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1. Introduction

Until late nineties, the Royal Government of Bhutan has been largely responsible for providing basic free education (Pre- Primary- X) to the Bhutanese children with very minimal participation from the private sector. The government has been able to provide eleven years of free basic education to the children without compromising the quality and standard of education despite increasing number of students in government schools and resource constraint.

However, with the rapid socio-economic development taking place in the country, the involvement of private sectors in education is growing at fast pace and in coming years it is expected that private school will play a very prominent role in sharing the cost of the government in education as well as delivering quality of education. Moreover, there is an increasing demand by the public for better and alternative education for their children that best suits the nation's aspirations as well as meeting the needs of the increasing competition in the market.

The National Education Policy (2011) states that the Royal Government of Bhutan shall promote and encourage by all means possible, including fiscal means, the setting up and operation of Private schools at all levels from Pre- Primary through to class XII. This indicates the functional responsibilities of the Ministry of Education to facilitate the establishment of Private Schools in Bhutan. This is where the Guidelines for Private School will play its important role of providing the guiding frame work for all private schools.

Having mentioned this, the expansion of private schools in the country will provide choices to the Bhutanese parents who are able and willing to pay for their children's education. Establishment of private schools would also help in the access to education besides providing them the options to choose between the public and the private schools.

2. Purpose

The Guidelines for Private Schools in Bhutan shall serve the following purposes:

- 2.1 Help stakeholders in facilitating the establishment of Private schools in the country as well as effective functioning of the school.
- 2.2 Guiding principle and policy frame work for all private schools irrespective of the level of schools. It includes rules governing the use of prescribed curricula, accreditation procedures and a requirement of minimum standards for both physical facilities and the overall functioning of schools.
- 2.3 Provide a supportive framework in the education sector that shall encourage private sector participation in improving the standards of education such as setting up and monitoring standards and quality.
- 2.4 Strengthen the role of private sector in education through the provisions mentioned in the Guidelines for the Private Schools in Bhutan.

3. Definition

A private school is a privately funded school providing quality education offering either the national curriculum and examination system or an internationally recognized curriculum and examination system catering to both Bhutanese and international students (Source: National Education Policy)

4. Level and Location of the School

4.1 As spelled out in the National Education Policy, the level of schools, irrespective of private or government shall operate at one of the following level of schools:

- Primary – Pre- Primary to Class VI
- Secondary – Class PP/ VII to Class X
- Higher Secondary – Class PP/VII/IX/XI to Class XII

Where school spans several levels (PP-X or PP-XII), each level of the school shall have a separate vice principal responsible for its management. However, the principal shall be responsible for the overall management of the school.

4.2 The location of the School shall be subject to the following conditions:

- The school shall be ideally located to facilitate congenial learning.
- The site proposed for school construction must be geo-technically stable.
- The site shall have adequate space to fit in all requirements mentioned in annexure 1.
- The proposal shall be subject to the views of the settlements and landowners of the adjacent areas.
- The proposed site shall be free of potential threat and risk of security and other hazards.

4.3 School Safety

Making Children Safer:

- School Manager, teachers, staff and students shall be aware, trained and able to respond during and after the emergencies [Refer Annexure 3]

The Structural Facilities:

- Buildings shall be able to resist earthquakes and other hazards and function to maximum capacity during emergencies. [Refer Annexure 3]

The Non- Structural Facilities:

- Non- Structural hazards hunting must be done and address these hazards with appropriate mitigation measures and make school internal systems resistant to earthquake and other hazards [Refer Annexure 3]

5. Physical Infrastructure

Each school shall meet the minimum facilities and infrastructure specified by the Ministry of Education. [Refer annexure 1]

