



NATIONAL EDUCATION POLICY (Draft)



Royal Government of Bhutan
June 2022

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“As I serve my country, I have a number of priorities. Number one on my list is education. Education is empowering- it’s a social equalizer and it facilitates self-discovery, which leads to realizing one’s full potential. Good education gives you confidence, good judgment, virtuous disposition, and the tools to achieve happiness successfully. A good school gives a child a fair shot at success and ensures that a person’s achievement in life will not be predetermined by his or her race, parentage and social connections.”

*-His Majesty Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wangchuck
(Bhutan Education Blueprint 2014-2024)*

Provisions in 'The Constitution of The Kingdom of Bhutan'.

Article 9: Principles of State Policy-

15. The State shall endeavour to provide education for the purpose of improving and increasing knowledge, values and skills of the entire population with education being directed towards the full development of the human personality.

16. The State shall provide free education to all children of school going age up to tenth standard and ensure that technical and professional education is made generally available and that higher education is equally accessible to all on the basis of merit.

1. Introduction

Until the advent of modern education in Bhutan in 1961, monastic education was the main form of education. Monastic education has served the social, economic and spiritual needs of the country for centuries. Since the commencement of planned development in 1961, the modern education system has scaled up significantly and has played a principal role in pursuit of political, cultural, environmental and socio-economic development of the country.

The Constitution of the Kingdom of Bhutan mandates the State to provide education to improve and increase the knowledge, values and skills of the entire population for a more holistic development of human personality. Considering that education is also recognized as fundamental necessity, efforts are being put globally through a series of strategic interventions including EFA, MDGs, and currently Sustainable Development Goal 2030 to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all. Given the fast changing scenarios globally, the need to harmonize national needs, and address emerging challenges, preparation in line with global trends has become critical.

Bhutan has made commendable progress in enhancing access to education. However, acknowledging the changing needs and growing expectations, there is a need to upscale the quality and equity in education. In response to this challenge, numerous measures have been initiated such as school reform programmes, teacher development programmes, and curriculum and assessment reforms. One historic and significant policy drive is the issuance of The Royal Kasha on the 113th National Day, 17th December 2020 on Education Reform to the people decreeing the urgency and need to reform education in the country. The Kasha highlights that education is indispensable and must give renewed life by reorienting our school structures and infrastructure, revisiting our curriculum, pedagogy, learning process, and assessments either by transforming or rewriting through a radical approach in view of the challenges and opportunities of the twenty-first century. The Royal Kasha also decrees that STEM subjects must be made part of learners' everyday language.

In light of The Royal Kasha, and ongoing reforms to make education more relevant, the National Education Policy 2022 is developed to provide an overarching framework and directions for an education system that prepares citizens who are nationally rooted and globally competent.

The National Education Policy 2022 builds upon the constitutional commitment for educational provision, earlier education policy documents of 1976 and 1985, Education Policy Guidelines and Instructions, and Sustainable Development Goals that were formulated thereafter. Specifically, it formulates The Royal Kasha on education reform outlining the key areas that need to be strategized and strengthened with stronger measures for wholistic development of learners with fine blend and balance of our native grit and intellect with acquired knowledge and skills.

2. Rationale

Education is a basic necessity to equip citizens with knowledge, skills, values and attitudes to become productive members of the society. Education should be responsive to the individual interest and changing socio-economic needs of the country in achieving the country's aspiration of Gross National Happiness.

Concerted efforts have been made to achieve universal access to education, strengthen foundations for learning, enhance literacy and numeracy, and skills for work and lifelong learning. While significant progress has been made, more efforts need to be put in for provision of equitable, relevant and quality education.

Therefore, this policy is developed to enhance access, quality and equity in education in order to create a strong foundation that aligns with the country's unique values, traditions, and culture. In addition, this policy will also form the basis for the formulation of the Education Act in the future. The ultimate goal is to prepare and nurture citizens with knowledge, skills, values and attitudes necessary for the 21st Century and beyond. Such an education system will lead towards realizing His Majesty's vision for a robust education system that is timeless and acts as a social equalizer.

3. Vision

This policy aims to enable the development of an education system that will contribute to:

“An educated and enlightened society guided by GNH principles”

4. Goals

The purpose of education is to prepare our citizens to be leaders who are mature, confident, intelligent, and well-rounded individuals. It is to develop citizens who are prepared for the right livelihood, practice contemplative learning, and values and promote our unique national identity and practices, sovereignty, security, peace and harmony. Further, it also aspires to build lifelong learners who are critical, creative, informed and engaged in civic affairs, who have holistic understanding of the world, and have a genuine care for others and nature.

