



Child Rights International

UPHOLDING THE FREE SHS POLICY IN THE BEST INTERESTS OF THE CHILD

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Child Rights International (CRI) has noted the recent calls for parents to provide food and other provisions to support their children in senior high schools due to ongoing feeding challenges. Additionally, suggestions have been made for parents to take on the costs of feeding and accommodation for their wards. We must stress that these requests undermine the core principles of the policy.

The Free SHS programme was established to ensure free and equitable access to secondary education, removing financial barriers and promoting inclusivity. Any effort to transfer responsibilities such as feeding to parents undermines the core intent of the policy and creates inequities it was designed to address.

When logistical challenges arise in the implementation of the Free SHS programme, it is essential for stakeholders to engage directly with the government to secure the necessary resources. The responsibility for addressing such challenges lies squarely with the implementing authorities. Shifting these responsibilities to parents not only deviates from the policy's framework but also places undue pressure on families, many of whom are already facing economic hardship.

As of today, the 11th January, 2025 the Free SHS policy remains intact, with no official directive requiring parental contributions to support its implementation. Any changes to the policy must come through formal review and clear communication from the government. Until such amendments are made, stakeholders are urged to adhere to the policy in its current form.

Therefore, we must make every effort to avoid situations where individuals or institutions impose their will to alter the framework of a social policy like this. Protecting a social policy is a shared responsibility of all stakeholders and beneficiaries. When challenges arise, it is crucial for them to be circumspect in how they communicate about the policy's implementation and progression.

Furthermore, the welfare of children is a universal priority. As a nation committed to the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Children's Act, we have a responsibility to protect the interests of children. Policies should never place children in situations where they suffer due to negligence or systemic flaws. Every decision must prioritise the best interests of the child. Under no circumstances should children be impacted by the lack of food or any other basic necessity. It is our duty to ensure that children fully benefit from policies designed to support them, such as the Free SHS programme. As a critical social intervention, it must be protected and upheld to serve its intended purpose effectively.

Child Rights International (CRI) remains committed to protecting the rights of children and ensuring that no action undermines their access to education. We encourage continued dialogue and effective solutions that align with the intentions of the Free SHS policy in ways that uphold the principles of equity and inclusiveness

Signed,


Bright Appiah,
Executive Director