6. Procedures for the establishment of Private Schools in Bhutan

- 6.1 Proponents shall put up an application to the concerned District Education Officer (DEO)/ Thromde Education Officer (TEO). DEO/TEO, shall, after confirming the land registration and ownership of the land, forward the application to the Private School Division (PSD), DSE, MoE.
- 6.2 PSD shall review the application and the proponent is asked to submit the project proposal. The proposal shall include the land ownership certificate and a sketch master plan indicating the distribution of the minimum facilities in the area as required in the annexure 1 of the *Guidelines for Private Schools in Bhutan*.
- 6.3 PSD shall put up the application with the required documents in the Private School Technical Committee Meeting (PSTCM) comprising of a representative from School Planning and Building Division (SPBD), Policy and Planning Division (PPD), Bhutan Council of School Examination and Assessment (BCSEA), Human Resource Division (HRD), Education Monitoring and Support Service Division (EMSSD), Special Education Needs & Early Child Care and Development Division (SEN & ECCD) and PSD. PSTCM shall be chaired by the Director of Department of School Education. If the application and the documents meet the requirement, joint site verification is recommended.
- 6.4 PSD officials along with the Technical Committee Members, DEO/TEO and representatives from Gewog office/ thromde shall make the site visit and jointly prepare site visit report.
- 6.5 The joint site visit report is thereafter presented to the Private School Technical Committee Members (PSTCM).
- 6.6 Based on the decision of the PSTCM, PSD shall correspond with the proponent. If the site is found feasible for the establishment of the school then PSD asks the proponent to submit detailed project proposal along with the architectural drawings which shall be submitted to SPBD for scrutiny. If it is not found feasible, the committee recommends expressing a letter of regret and asks the proponent for alternative site and location with adequate area for the school establishment.
- 6.7 Once the SPBD has scrutinized the drawings and made recommendations, PSD shall write to the proponent asking to incorporate the recommendations made by the SPBD office and also to submit the work plan indicating the timeline of the work. An approval in principle is accorded by the PSD to go ahead with the construction work upon producing environment clearance certificate from the National Environment Commission. Validity of the approval in principal for the construction of school is for three years.

- 6.8 Final and formal approval (*Gold Leaf*) shall be accorded by the PSD only upon the completion of the physical infrastructure and other facilities and fulfillment of all requirements as spelled out in *Guidelines for Private Schools in Bhutan*.
- 6.9 After the issue of Gold Leaf by the PSD, the proponent shall be asked to sign a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the MoE for the commencement and operation of the school. The MoU shall be for a period of five years. The renewal of the school license shall be subject to the annual assessments by the MoE.

7. Staffing

- 7.1 At the Primary level, a minimum of 90% of the teaching staff shall be Bhutanese. All teachers shall be trained and have the required academic qualifications as prescribed by the Ministry of Education.
- 7.2 At the Secondary level at least 70% of the teachers shall be trained Bhutanese and with qualification requirement set by the Ministry of Education.
- 7.3 The Ministry of Education shall facilitate the deployment of principals and teachers for private schools on secondment as per the prevailing BCSR rules and regulations during the initial phase of the school establishment and operation.
- 7.4 Principals and teachers on secondment shall be governed by the secondment rules and regulations of the BCSR in force.
- 7.5 Payment of allowances such as the monthly remuneration, Leave Travel Concession (LTC) shall be as per the prevailing Labour Act of the country.
- 7.6 Private schools can recruit expatriate teachers with minimum qualification of Bachelor's Degree in teaching upon clearance from the Ministry of Education.
- 7.7 Private schools shall maintain a maximum teacher-student ratio of 1:30
- 7.8 Private schools shall have service rules as per the Labour Act with a set remuneration structure where pay scale, annual increment and other benefits are specified. A copy of which should be sent to the Ministry of Education.
- 7.9 Teachers of private school shall be paid full vacation allowances for rendering seven months of service as per the BCSR in force
- 7.10 Principals of private schools shall have a degree in Educational Management and Administration or minimum five years experience in managing a school as Principal.

7.11 A full time trained counselor, Health and Physical Education (HPE) Instructor/Sports Instructor are mandatory for every private school.

