

Opinion: schools reopening after the quake need safety checks and emotional support

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Summary

A psychologist and university lecturer writes in La Prensa that the return to class after the magnitude 7.5 earthquake must prioritise certified building safety and emotional care over curriculum, especially for young children frightened by aftershocks.

Details (summary of the article)

Writing in La Prensa, a psychologist and university teacher argues that reopening schools after the magnitude 7.5 earthquake should not be rushed as an administrative formality. He asks local and regional authorities to have every school inspected by qualified technical staff and certified as safe, with any required repairs completed, before pupils return. On the emotional side he warns that preschool and primary pupils are especially vulnerable, showing fear and anxiety as aftershocks continue. He proposes three classroom priorities: an opening moment of gratitude and reconnection; age-appropriate support, including shielding younger children from alarming images and rumours online while teaching older students to verify information and avoid spreading sensationalist content; and channelling students' willingness to help through official collection centres for safety and insurance reasons. He praises student volunteers from universities including the University of Panama, UTP, Udelas, UNACHI in Chiriquí, UMIP, USMA and Universidad del Istmo. The first lesson back, he concludes, should be listening to pupils' fears and turning grief into organised solidarity.

Original (es)

Volver a las aulas tras el sismo: cuidado emocional, seguridad e información responsable

El regreso a clases exige planteles seguros, escucha y acompañamiento emocional, además de herramientas para que estudiantes y familias afronten el miedo y reconozcan la desinformación.