

## **Learners and Students Frustrated Over Early Wi-Fi Shutdowns**

By Life Sithole

Many students in Swaneville who struggle to buy data are frustrated over the early Wi-Fi shutdown at the Lusaka library.

The Kagiso library is open between 08:00 AM and 4:00 PM. When the library staff leave, the free Wi-Fi is also switched off, leaving most of the university students and matric learners who use the facility disconnected. These students and learners are the ones who mostly need access to Wi-Fi and use the internet to do assignments and projects. Without a Wi-Fi connection, students are forced to buy data, but many of them cannot afford it because data is expensive. These learners say they are losing out on opportunities and marks they could score with internet access.

Another reason the students are frustrated by this issue because they struggle to complete their work on time or access online resources, they say. They also cannot connect their classmates to work together on group assignments. The Wi-Fi cut-off may appear like a small issue, but it even affects learners and students trying to submit assignments. A student who wants to remain anonymous says she suspects that the staff who switch the Wi-Fi off early when they leave don't understand the demands of the study courses. The student says that they often have group projects that need them to have evening collaborations. Without Wi-Fi, it's hard for those in need of data to meet deadlines or connect with others.

Naledi Mahlomi, 17, is a scholar in grade 11 at Winifred Nomzamo High School in Swaneville. Mahlomi says that the library of Swaneville gives them a lot of trouble as students. She says that some parents are struggling to buy their children data or install Wi-Fi in their households. Mahlomi alleges that the library does not follow the closing schedules instead, they close earlier than they should, neglecting the appointed time.

Mahlomi says that she and her friends went to the library to do a school assignment after Workers' Day. When they reached the library the following day, they were told that the library was not open, and it was still a holiday. The teenager says that when they wanted to know why Friday, 2 May, was considered a holiday, the security guard responded with a "stinking attitude" and said that it is an extended holiday and that they should leave the library.

The students are saying the library should always consider keeping the Wi-Fi on until late because, as grade 11 and 12 students, they are out of school around 4:00 pm. The learners are begging for their demands as students to be met.

Another high school learner, Anele Nosenga, a learner at Ahmed Timol Secondary School, said that she has been going through a tough time because her school mostly focuses on doing things digitally. Nosenga says that everytime they go to the library, even if it's still early, they tell you to leave. The learner said that when the mayor visited in April 2025, he said that the library would no longer close early, but the problem continues.

The students hope for alternative solutions to support the students who are disadvantaged. This would really help the students who are in need to complete their studies and reduce their financial burden.

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