7.12 All private schools shall recruit necessary support staff as reflected in *Annexure 2* and shall be paid as per the Labour Act of the country.

8. Curriculum & Assessment

8.1 Private School shall follow the National School Curriculum prescribed by the Department of Curriculum and Research Development (DCRD), Ministry of Education.

8.2 Private Schools shall abide by the assessment policy as spelt by DCRD and BCSEA. Private Schools shall be subject to monitoring by the Education Monitoring and Support Services Division (EMSSD), DEO, Private School Division and BCSEA as and when required by the Ministry of Education or on request from the school.

8.3 Private schools shall follow the same academic session and normally participate in extra-curricular activities, sports and other competitions, cultural activities and celebrations of national significance as prescribed by the Ministry of Education. However, Ministry of Education may authorize in writing the amendments to this policy for individual private schools provided they follow the minimum of 180 instructional days or 880 instructional hours.

8.4 All private schools shall enhance student enrichment programmes and other voluntary services.

8.5 The school shall register its students for national level examinations with the Bhutan Council for School Examination and Assessment (BCSEA) and shall also follow all the rules and regulations prescribed by the Council.

8.6 Private schools may offer alternative curricula and alternative examinations and qualifications in place of the National Curriculum and Board Examinations with written approval from the Ministry of Education. Such curricula and examination should be internationally recognized and subject to external assessment and monitoring.

9. Admission

9.1 Any Bhutanese child who has attained the age of six (72 months) by the start of new academic session is entitled to admission into the Pre Primary.

- 9.2 Admission at other levels shall be granted on production of academic certificates, character certificates, and other relevant documents as per the directives of the Ministry of Education.
- 9.3 Admission of students in classes X and XII shall not be allowed in the initial year of the operation of the school.
- 9.4 Total number of students enrolled should be in proportion to the physical facilities available.
- 9.5 Day private school shall not admit dependent children as per the admission policy of the Ministry of Education.
- 9.6 The secondary private schools should seek prior approval from the Bhutan Council of School Examinations and Assessment (BCSEA) before admitting students from Examination Boards outside Bhutan.
- 9.7 Private schools are encouraged to make provision for scholarships for students at all levels from economically or socially disadvantaged backgrounds as a part of corporate social responsibilities.
- 9.8 The school shall maintain individual records of the students.

10. Fees & Taxes

- 10.1 The proposed fee structure shall be approved by the Ministry of Education and made publicly available. The proposal for fee revision shall include all other collections and reach the Private School Division, MOE, latest by end of September and Ministry of Education shall respond by the end of October.
- 10.2 The school fees should be collected at least in two instalments. Schools shall not collect any other fees beyond the fees approved by the Ministry of Education.
- 10.3 In line with the clause 13.1.20 of the National Education Policy, all private school shall fix the same fee structure for two years for the students appearing Bhutan Secondary Certificate Examinations (BSCE) and Bhutan Higher Secondary Certificate Examinations (BHSEC) as the content of the course is for two years.
- 10.4 All private schools shall maintain a bank account under which all the transactions shall be reflected, and readily available for inspection by authorized government agencies.
- 10.5 The school shall pay all taxes as per the prevailing rules and regulations of the Royal Government of Bhutan.

10.6 Proper printed receipt with school seal shall be provided to the parents for any collection.

11. Government Support

11.1. All private schools irrespective of the levels shall be provided with textbooks free of cost and shall comply with textbooks issue regulations of the Ministry of Education.

11.2. All materials developed by the Ministry of Education for the purpose of School Education Programme shall be shared to private schools.

11.3. Teachers of Private schools are eligible to participate in INSET training programmes organised by the Ministry of Education within the country. However, expenses related to their travelling, daily subsistence allowances (DSA) and others where necessary shall have to be met by the respective schools.

11.4. Support from the education officials on management, performance etc shall be provided to the school

12. Monitoring and Support

12.1 Schools shall follow the same monitoring policies as laid down from time to time by the Ministry of Education and BCSEA.