Therefore, the National Education Policy 2022 aims to strengthen the robust, inclusive and holistic education that:

- 4.1 Builds learner's character that embodies the principles and values underpinning Gross National Happiness, and upholds the country's unique cultural and spiritual heritage and values (Nationally Rooted);
- 4.2 Prepares learners to become knowledgeable, skilful, creative, innovative, and enterprising, capable of responding to the national needs and emerging global trends (Globally Competent).

5. Objective

- 5.1 To develop sound educational systems that enable the creation of a knowledge based GNH society
- 5.2 To provide equitable, inclusive and quality education and lifelong learning opportunities to all learners and harness their full potential to become productive citizens
- 5.3 To equip all learners with appropriate knowledge, skills, values and attitudes to meet the needs of the 21st century and beyond.

6. Scope

This policy informs and guides all forms and levels of education in Bhutan - public, private, and International to achieve His Majesty's Vision and aspirations, and initiatives of the Royal Government of Bhutan over the short, medium, and long term. This includes early childhood,

school, monastic, tertiary, TVET, non-formal and continuing education, and lifelong learning opportunities.

7. General Policy Statement

- 7.1 All educational institutions shall foster learners' knowledge, skills, beliefs, and attitudes based on Bhutanese culture and values of *Tha Damtse Ley-Judrey*, *Sampa-Semke*, *Jawa-Choe-Lam*, and *Zacha-Drosum*. It shall also *emphasize values of* national identity, patriotism, sovereignty, security, peace and harmony.
- 7.2 All educational institutions shall promote core human values and facilitate productive and critical engagement in society as active and informed citizens by developing civic, financial, entrepreneurial, media literacy, and provide life skills education programmes.
- 7.3 All educational institutions shall educate and promote the cultural heritage of the country.
- 7.4 All Educational institutions shall protect, conserve and promote their pristine environment and safeguard the biodiversity of the country. It shall also educate, and mitigate the impact of climate change.
- 7.5 All educational institutions shall inculcate and promote reading habits to foster a reading culture and study skills among learners for their personal growth and be an informed and engaged citizen.
- 7.6 All educational institutions shall promote digital education, including use of technology in teaching-learning, assessment, planning, and administration.
- 7.7 All Public Educational institutions shall develop mechanisms and share resources such as libraries, computers labs, online resources, and other educational resources including games and sporting facilities among the schools and education institutions.
- 7.8 All educational institutes/agencies shall institute, administer, and use feedback and climate survey systems periodically to check the health of the education system.
- 7.9 All educational institutions shall mandatorily check and monitor learners' health periodically in every academic year to educate, prevent, treat, and rehabilitate for their wellbeing.
- 7.10 All educational institutions shall rigorously put in place and follow a mechanism to track and develop learners from early education and transitions thereafter.
- 7.11 The provision of Basic Education shall constitute ECCD, Special Education Needs, and School Education within the country.
- 7.12 The Ministry of Education shall coordinate, consolidate, and develop educational statistics periodically for informed decision making.
- 7.13 All educational institutions shall develop, maintain and periodically review the inclusive disaster management plan.
- 7.14 All educational institutions shall promote the national language Dzongkha.
- 7.15 All educational institutions shall educate and promote the National Dress of the country, and learners shall wear national dress/appropriate uniforms during academic sessions/practical sessions, and in all formal occasions.

7.16 All educational institutions shall hoist the national flag of Bhutan as per ‘[The National Flag Rules of Bhutan, 1972 and amendments thereof](#)’.

7.17 All learners shall sing the The National Anthem of Bhutan during morning assembly sessions and on all formal occasions, and promote and strengthen recitation of morning and evening prayers.

8. Early Childhood Care and Development

Early childhood is the period from conception to approximately eight years in which the foundation for holistic development of children’s health, education, social, emotional, psychological and intellectual development are formed. Early childhood care interventions harness the critical window of opportunities during rapid brain development of a child, where foundations for lifelong abilities are laid. Therefore, structured Early Childhood Care and Development (ECCD) programmes and services are important for all children, including those with special educational needs, for school readiness, and to ensure holistic growth and development. Hence, ECCD services shall contribute towards enhancing social, emotional, language, cognitive readiness of children, so that they can adjust, learn and thrive well in school and in their lives.

