

GUIDELINES ON THE UTILISATION OF SCHOOL TIME BETWEEN 2:55 P.M AND 4:30 P.M

LOWER SECONDARY CURRICULUM



JULY 2024

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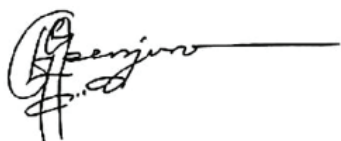
FOREWORD

Uganda has embarked on a transformative journey to reform the Lower Secondary School Curriculum, with the goal of providing a holistic education that nurtures learners academically, socially, and morally. At the core of this reform is a commitment to developing well-rounded individuals equipped with academic knowledge, practical skills, and strong character.

A key component of this curriculum shift is the enhanced emphasis on co-curricular activities and the promotion of self-directed learning. These elements are instrumental in supporting learners' personal growth, fostering creativity, collaboration, and responsible citizenship. As the education sector embraces this new direction, the role of educators in guiding, facilitating, and modelling these changes remains critical.

These guidelines have been developed to support schools in effectively utilising the period after 2.55 p.m. They provide practical strategies and insights to ensure that this time becomes a purposeful extension of learning, engaging learners in meaningful activities that promote autonomy, talent development, and lifelong learning.

By fostering a learner-centred environment beyond the traditional classrooms, we move closer to realising the full potential of our learners and strengthening the foundation for resilient and dynamic society.



Prof. George Ladaah Openjuru

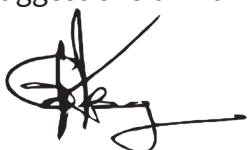
Chairperson NCDC, Governing Council

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National Curriculum Development Centre (NCDC) takes responsibility for any shortcomings that might be identified in the publication and welcomes helpful suggestions on how to address them.



Dr Grace K. Baguma

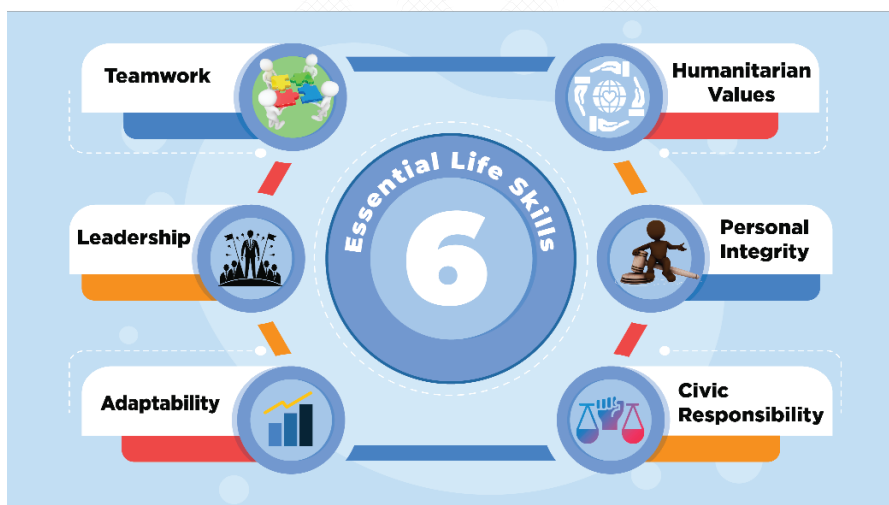
Director,
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INTRODUCTION

The Lower Secondary School Curriculum underscores the importance of co-curricular activities in supporting the holistic development of learners. To that end, the time between 2:55 p.m. and 4:30 p.m has been allocated specifically for co-curricular engagement within the school timetable (Refer to the sample school timetable in the implementation guidelines of the New Lower Secondary Curriculum).

Co-curricular activities refer to programmes and learning experiences that complement classroom instruction. They provide learners with opportunities to develop essential life skills such as teamwork, leadership, adaptability, humanitarian values, personal integrity, and civic responsibility.



Participation in these activities enhances learners' well-being and equips them to apply knowledge in real-world contexts. With this in mind, the curriculum promotes a balanced approach to learning by addressing the cognitive, affective, and psychomotor domains. The particular section "How to Conduct Co-Curricular Activities", of this document, provides customised activity guidelines for the after-class period. While these activities are learner-led, they require the teacher's facilitation to ensure purposeful engagement. The time between 2.55 p.m. and 4:30 p.m., is intended to support experiential learning, encourage collaboration among peers, and utilise the local environment as a resource.