12.2 The school shall institute school self assessment and school improvement plan.

12.3 Schools shall be monitored through established mechanisms from the Department of School Education.

12.4 Schools shall be provided feedback on their performance by the Ministry of Education and BCSEA

13. School Management:

13.1 School Management Board

13.1.1 **Composition:** The school Management Board shall have the following composition:

13.1.2 **Chairperson:**

13.1.3 **Member Secretary:**

13.1.4 **Members:**

13.1.5 **Relevant School Authorities**

- 13.1.6 Parents' representative constituting one parent for every hundred children with a minimum of five parent's irrespective of student number. The parent membership should represent both genders. Parent's representatives to the SMB shall be nominated by the parents during the parent teachers meeting.
- 13.1.7 Two student representatives (a boy and a girl) as and when required.
- 13.1.8 **Quorum:** The quorum of the board is fixed at $\frac{2}{3}$ of the total membership.
- 13.1.9 **Tenure:** Members shall serve tenure of two years and may be re-elected for a second term.
- 13.1.10 **Sittings:** The board shall meet a minimum of two times in a year and as and when required.
- 13.1.11 **Withdrawal of membership:** Membership of the SMB may be withdrawn through resignation or removal.
- 13.1.12 The School Management Board shall have the following responsibilities:
- Provide vision and direction to school.
 - Guide the school in proper implementation of and compliance with the government policy and guidelines.
 - Guide the school Management Team in the effective implementation of the policies and guidelines.
 - Guide the school in providing quality of services.
 - Propose and discuss school development activities.
 - Guide the school in putting in place proper system for the smooth functioning of the School.
 - Review the progress and performance of the school.
 - Report school performance and improvement to all stakeholders.
 - Help the school in conducting a minimum of at least two general parent teachers meetings in a year.
 - Guide the School Management Team (SMT) in case of serious disciplinary problems.

Code of ethics of School Management Board

The SMB members shall not interfere in the day-to-day internal affairs of the school administration. It shall meet on a bi-annual basis to provide directions, monitor and review the progress of the school. However, SMB can also meet as and when need arises.

13.2 School Management Team

- 13.2.1 **Composition:** The school Management Team members shall be the heads/coordinators of the different programme. However, the following composition shall have to be maintained:
- 13.2.2 **Chairperson:** Principal
- 13.2.3 **Member Secretary:**
- 13.2.4 **Members:**
- 13.2.5 The School Management Team shall have the following responsibilities:

- Set goals to implement the policies and plans.

- Implement school programmes and activities.
- Estimate budget and submit to the proprietor through the principal.
- Form committees and assign tasks with well-defined job description.
- Plan and carry out school level monitoring and support services through School Self Assessment (SSA)
- Conduct professional development programmes
- Nominate staff for CBIP/DBIP/NBIP and any other ad hoc invitations.
- Assess the performance of staff and provide feedback for improvement.
- Manage situational crisis or emergencies in the school.
- Monitor and evaluate programmes and provide support services.
- Apprise the SMB and the staff on government's policy directives.

14. Working Committee And In-Charges

14.1 In a large school, within the SMT, there can be working committee and in-charges to execute specific task including:

- 14.1.1. Academic, assessment and examinations
- 14.1.2. Maintenance of properties
- 14.1.3. Admission
- 14.1.4. Maintaining record
- 14.1.5. Running of student mess
- 14.1.6. Curricular and co-curricular activities
- 14.1.7. Student/Teacher support services
- 14.1.8. Discipline Committee

Note: Each Committee or In-charges are advised to do the planning for effective execution of the activities with high sense of direction and accountability in consultation with the SMB

(Courtesy: Nurturing Green schools for Green Bhutan: A guide to School Management, EMSSD, 2011)

15. General Terms and Conditions

- 15.1. The Proprietor shall ensure that all the minimum requirements in terms of both facilities and human resources are in place prior to the opening of the school.
- 15.2. The school shall provide and maintain high quality of education.
- 15.3. The ownership of the school shall not be transferred without approval from the Ministry of Education.
- 15.4. The Ministry of Education shall assess the quality of education in the school from time to time.
- 15.5. The school shall provide any information as part of regular reports or for specific studies conducted by the Ministry of Education.
- 15.6. All students shall be required to wear the school uniform.