Policy statements

8.1 ECCD shall be professionalized, and all children from conception to eight years of age, including their families, and caregivers shall have access to ECCD programmes and services by 2030.

8.1.1 MoE shall collaborate with relevant agencies to provide home based parenting education and interventions through awareness and advocacy programmes, including crèche, to cater to children from zero to 24 months old to promote child care, nutrition, health, hygiene, protection and stimulation. In this regard:

8.1.1.1 The Ministry of Health shall:

- a) Provide parenting education and interventions to parents for their children
- b) Provide support, awareness and advocacy programmes on child care, nutrition, health, hygiene, protection and stimulation.

8.1.1.2 MoE shall:

- a) Facilitate and support parenting education, and interventions through awareness and advocacy programmes.
- b) Support and regulate crèche.

8.1.2 The Government shall provide free early learning opportunities to all children between the ages of 25 to 60 months old through provision of centre based ECCD programmes.

8.1.2.1 The Centre based ECCD programmes and services shall develop gross and fine motor, language, cognitive, social and emotional, self-help & adaptive, and spiritual & moral development.

8.1.2.2 ECCD centres shall be responsive to the needs of children in their care, and be inclusive of gender, disability, and socio-economic status.

- 8.1.2.3 ECCD curriculum and pedagogy should be developmentally appropriate, whereby learning activities, settings and materials should be age appropriate, play based, safe, child friendly, environmentally sustainable and culturally relevant.
- 8.2 The Ministry of Education shall develop National Standards and guidelines for ECCD, regulate the establishment and operation of both public and private centres.
- 8.3 ECCD centres shall not collect any form of fee or contribution from children/families other than fees approved by the Ministry of Education.

9. School Education

School Education in Bhutan renders a range of learning experiences in a formal educational setting ranging classes from Pre-Primary (PP) to Grade XII. It shall offer opportunities and learning experiences to all learners in actualizing their full potential to be socially engaging and economically productive citizens. Towards this endeavour, sustained efforts in strengthening equitable access, quality and equity shall be made all times. As such, the school education policies shall be geared towards developing a system of education that shall continue to prepare nationally rooted and globally competent learners responsive to the changing local, national, and global needs.

Policy statements

- 9.1 All children of school going age shall have equitable access and opportunity to free, inclusive, and quality basic education.
- 9.2 The entry age to the Pre-Primary shall be five years (60 months), and admission procedures shall be guided by the school admission guidelines of the Ministry of Education.
- 9.3 The Ministry shall facilitate the enrolment and retention of school going age children who are out-of-school including children with special educational needs, in basic education through appropriate support systems.
- 9.4 Early childhood pedagogies and developmentally appropriate interventions shall be instituted in primary schools to transition children aged five to eight years from early childhood education to school education.
- 9.5 Access to higher secondary education, through various pathways and equivalencies on the basis of minimum competencies and merit, shall be made available to all learners.
- 9.6 All schools shall promote learners to the next higher grade upon attaining set standards, and engage parents on matters relating to learners' academic progress and learning achievements, promotion and repetition.
- 9.7 Parents, families, carers, and communities shall play a critical role in their children's education from daily activities at home, participating in the school as a key stakeholder, and providing feedback in ensuring children's health, safety, and in their growth and learning.
- 9.8 The annual school academic calendar shall ordinarily consist of a minimum of 150 instructional days. Variations to this will consider class cohorts, seasonal conditions, and other relevant factors as outlined in school management and operational guidelines.
- 9.9 Schools shall contribute to the expansion of required vocational skills by offering a

diverse range of technical and vocational education and training subjects and programmes.