This period allows learners to extend their classroom learning into meaningful practice.

Examples of co-curricular activities include

- | | |
|-------------------------|--------------------------------|
| i) Self-study | v) Games and sports |
| ii) Debates | vi) Community work |
| iii) Project work | vii) Field visits |
| iv) Clubs and societies | viii) Guidance and counselling |

Through these activities, schools are encouraged to create dynamic and inclusive learning environments that nurture learners' potential beyond academic achievement.

THE PURPOSE OF CO-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

Co-curricular activities are designed to support the holistic development of learners. Specifically, they aim to enable learners to become:

01


Responsible and patriotic citizens, committed to contributing to the well-being of themselves, their communities, and the nation.

02


Lifelong learners, capable of planning, reflecting and directing their own learning as they explore personal interests, passions, and curiosities that promote fulfilment and growth.

03


Self-directed individuals, who demonstrate initiative, motivation, and effective self-management in both academic and non-academic pursuits.

04


Active contributors to society, who apply their knowledge, skills, and values for the benefit of others and the improvement of their communities.

How to Conduct Co-Curricular Activities

This section outlines how various co-curricular activities should be organised, assessed, documented, and reported.

A sample assessment checklist is provided to help monitor learners' participation and involvement in each activity.

i) **Self-study**

Self-study encourages learners to deepen their understanding of subject concepts through independent enquiry. It promotes skills such as critical thinking, research, and time management.



Teachers may initiate self-study by assigning reading tasks or exploratory questions. Learners, in turn, can generate their own questions to investigate concepts previously introduced in class. This process helps them develop metacognitive skills and take ownership of their own learning.

However, Self-study should complement—not replace—teacher-led instruction.

Teachers are advised to use this time purposefully and not rely excessively on independent study for the induction of new concepts.

ii) Debates

Debates are structured discussions that engage learners in analysing issues, making informed judgments, and proposing reasoned solutions. They provide an excellent platform for learners to develop a range of cognitive and interpersonal skills, including communication, critical thinking, argumentation, and active listening.



Through debating, learners deepen their understanding of subject content, sharpen their analytical abilities, and build confidence in expressing their views. It also promotes respectful dialogue, tolerance of differing opinions, and the ability to defend a position using logical reasoning and evidence.

Teachers are encouraged to organise debating sessions at various levels such as within classes, between classes, across school houses, and with other schools, to enhance learners' confidence, language proficiency, and presentation skills.

Debate topics should be:

- a) Shared in advance to give learners time to prepare;
- b) Related to classroom learning, and;
- c) Focused on real-life community, national, and global issues to foster civic awareness and critical enquiry.

Teachers should guide learners to explore complex, open-ended problems and encourage them to think beyond simple and generic answers. This fosters curiosity, open-mindedness, and a deeper connection between learning and real-world challenges.

iii) **Project work**

Project work is a learner-centred activity that involves planning, researching, and creating a specific product or solution within a defined timeframe. It encourages learners to apply knowledge and skills from multiple subject areas to address real-world problem or question.



Engaging in projects helps learners develop essential competencies such as critical thinking, creativity, collaboration, communication, and time management.

It also fosters autonomy, initiative, and responsibility, as learners take ownership of their learning process from start to finish.

Teachers should design project tasks that are relevant to learners' interests and community needs, ensuring that the outcomes are meaningful and achievable. Projects may be conducted individually or in groups and should follow a structured process—from planning and research to implementation and presentation.

By integrating disciplines and promoting problem-solving, project work strengthens the connection between classroom learning and life beyond school.

iv) **Clubs**

School clubs provide valuable opportunities for learners to associate with peers who share similar interests. They promote freedom of association and support the development of leadership, collaboration, and social responsibility.



Through participation in club activities, learners gain practical life skills, expand their worldviews, and develop interpersonal relationships that contribute to their overall growth.

To cater to diverse learner needs and talents, schools are encouraged to offer a wide range of clubs.

According to the Ministry of Education and Sports Guidelines on the Formation, Management and Strengthening of School Clubs (2020), clubs may be grouped into the following broad categories:

- 1) **Academic-based clubs:** these enhance the application of classroom knowledge and promote intellectual engagement. Examples include the Writers' Club, Readers' Club, Debating Club, Mathematics Club, and Science Club.
- 2) **Humanitarian and service-oriented clubs:** These expose learners to community needs and help them cultivate empathy, civic engagement, and problem-solving abilities. Some examples include the Red Cross Society, Scouts, Girl Guides, and Interact Club.