- 15.7. The school shall not engage in any activities which are anti-social or against national interest and the policy of the Royal Government.
- 15.8. Any change in the level of school shall require prior approval from the Ministry of Education.
- 15.9. The school shall not be closed without the prior approval from the Ministry of Education. Closure of the school by either party (Proprietor or Ministry of Education) shall require one year's notice and adequate provisions should be made for the children affected.
- 15.10. Wherever acts, laws and rules and regulations are mentioned in the guidelines, it means the prevailing ones.
- 15.11. If the school intends to add new infrastructure or make major alteration to the structural infrastructure, it should be done in consultation with MoE.
- 15.12. Ministry of Education shall not allow conversion of existing structures into classrooms and establishment of schools in the rented premises.

16. Sanctions for Non-Compliance to the Guidelines:

- 16.1.1 **Step 1:** Reminder letter: A reminder letter to the school administration shall be sent within speculated time to appeal and for amendments.
- 16.1.2 **Step 2:** Written Warning: Upon non compliance with the reminder letter, a written warning shall be sent to the school mentioning the repercussions for non compliance.
- 16.1.3 **Step 3:** Recommendation for the suspension of the license by issuing a letter to MoEA with copy to DRC, MoF
- 16.1.4 **Step 4:** Recommendation to the BCSEA for the school to be de-affiliated from BCSEA
- 16.1.5 **Step 5:** Revoke the Gold Leaf as per the clause 13.1.12 of the National Education Policy.

Annexure 1: Physical Facilities**Requirement for Primary School:**

1. **Classroom:** The classroom shall accommodate maximum of 36 students @ 1.5 sqm per child
2. **Administrative purposes:** School shall have designated office space for Principal, VPs, general office and staff room with adequate toilets.
3. **Library room:** Library room shall be a size of minimum two standard classrooms. Number of books per child shall be 5 initially but provision has to be kept to improve the library annually.
4. **Toilet:** Separate for boys and girls with minimum ratio of toilet booth to students as 1:15 (boarding school) and 1:25 (day school)
5. **Games and sports:**
 - a. Football field: Minimum of 35 X 70 m²
 - b. Volley ball court: standard size
 - c. Basket ball court: standard Size
 - d. Indoor games
6. **Water supply:** Safe and regular supply shall be provided with wash basin available in the school
7. **Multipurpose Hall**
8. **Computer laboratory:** with adequate number of computers
9. **Science laboratory**
10. **Infirmary room**
11. **Store room for books and stationery**
12. **Adequate parking space**
13. **Principal's and caretaker's quarter:** it shall be within school premises or in close proximity to the school compound
14. **Conveyance facilities**
15. **Proper drainage system shall be there in place**

Requirement for Secondary School:

1. **Classroom:** The classroom should accommodate maximum of 36 students @ 1.5 sqm per child
2. **Administrative purposes:** School shall have designated office space for Principal, VPs, general office and staff room with adequate toilets.
3. **Library room:** Library room shall be a size of minimum two standard classrooms. Numbers of books per child is 10 initially but provision has to be kept to improve the library annually.
4. **Toilet:** Separate for boys and girls with minimum ratio of toilet booth to students as 1:15 (boarding school) and 1:25 (day school)
5. **Games and sports:**
 - a. Football field: Standard size
 - b. Volley ball court: standard size