- 9.10 Information and Communications Technology (ICT) shall be one of the core subjects with focus on introducing coding, its applications, and use at all grades.
- 9.11. All educational institutions shall meet the national standards in terms of human resources, infrastructure, health and safety, wellbeing, and security.
- 9.12 Schools shall maintain a class size of maximum of 24 for primary, and 30 for secondary levels.
- 9.13 Schools shall foster best practices and promote innovative approaches to engage learners and develop their full potential and life-skills.
- 9.14 Schools shall put in place appropriate measures for all learners, including gifted children, children with special educational needs, across all grades to ensure equitable access to and participation in school. This includes support with specialized, appropriate educational services and facilities, including trained personnel.
- 9.15 Schools shall not collect any form of fee or contribution from learners/families other than fees approved by the Ministry of Education.
- 9.16 Special provisions and considerations shall be made for schools with exceptional circumstances, such as extreme remoteness, high altitude, and socio-economically disadvantaged communities.
- 9.17 Teaching and learning materials shall be provided to teachers and learners in public schools, whereas private schools following the national curriculum will be provided with textbooks only.
- 9.18 All learners in public schools at the primary level, and at the secondary level rural areas shall be provided with free stationery.
- 9.19. Schools shall have standard physical facilities, including classrooms, Science and ICT laboratories with adequate and appropriate provisions, libraries, counselling rooms, functioning water-and-sanitation and hygiene, sporting and administrative facilities determined by the Ministry. Such facilities shall be accessible, safe, and consider age, gender, disability, and climatic conditions.
- 9.20 There shall be designated schools with Special Educational Needs appropriately supported and equipped with safe and accessible physical facilities, including classrooms, Science and ICT laboratories libraries, counselling rooms, functioning water-and-sanitation and hygiene, and sporting facilities.
- 9.21 Schools shall have eco-friendly infrastructure with Bhutanese architectural designs.
- 9.22 Schools shall operate as:
 - Primary school with grades from Pre-Primary to grade VI,
 - Secondary school with grades from VII to XII
- 9.23 All schools shall have qualified Bhutanese principals.
- 9.24 The Ministry of Education shall facilitate and regulate the establishment and operations of all public, private and international schools, including offshore campuses in Bhutan.
- 9.25 The Ministry of Education shall gradually expand the concept of autonomous schools.

- 9.26 The relevant agencies shall collaborate to support out-of-school youths, to engage them in appropriate education pathways including skilling, reskilling and up-skilling programmes.

10. Monastic Education

Monastic education refers to the traditional Buddhist form of education and remains the central form of spiritual learning and development in Bhutan. Monastic education provides a distinct medium of acquiring Buddhist knowledge, skills and values. There are a number of public and private Monastic education institutions within Bhutan each with their own established governance arrangements and independent curriculum, assessment and examination systems, and standards. *Zhung Dratshang* is constitutionally recognized as the Monastic governing body. It oversees the public Monastic education system in Bhutan.

The policy statements below apply to Monastic education institutions under *Zhung Dratshang*. However, all Monastic education institutions may adopt this policy to strengthen cooperation and collaboration among the educational institutions and to provide accessible, inclusive, and quality education to children and learners.

Policy statements

- 10.1 Children shall have equitable access to Monastic *Lobdras*, *Goenzin Dratshangs* and *Shedras* registered and recognized by *Zhung Dratshang*.
- 10.2 Identified Monastic *Lobdras*, *Goenzin Dratshangs* and *Shedras* shall put in place appropriate measures for learners with special educational needs across all grades to ensure equitable access to learning and participation in monastic education.
- 10.3 *Zhung Dratshang*, the Ministry of Education, and other relevant government agencies shall collaborate to facilitate the enhancement of quality and inclusive education. Collaboration shall include areas such as sharing of resources and provision of education support services, including building capacities of teachers, development of teaching and learning materials, ICT education, physical education, and life-skills education, besides others.
- 10.4 *Zhung Dratshang* shall put in place mechanisms to strengthen and maintain access, quality and equity of education in Monastic *Lobdras*, *Goenzin Dratshangs* and *Shedras*.
- 10.5 Monastic *Lobdras*, *Goenzin Dratshangs* and *Shedras* shall promote learners to the next level based on attaining set standards.
- 10.6 Information and Communications Technology (ICT) shall be promoted in Monastic *Lobdras*, *Goenzin Dratshangs* and *Shedras* through provision of ICT based resources to leverage the power of ICT in teaching and learning.
- 10.7 *Dratshang Lhentshög* Secretariat, in consultation with *Zhung Dratshang*, shall support teachers and learners with adequate and appropriate teaching and learning materials, including textbooks.
- 10.8 Monastic *Lobdras*, *Goenzin Dratshangs* and *Shedras* shall have standard physical facilities including classrooms, functioning water and sanitation facilities, sporting facilities and

administrative facilities that ensure accessibility, safety, effective teaching and learning, enhances growth and development of learners that consider age, gender, disability, and climatic conditions.