While the Ministry's two broad categories remain foundational, many schools have found it useful to expand these into six thematic areas to better reflect the range of learner interests and emerging global competencies.

These include:

- 3) **Environmental and sustainability clubs:** These promote ecological awareness, conservation, and climate action through hands-on projects. Examples include the Wildlife Club, Climate Change Club
- 4) **Entrepreneurship and innovation clubs:** These nurture creativity, financial literacy, and problem-solving skills. Examples include the Entrepreneurship Club, Junior Achievers, Innovation Hub
- 5) **Arts, culture, and media clubs:** These encourage self-expression and creativity through performance and visual arts. Examples include the Music, Dance and Drama (MDD) Club, Art Club, Journalism Club
- 6) **Sports and wellness clubs:** These promote physical fitness, teamwork, and mental well-being. Examples include the Football Club, Chess Club, Athletics Club, Health and Wellness Club

Schools should encourage learners to participate in multiple clubs at different stages of their school life. This allows them to appreciate diverse values, explore new interests, and interact with peers from various backgrounds—fostering inclusivity, adaptability, and a broader understanding of the world.

v) **Games and sports**

Games and sports are essential co-curricular activities that contribute significantly to learners' physical, mental, and social development. While games often refer recreational or structured activities with rules, sports typically involve physical exertion, skill, and competition governed by standardised rules.



Participation in games and sports provides a healthy break from academic demands, promotes physical fitness, and helps learners develop teamwork, discipline, and perseverance. These activities also offer learners opportunities to discover and nurture their talents, build resilience, and gain confidence through both participation and competition.

Schools should provide opportunities for learners to engage in a wide range of indoor and outdoor games and sports, such as:

- i) **Outdoor:** Football, netball, athletics, volleyball, basketball.
- ii) **Indoor:** Chess, table tennis, scrabble, board games.

Involvement in both competitive and recreational activities encourages sportsmanship, healthy rivalry, and social integration. Inclusive practices should be promoted to ensure gender equity, support for learners with disabilities, and recognition of diverse talents.

To support these activities, schools should innovatively utilise available space and resources, collaborate with local communities, and integrate physical education into the school timetable. Even schools with limited infrastructure can organise low-cost, high-impact games that keep learners active, engaged, and motivated.

By fostering a strong games and sports culture, schools help learners develop not only their physical and mental well-being, but also critical life values such as fair play, cooperation, and leadership.

vi) **Community work**

Community work involves learners stepping beyond the school environment to participate in activities that address real-life challenges within their local communities. These activities provide learners with meaningful opportunities to develop a sense of social responsibility.



By engaging in tasks such as environmental clean-ups, visiting the elderly, tree planting, awareness campaigns, or assisting at local health centres, learners gain practical exposure to social, medical, economic, and environmental issues. This experience enhances their understanding of community dynamics and fosters a desire to make a positive impact.

Active participation in community work helps learners build teamwork, problem-solving skills, and leadership. While also creating stronger connections between the school and the wider society. Learners benefit personally through improved social support networks and a deeper appreciation of both the challenges and opportunities within their community. To ensure equal participation, teachers are encouraged to develop a well-structured roster or schedule that gives every learner an opportunity to engage in different community activities.

Learners should also be encouraged to reflect on their experiences, share insights with peers, and propose sustainable solutions for recurring community problems.

Community work should be seen not just as a duty but as a transformative learning experience that cultivates compassion, civic engagement, and a commitment to the common good.

vii) **Field visits**

Field visits re structured learning activities where learners go outside the school environment to observe and interact with real-life work settings. Unlike community engagement, which emphasises social contribution, field visits are subject-specific and primarily aimed at enhancing experiential learning, career awareness, and skills development.



In the Competency-Based Curriculum, any subject area may organise a field visit to expose learners to practical applications of classroom knowledge and help them explore possible career pathways. These visits provide opportunities for learners to engage in apprenticeship-like experiences and connect academic concepts with the world of work.

Effective field visits require collaboration, multidisciplinary planning at the school level. Teachers should conduct a preliminary visit to the site to assess its relevance to the targeted learning outcomes, confirm its safety standards, gauge the available space, and evaluate its distance from the school. Based on this information, logistics such as transport, supervision, duration, and costs should be considered.

Prior to the visit, learners should be well-prepared with:

- 1) Information about the site and its objectives,
- 2) A checklist of learning tasks,
- 3) Appropriate learning tools or equipment,
- 4) Safety guidelines and expected conduct.