- c. Basket ball court: standard Size (each for boys and girls)
- d. Indoor games
6. **Water supply:** Safe and regular supply shall be provided with wash basin available in the school Multipurpose Hall
7. **Computer laboratory:** with adequate number of computers
8. **Three separate Science laboratories:** If the school is offering science subjects
9. **Infirmary room**
10. **Counseling room**
11. **Store room for books and stationery**
12. **Separate Storage Room:** Qualifying the requirement set by BCSEA
13. **Adequate parking space**
14. **Principal's and caretaker's quarter:** It should be in close proximity to the school compound
15. **Conveyance facilities**
16. **Proper drainage system shall be there in place**

Requirement for Higher Secondary School:

1. **Classroom:** The classroom should accommodate maximum of 36 students @ 1.5 sqm per child
2. **Administrative purposes:** School shall have designated office space for Principal, VPs, general office and staff room with adequate toilets.
3. **Library room:** Library room shall be a size of minimum two standard classrooms. Number of books per child is 15 but provision has to be kept to improve the library annually.
4. **Toilet:** Separate for boys and girls with minimum ratio of toilet booth to students as :15 (boarding school) and 1:25 (day school)
5. **Games and sports:**
 - a. Football field: Standard size
 - b. Volley ball court: standard size
 - c. Basket ball court: standard Size
 - d. Indoor games
6. **Water supply:** Safe and regular supply shall be provided with wash basin available in the school
7. Multipurpose Hall
8. **Computer laboratory:** With adequate computers
9. **Three separate Science Laboratories:** If the school is offering science subjects
10. **Infirmary room**
11. **Counseling room**
12. **Store room for books and stationery**
13. **Separate Storage Room:** Qualifying the requirement set by BCSEA
14. **Principal's and caretaker's quarter:** It should be in close proximity to the school compound
15. **Adequate parking space**
16. **Conveyance facilities**

17. Proper drainage system shall be there in place**Additional requirement for Boarding Schools:**

1. **Hostel:** Separate for boys and girls @ of 2.40sqm² per child
2. **Infirmary:** Each hostel shall have infirmary with attached toilet
3. **Toilet:** Separate for boys and girls with minimum ratio of toilet booth to students as 1:15
4. **Shower:** Each hostel shall have provision for shower rooms with regular water supply
5. **Kitchen and store**
6. **Warden and Matron's quarters:** It shall be attached to the hostel or nearby
7. **Dining hall/MPH with wash basin**
8. **Conveyance facilities**
9. **Proper drainage system shall be in place**

Note: The proprietor/management shall be mindful to add in features and facilities to make school compound child friendly and include the components for green school.

Annexure 2: Staff list:

1. One librarian assistant for the library.
2. One lab assistant for the science lab at the primary level and three lab assistant at the secondary and higher secondary level/ computer lab
3. One health personnel for the infirmary
4. One counselor for the counseling
5. One health and physical education instructor for the games and sports and other physical education
6. One or Two cleaners
7. One or two care givers for the primary schools

Annexure 3: School Safety

1. The school must put school disaster management plan/ emergency and response in place (including evacuation plans, emergency communication, contingency plan etc.)
2. The school must conduct Mock Drill regularly. Boarding school may conduct night mock drill as well.
3. The school must carry out the capacity mapping at school level, community and Dzongkhag level especially in SAR, First Aid, Trauma Care etc.
4. The school must sensitize staff and students on any matters related to emergencies.
5. Vulnerability assessment must be carried out for old buildings.
6. Assessment of sites and buildings must be carried out for old buildings.
7. The school must prioritize a course of actions for vulnerable buildings- replace or retrofit.
8. New constructions must adopt minimum seismic design requirements with evaluation of sites for natural hazards.
9. The school must brace or anchor systems, piping, equipments and other items that may become falling hazards.

Annexure 4: Teacher's Qualification Requirement

- 1. Primary level: B.Ed (P)**
- 2. Secondary Level: B.Ed (P), B.Ed (S), or PGDE.**
- 3. Higher Secondary Level: B.Ed (P), B.Ed (S), or PGDE.**