10.9 The Ministry of Education shall support in provision of adequate Math, English and basic ICT teachers to all Monastic institutions by 2023

10.10 Monastic *Lobdras*, *Goenzin Dratshangs* and *Shedras* shall operate as *Zhirim Lobdra* ranging from Pre-Primary to grade VIII, *Dingrim Shedra* from grades IX to XII, *Thorim Shedra* from grade XIII to XV, and *Chheytho Shedra* equivalent to Masters level.

11. Curriculum, Assessment and Recognition

11.1 Curriculum and Assessment

Curriculum and assessment is central to education and plays a vital role in achieving educational aspirations as defined under the policies and the larger interest of learners. Learning opportunities for wholistic development of learners in terms of cerebral, emotional, social, spiritual, and physical domains through authentic engagement and assessments to drive towards knowledge based society. The curriculum and assessment should inculcate knowledge, skills, values and attitudes to enable learners to be creative, innovative and enterprising to live a productive and meaningful life. It shall also inculcate the country's unique culture and values such as personal rigour, discipline, integrity and national values including national identity, patriotism, sovereignty, security, and peace. Overall the school curriculum shall build and contribute in strengthening just and harmonious society.

Policy statements

11.1.1 The curriculum shall equip learners with the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and beliefs, based on Bhutanese values of *Tha Damtse Ley-Judrey*, *Sampa-Semke*, *Jawa-Choe-lam*, and *Zacha-Drosum*. It shall also infuse as well as instil the principles and values of Gross National Happiness.

11.1.2 The curriculum shall be designed to develop a sound foundation in literacy, numeracy, and ICT education including coding starting from primary level.

11.1.3 Dzongkha as the national language shall be taught in all schools to ensure that all learners acquire high proficiency. Investments in strengthening Dzongkha teaching and learning materials and teacher development shall be a priority.

11.1.4 English shall be the medium of instruction in schools.

11.1.5 Bhutanese Sign Language shall be continuously developed, standardized, strengthened, and appropriately supported in educating learners who are deaf and hard of hearing.

11.1.6 The curriculum designs and content shall be informed by national priorities, learners' needs and emerging societal demands. It should also be suitable to local contexts to enable learners to be innovative and creative, lifelong learners, and prepare them for the world of work.

11.1.7 The curriculum shall provide opportunities for learners to pursue diverse academic programmes and pathways based on emerging priorities and needs.

- 11.1.8 School curriculum shall strengthen Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) education to promote creativity and innovation, and prepare learners to participate meaningfully in a society and economy that is increasingly reliant on ICT and the growth of Industrial Revolution 4.0
- 11.1.9 The free access to digital content, including coding, and platforms supported by interactive teaching-learning resources and adequate facilities shall be provided on priority basis to all students and teachers to upscale digital education.
- 11.1.10 The School education shall promote Arts Education to provide diverse learning to develop and enhance creativity.
- 11.1.11 The research and development shall inform the curriculum and implementation, cognizant of emerging global educational practices and trends, and national priorities.
- 11.1.12 The delivery of curriculum shall be through 21st Century Pedagogy to cater to diverse needs, interests, and abilities of learners. It shall strengthen blended learning.
- 11.1.13 Curriculum and pedagogy shall be inclusive of gender, special educational needs, socio-economic circumstances and geographic location.
- 11.1.14 Curriculum shall be inspired and informed by the philosophy of Gross National Happiness and sound educational principles to nurture nationally rooted and globally competent citizens.
- 11.1.15 School curriculum shall be competency based, dynamic, flexible and responsive to changing priorities of the country, society and learners. It shall focus on process and experiential learning to enable students to actualize their potential to prepare them to harness the potentials of a complex and challenging world. The revision and reform of school curriculum shall commensurate standard curriculum development cycle.
- 11.1.16 The National School Curriculum Framework shall guide the formulation of learning outcomes, standards, and assessment for school education.
- 11.1.17 There shall be a professional body responsible for the development of school curriculum. The Ministry shall provide oversight and policy direction to this body.
- 11.1.18 There shall be a clear governance, roles and responsibilities defined for the Ministry of Education and the independent professional bodies responsible for school curriculum, assessment and examinations with respect to the development, implementation, and review of school curriculum, assessment and examinations.
- 11.1.19 The Ministry of Education shall facilitate collaboration amongst key agencies and other stakeholders on matters related to school curriculum implementation, assessment, monitoring and evaluation, and relevant teacher pre-service education and development. *Geden Tsugla Dutshog* shall facilitate collaboration in all matters related to curriculum implementation, assessment, monitoring and evaluation in monastic education institutes under *Zhung Dratshang*.