Teachers should also manage student numbers based on the capacity of the site, and secure necessary approval from parents/guardians and school. During the visit, learners should be guided to actively observe, ask questions, and record key findings.

After the visit, learners should participate in reflection sessions, reports, presentations, or project work that help them consolidate their learning and assess how well the visit met its intended outcomes.

When Well-organised, field visits enhance critical thinking, problem-solving, and career readiness, enriching the overall educational experience.

viii) **Guidance and counselling**

Guidance and counselling are essential co-curricular activities that support the holistic development of learners.



Guidance refers to the process of offering advice, direction, and information to help learners make informed choices in areas such as academics, career, relationships, and personal development.

It equips learners with the knowledge and skills to set goals, solve problems, and make responsible decisions in alignment with their values and aspirations.

Counselling, on the other hand, involves offering emotional and psychological support to learners facing personal, social, or emotional difficulties.

These may include issues such as anxiety, grief, peer pressure, low self-esteem, and family-related stress. Counselling provides a safe, confidential space where learners can express their concerns, reflect on their feelings, and develop positive coping strategies.

Effective guidance and counselling programmes in schools should address three main areas: academic, career, and psychosocial needs. Schools should adopt both preventive and responsive approaches to support learners' well-being and development. Teachers, school counsellors, administrators should work together to establish a designated, confidential, and welcoming space within the school for guidance and counselling sessions. These services should be scheduled during co-curricular periods to ensure minimal disruption of academic work and to protect learners' privacy.

Recording and Reporting Learners' Achievement from the Co-Curricular Activities

Unlike academic records, which primarily use scores and grades, co-curricular achievements are described based on observable learner behaviours, participation, and demonstrated competencies.

Schools are encouraged to maintain a Co-Curricular Activity Record Card for each learner. This card should capture the learner's attendance, level of participation, interest, collaboration, leadership, creativity, and personal growth through various co-curricular activities.

Such documentation not only complements academic records but also provides a holistic view of a learner's development. It facilitates recognition of effort, identification of talents, and awarding of commendations and responsibilities based on merits.

Checklist for Assessing Learner Achievement in Co-Curricular Activities

Name of Learner:	Class:
Activity:	Date(s):

Assessment of Learner's Engagement

Assessment Area	Achievement (Tick One)	Level	Comments
1) Attendance & Punctuality	☐ Excellent ☐ Good ☐ Fair ☐ Needs Improvement		<i>E.g. Learner X attends all club activities on time</i>
2) Participation & Involvement	☐ Active ☐ Moderate ☐ Minimal ☐ Not Engaged		
3) Interest & Motivation	☐ High ☐ Average ☐ Low		
4) Teamwork & Cooperation	☐ Outstanding ☐ Satisfactory ☐ Needs Support		
5) Initiative & Creativity	☐ Frequently Shows ☐ Occasionally ☐ Rarely		
6) Leadership (if applicable)	☐ Strong ☐ Developing ☐ Not Demonstrated		
7) Skill Development	☐ Excellent ☐ Good ☐ Basic ☐ Yet to Develop		
8) Behaviour & Conduct	☐ Exemplary ☐ Acceptable ☐ Needs Guidance		

General Comments/Recommendations:

.....

.....

Assessed by (Name & Signature):

.....

Designation:

Date:

CONCLUSION

Co-curricular activities are an integral part of the school learning programmes as they contribute significantly to the holistic development of the learner. These activities should be accessible to all learners, offering valuable opportunities to discover, develop, and nurture their talents. Beyond personal growth, co-curricular activities provide experiential learning and can open pathways to future careers and livelihoods.

It is essential for schools to maintain accurate and comprehensive records of each learner's participation and achievements in these activities. Such documentation contributes meaningfully to the learner's portfolio, reflecting their growth, skills, and engagement throughout their time at school.



GLOSSARY

Co-curricular activities: non-academic activities which complement classroom learning but done outside class time.

Extra-curricular activities: non-academic voluntary, activities that provide opportunities for personal growth, skill development and exploration of interests outside classroom. They are not part of the required academic course work.

Experiential learning: a process of learning through direct experience and active engagement or hands on experience to make connections to concepts.

Humanitarian Clubs: school coordinated group activities focussed on developing empathy among learners by helping people in need.

Psycho-social support: an effort to help someone improve the emotional, social and mental well-being.

Self-directed learning: an approach where learners take initiative to identify their own learning needs, set goals, choose strategies, and evaluate their own progress.



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