higher education state minister John Chrysostom Muyingo said the selection exercise is not merely an administrative event, but a critical national responsibility.

"For many families, this process represents hope, sacrifice and the promise of a better future. Therefore, as we commence this exercise, I wish to emphasise three key principles of: fairness, transparency and equity," he said.

The minister urged school administrators to ensure that no child is disadvantaged due to background, religion, region, gender or economic status.

"The credibility of this exercise depends on the integrity with which it will be conducted. The public must have full confidence that placement decisions are made openly and professionally."

As more learners qualify to join Senior One, Muyingo said the Government has improved access to secondary education.

"This is not a mere coincidence. It is a result of the NRM Government's strategic and pro-people policies and delivery on its manifesto commitments. It is, therefore, not surprising that the people of Uganda chose to renew the mandate of this Government by overwhelmingly voting for the President and the NRM party," Muyingo said.

The minister also said the Government is committed to providing these learners with adequate opportunities for continued education at secondary and vocational levels.

"Since 2019, we have constructed and operationalised 204 new seed secondary schools, whereas 55 are still at various levels of construction progress. We have also grant-aided over 200 community schools, by providing them with staff wages and USE [Universal Secondary Education] capitation grants.

"In 2025, we enacted the TVET [Technical and Vocational Education and Training] Act, under which we are providing and streamlining technical vocational education as another pathway that learners who complete Primary Seven can pursue," Muyingo said.

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