11.2 Assessment and Examinations

The primary purpose of assessment is to improve students' learning. It informs learners, teachers, parents, and other stakeholders about a student's learning needs and achievements. Assessment should also provide valuable information about the health of the education system,

specifically to inform if the curriculum is being delivered in line with its intended purpose and goals. Assessment practices shall incorporate formative and summative forms, including standardized and competency based examinations. In view of this, it is imperative that assessment and examinations are adaptable to ensure continuous improvement of the quality of education.

Policy statements

- 11.2.1 The health of school education shall be monitored through a periodic national, regional, and/or international education assessment system.
- 11.2.2 Mechanisms, including the use of ICT, shall be instituted at both school and national level to ensure that assessment is holistic, reliable, valid, authentic, flexible, and are comparable to international standards.
- 11.2.3 Assessment of student learning shall be based on learning standards or outcomes prescribed in the school curriculum, and shall include standardized wholistic school level assessment and national examinations. It shall blend formative and summative assessments, and emphasize competencies.
- 11.2.4 Standardized modes of assessment including national examinations shall be based on the learners learning outcomes or standards prescribed in the curricula, including psycho-social competencies.
- 11.2.5 Appropriate arrangements, shall be made available for learners with disabilities in assessment and examinations to ensure that all learners are able to demonstrate their learning outcomes.
- 11.2.6 An independent professional body shall be responsible for standardized assessment and examinations, including certifications, protocols, and regulation. The Ministry shall provide oversight and policy direction to this body.

12. Higher Education

Higher education system in Bhutan aspires to build nationally rooted and globally competent learners who are socially responsible, culturally grounded, ecologically sensitive, and spiritually aware equipped to lead Bhutan into a knowledge based society that values lifelong learning. To this end, Higher education plays a central role in building human resource requirements of the country. It should support developing citizens who can not only lead but also solve complex social and technical issues. In addition to the following policy statements, higher education shall be guided by the Tertiary Education Policy of the Kingdom of Bhutan 2010 (TEP) and TVET policy, and amendments thereof.

Policy statements

- 12.1 Higher Education Institutes (HEIs) in Bhutan shall offer courses/programmes of international standard in line with the Tertiary Education Policy that are relevant and critical to the current and future national, social, economic, and spiritual needs. Skills development programmes, particularly in technical areas including ICT shall be given priority.
- 12.2 Access to Higher education towards the academic route shall be a maximum of 40% of the class 12 graduates based on merit ranking and aptitude.

- 12.3 Entry to all TEIs shall be on the basis of merit appropriate to learners' abilities, interests, competencies and performance, and psycho-social attributes.
- 12.4 Scholarships and access schemes within and outside Bhutan, including on cost-sharing modalities, shall be made available to candidates based on merit, especially in critical areas of national human resource requirements, and consider gender and disabilities.
- 12.5 HEIs shall provide different modes of study, including distance education learning, responsive to learning needs, and flexible course structures.
- 12.6 HEIs shall institute strategies and conduct impactful research to promote strong research culture, development and dissemination.
- 12.7 HEIs shall deploy andragogical or heutagogical approaches that involve active student participation, communication, collaboration, creativity and critical thinking, development of competencies, and promote active, informed and productive citizens.
- 12.8 Programme content and pedagogy deployed shall be inclusive of gender, special educational needs, socio-economic circumstances and geographical location.
- 12.9 HEIs shall rigorously pursue digital technology, science, innovation, entrepreneurship, home, cyber and food security to prepare learners to participate and engage meaningfully in the 21st century and beyond.
- 12.10 All relevant educational agencies shall collaborate to promote and provide pathways for learners, including seamless transition from school education, non-formal education, TVET, Monastic Education, and Higher Education and facilitate credit transfer among relevant programmes/courses.
- 12.11 HEIs shall collaborate with local, regional and international institutions, employers, and industries, to strengthen the courses/programmes, exchange knowledge and resources, and enhance research and development.
- 12.12 The establishment of renowned international HEIs/campus in the country shall be encouraged and promoted.
- 12.13 HEIs shall have facilities that support appropriate and quality delivery of its programmes, innovative research and development conducive for its learners and staff including international students and for exchange programmes.
- 12.14 The overall policy directions for and regulation of all HEIs shall be through the recognized national higher education regulatory bodies including but not limited to Higher Education Board, and Bhutan Accreditation Council.
- 12.15 An independent body shall be established to support and oversee research priorities, and to fund research and development activities to support the short, medium, and long term needs of the country.
- 12.16 A quality assurance mechanism shall be put in place to ensure that standards are met as per the national qualifications framework.

