When elementary school students began national exams on Monday, July 12, nearly 630 students failed to show up at exam centers in Northern Province.

Officials said they are investigating possible reasons why the candidates failed to show up for exams.

A total of 35,656 candidates registered to sit for their primary school leaving examinations in the five districts of the Northern Province.

However, 628 students did not turn up for the first two exams on Monday.

In the district of Gicumbi, 238 pupils did not take the first exam. District officials say 83 of the students were living in Gihembe refugee camp before their transfer in March to Mahama camp in Kirehe district of Eastern Province.

In other districts, officials told the Rwanda News Agency (RNA0 that they are following up to find out the reasons for the absence."

"We are working with local government officials and parents to find out why the students did not sit for exams," Alex Munyamahoro, director of education for Musanze district told RNA.

The national exams should have taken place in November 2020, but were delayed due to the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic, which resulted in the closure of schools.

Reviews are taking place despite stringent measures recently put in place to control the outbreak of new coronavirus cases.

Coronavirus prevention measures such as wearing masks, washing hands and social distancing have been observed in examination centers.

The education ministry has set up guidelines for students who test positive for the coronavirus to sit for national exams.

At least 50 students with symptoms of Covid-19 have been allowed to sit for exams across the country, according to the ministry.

39 student patients with the virus were reported in the North Province alone. Though an isolation room for Covid-19 patients has been set up in each examination

center.

In Musanze district, two students are sitting for exams in the presence of a nurse.

The site supervisor who preferred not to be named has said that they were monitoring the situation to make sure the students did not pass the virus on to others.

She added that students’ exam papers would be kept separate from those of their colleagues.