



NIGERIAN COPYRIGHT COMMISSION

20 September, 2024

COPYRIGHT ADVISORY 3

WARNING AGAINST BOOK PIRACY

Following recent inspections and anti-piracy operations across the country, the Nigerian Copyright Commission has noticed disturbing trends in the distribution of pirated books through schools, online sales outlets and traditional book stores. The Commission has also noticed a rise in the local printing of pirated books and the illicit activities of importers, sales representatives and road transporters who deal in pirated books.

It is an offence under the Copyright Act, 2022 to reproduce, import, sell, distribute or be in possession of infringing copies of a copyright work. It is also an offence to aid and abet criminal copyright infringement. Punishments under the Act are now significantly stiffer with no upper limit to the amount of fine or term of imprisonment that may be imposed. Copyright Officers are vested with the powers and privileges of Police Officers and may, without warrant, enter any premises (including schools and stores) used for infringing activities. They may also effect the arrest of persons and seal up premises connected with piracy. Convicted offenders may forfeit infringing materials and properties which are found to be proceeds of a copyright offence may be forfeited.

It is particularly disturbing that some schools source books from well-known piracy hotspots and printers for sale to their students. The Commission will henceforth treat such schools as booksellers and hold them accountable for any pirated books found in their premises or in the possession of their students. Schools are advised to patronize publishers directly or purchase from accredited sales representatives or reputable bookstores. They should, in all cases, exercise extreme caution and due diligence in their dealings and always insist on signed invoices from suppliers.

This Advisory serves as notice to publishers, printers, importers, sales representatives, booksellers, online selling platforms, transporters, owners of premises where books are printed or stored, school proprietors and heads of schools who may be involved or aiding book piracy. They are advised to be extra vigilant and to take adequate precautions to avoid complicity in book piracy. Booksellers should also exercise due diligence in their dealings with distributors and book importers.

The Commission acknowledges its collaboration with enforcement and security agencies, including the Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps, Nigeria Police, Nigeria Customs Service and the Department of State Services. We call on parents, guardians, right owners and the public to report any suspected cases of piracy to any of these agencies or to the Commission's offices or send email to info@copyright.gov.ng or call **090 1900 1400; 090 1900 1401**.

[Signed]

Director-General