13. Technical and Vocational Education and Training

Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) has the nested potential to transform the livelihood of individuals as it contributes in enhancing productivity and competitiveness while

promoting entrepreneurial programmes and activities in the country. It is effective in engaging and building competencies for gainful employment in the world of work to meet the national level skills requirements. Given TVET's diverse and complex nature, resource intensiveness, its provision has to be well planned, efficient, and focused to maintain its standards. TVET in the country shall strive to build skills-based society by setting strategic priorities in close coordination with relevant key stakeholders. In addition to the following policy statements, the provisions of TVET shall be guided by a separate TVET Policy and amendments thereof.

Policy Statements:

- 13.1 TVET shall develop knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values to build employability skills, and entrepreneurship.
- 13.2 TVET programmes shall absorb at least 60% of grade XII graduates or equivalent by expanding access and capacity of the current vocational institutes, besides mainstreaming in the schools.
- 13.3 There shall be a national agency established, which shall spearhead, oversee, direct, and support the growth of a vibrant, dynamic, innovative, competitive, and state of the art TVET system in the country.
- 13.4 The agency responsible for TVET shall offer courses of international standards that are relevant to current and future national, international, social, and economic needs including international markets.
- 13.5 TVET agency and institutions shall collaborate and build linkages with the best national, regional and international TVET institutes, education institutions and industries to strengthen the courses/programmes, exchange knowledge and resources, and promote research culture and development to stay relevant for all times.
- 13.6 The TVET courses/programmes shall preserve and promote *Zorig-Chusum* and culture.
- 13.7 The TVET courses/programmes shall be accredited and recognized based on the provisions of Bhutan Qualifications Framework 2012 and Bhutan Vocational Qualifications Framework 2013, and revisions thereof.
- 13.8 The governing agencies shall create TVET pathways and equivalencies for learners, and institute credit transfers among relevant programmes/courses for seamless progression.
- 13.9 The agency for TVET shall facilitate enrolment and retention of learners through appropriate mechanisms, including, but not limited to, consideration for gender, disabilities, and learners coming from disadvantaged socio-economic background.
- 13.10 TVET institutions shall be appropriately equipped with the state of the art facilities and space, adequate, trained and competent faculties, and support systems.
- 13.11 TVET institutions shall collaborate with relevant agencies, both public and private, to facilitate, promote, and support the growth and diversification of trades, and employment of youth.
- 13.12 The relevant governing agency shall facilitate the establishment of renowned international TVET institutes/campus in the country.
- 13.13 All TVET institutions shall be appropriately supported, and follow safety standards as per the national standards.

13.14 TVET educators shall promote active communication, collaboration, creativity, critical thinking and innovation.

14. Literacy and Lifelong Learning

The Royal Government of Bhutan encourages citizens to pursue lifelong learning both formally and informally. An individual's level of formal education and their consequent literacy directly influences their living standards and effectively contributes in the preservation and promotion of culture and traditions, and responds to changing labour market demands. As such, appropriate measures need to be put in place to ensure citizens are literate and acquire knowledge and skills required to respond to the needs of the changing markets and fast transforming economies to live a productive and meaningful life.

Policy statements

- 14.1 The Ministry of Education shall support and promote the development of literacy and numeracy skills for all citizens in both Dzongkha and English.
- 14.2 Non-formal education shall be provided and made accessible to all those individuals, including people with disabilities, who have missed, dropped from the formal education system, and/or for those requiring basic literacy development and vocational skills.
- 14.3 Opportunities shall be provided to enhance literacy, numeracy, and vocational skills through appropriately resourced educational institutes, distance and online learning.
- 14.4 Opportunities shall be provided for those who wish to upgrade their qualifications and skills through continuing education and equivalency programmes including bridging programmes.
- 14.5 Non-formal education shall infuse life skills such as health and reproductive issues, environment, disaster management, social dimensions such as gender, childcare and protection, safety, democracy, Gross National Happiness within its course content. Programme design, content delivery and duration should be flexible in order to be inclusive of gender, disability, geographic location and socio-economic circumstances.
- 14.6. Community Learning Centres (CLCs) shall have appropriately resourced libraries that are also accessible to communities. They shall also have access to libraries, computers labs, and other educational resources in Educational institutions and schools.
- 14.7 Non-formal and continuing education shall be directed and strengthened by an appropriate governing board and operational guidelines.
- 14.8 Education shall be provided to parents and caregivers of children in matters concerning child care, nutrition, health, hygiene, child safety and protection, stimulation, child and adolescent growth and development, besides others.

