

# Kenya

## *School Classes*

Kenyan students take at least ten subjects throughout an entire year. They meet for subjects like mathematics and English daily, while for other subjects at least four times a week. In Kenya, students have the same classmates for the four years of high school. Different teachers come to the classrooms to teach and students remain in one classroom. Private schools have approximately 25 students per classroom, while government schools have classes of 50-70 students. Students are evaluated according to how they perform on the exams and tests. Homework and class participation are not calculated as part of the final grade and are not compulsory. Schools in Kenya are both co-ed and single gender.

## *School Relationships*

In Kenya, students mostly refer to their teachers as Mr., Mrs., Sir, or Madam to show the respect for the teacher.

## *Extracurricular Activities*

Most schools in Kenya have extracurricular activities such as sports and clubs, although there is not much emphasis put on these activities in comparison to academics. Parents concentrate more on their student's educational activities rather than extracurricular activities.

## *School Rules*

Cell phones are not allowed to be used on school grounds and fighting in school is punished severely.

## *Return*

Catching up with the Kenyan educational system upon return becomes quite hard because of the difference in the two systems.

## *Family Life*

In Kenya, the composition of the household depends on the type of family, culture and location of the family, although most households will house an extended family. Meals may be eaten together or separate, except on weekends or holidays when most families gather for a meal sometimes with the extended family. In some families both parents are financial contributors, but in most cases the father is the breadwinner of the family. In Kenya, the father is the head of the family while mothers are responsible for household and everyday matters.

## *Teen Life*

Siblings share almost everything in Kenya, and not necessarily with permission. Personal space is not considered a big thing in the family since the family members are supposed to be very close to each other. While it is important to always be respectful, many Kenyan teenagers interact informally with all of their family members. The same applies to very close family members however, with older and distant family members, the interaction is very formal. Teenagers in Kenya can express their emotions to their peers, but rarely to their elders.

## *Responsibilities*

Most families in Kenya hire house help for household chores, regardless of the income level of the family. Even very poor families keep household help usually in exchange for room and board. The adult women of the house are responsible for all housework. A student would only help if necessary. In Kenya it is mainly the females who do the cooking. Females are responsible for light housework whereas boys are responsible for the more intensive hard work. In Kenya, part time jobs for teens are very rare. Often students obtain money from their parents and other family members. Students are not used to budgeting their money and they do not work.



## **COUNTRY FACTS:**

**Capital:** Nairobi

**Population:** 40,046,566

**Area, sq. mi.:** 224,081

**Real GDP per capita:** 1,600

**Adult literacy rate:** 91% (male); 80% (female)

**Ethnic make-up:** Kikuyu 22%, Luhya 14%, Luo 13%, Kalenjin 12%, Kamba 11%, Kisii 6%, Meru 6%, other African 15%, non-African (Asian, European, and Arab) 1%

**Religion:** Protestant 45%, Roman Catholic 33%, Muslim 10%, indigenous beliefs 10%, other 2%

note: a large majority of Kenyans are Christian, but estimates for the percentage of the population that adheres to Islam or indigenous beliefs vary widely

### ***Parental Involvement***

Parents supervise their children on using the internet and usually limit the time and closely monitor the sites visited. However, most Kenyan families do not have internet access in the home, so students would be used to using a local internet café. It may be tempting for students who have never had 24-hour access to internet in the home to remain on the internet for long periods of time and access it with great frequency. In Kenya, parents are a big part of the students' academic life.

### ***Pets***

In Kenya, most families have cats as pets while some will have dogs which are mainly used as guard dogs. It is very rare for dogs to be kept in the house.

### ***Personal Interactions***

#### ***Mixed Gender Socializing***

Most of the time, teens socialize with the same gender but on some rare occasions boys and girls interact.

#### ***Friendships***

Kenyan teens think of peers as friends, the concept of friends is "people you know" and usually teens would have from two to five very close friends. Most teens have peer groups and also one-on-one friends and they make friends from family or neighborhood connections as well as from school and common activities. Lending money is common among friends. Most teens use social networks to keep in touch

#### ***Eye Contact***

Eye contact is not common when communicating and it is considered rude.

### ***Cultural Norms***

Greetings are a big part of Kenyan culture and younger ones usually greet older individuals to bring about closeness to one another. In Kenya people usually use proverbs and sayings to indirectly communicate their message. Direct communication is considered rude. The Kenyan concept of time is very flexible. People prefer to take their time rather than hurry to be on time. It is acceptable to be up to 30 minutes late for appointments with no explanation for the tardiness.

### ***Personal Hygiene***

Kenyan teenagers generally take a quick shower once a day and sometimes twice if they are involved in physical activities. It is generally thought to be unclean in Kenya to wear the same clothes two days in a row or to wear the same clothes twice without washing them. The bathroom is shared by all family members and teenagers are responsible for taking care of their toiletries. Most Kenyan teenagers have one towel in their bathroom to use to dry their body (and maybe a separate towel to dry their hair or face). Shoes are taken off in the home as a sign of respect and to maintain a clean house.

### ***Diet***

Almost every town in Kenya has a place to purchase halal meat. Most foods are prepared from scratch.

### ***Religion***

Religion is a huge part of Kenyan families and usually brings about the aspect of family-centered culture.

### ***Holidays***

Eid is a public holiday in Kenya. Muslims celebrate while others are free to rest from their daily activities. Christmas, Eid, Diwali, Independence Day, Heroes' Day, Labor Day and many more