15. Education Quality Assurance and Accreditation

The credibility of educational institutes can be ascertained through a rigorous Quality Assurance and Accreditation process. These processes ensure that educational institutes meet and maintain a minimum standard of quality and integrity regarding academic standards, administration, and related services. It establishes legitimacy, credibility, and recognition of educational institutes,

both within and outside the country. Therefore, all educational institutions shall meet the quality assurance, and minimum standards required.

Policy statements

- 15.1 All schools shall follow nationally or internationally recognized assessment, examination and certification systems endorsed by the Ministry of Education or the relevant agency of the Royal Government of Bhutan.
- 15.2 The Ministry of Education shall assess the quality of public and private ECCD Centres.
- 15.3 The Ministry of Education shall assess the quality of public, private and international schools.
- 15.4 A quality assurance and accreditation body (ies) shall assess the quality of and accredit Tertiary Education and TVET Institutes.
- 15.5 The Ministry of Education in collaboration with relevant stakeholders shall develop, maintain and periodically review a comprehensive framework to recognize equivalency of assessment results, credit transfers, and certification of learners studying within and outside Bhutan
- 15.6 The Ministry of Education shall recognize relevant internationally orientated primary and secondary curriculum.
- 15.7 Mechanisms shall be put in place to recognize prior learning and facilitate credit transfer for seamless movement of learners among and into schools, technical and vocational education and training, tertiary, and other forms of education.
- 15.8 Accreditation systems shall recognise the learning and achievements of learners with disabilities. Accreditation shall be recognised nationally for employment and further training opportunities.
- 15.9 An effective monitoring & evaluation body shall be put in place to oversee the overall health and quality of education to inform future planning related to curricula, teachers, resource allocations, and system efficiency leading to ISO certification.

16. Holistic wellbeing of children and young people

In addition to academic, intellectual and cognitive development, educational institutes play an important role in the holistic development and wellbeing of children, youth and adult learners. Educational institutes can support children, youth and adult learners through mechanisms and programmes that promote their physical and psychosocial wellbeing.

Policy statements

- 16.1 All educational institutions shall create a safe environment, provide adequate and appropriate programmes, and support to enrich and empower learners to facilitate their growth and wellbeing.
- 16.2 All programmes for children, young people and learners shall meet the safety and protection standards set by the relevant regulatory bodies.
- 16.3 All educational institutions shall put in place plans and programmes to imbue a sense of volunteerism and foster character building of learners on the country's unique values and culture.

- 16.4 All educational institutions shall provide a safe and secure, supportive, inclusive, and learner-friendly environment that is conducive to holistic learning, intellectual engagement and growth. This includes an environment free from abuse, harassment and violence including bullying.
- 16.5 All educational institutions shall develop, maintain, educate, and review policies and procedures periodically to minimize the risk to the safety and wellbeing of all children, young people and adult learners in their care. The procedures shall include reporting cases of suspected abuse, neglect, while attending, travelling to and from, or outside the educational institute, to appropriate authorities.
- 16.6 All educational institutions shall maintain the privacy and confidentiality of personal information, including images/videos of children, young people, learners and staff under their jurisdiction.
- 16.7 All educational institutions shall provide comprehensive counselling and guidance to all learners with designated trained counsellors. The Guidance and Counselling Framework shall guide protocols and procedures.
- 16.8 Education institutions shall practice proactive and positive forms of behaviour management, educate and safeguard learners from any form of harassment or punishment.
- 16.9 Every child shall be supported to complete basic education through interventions such as safe transportation, accommodation, school feeding programmes, additional support for learners with disabilities, and other innovative support services.
- 16.10 All learners in public ECCD centres, schools, Monastic *Lobdras*, *Goenzin Dratshangs* and *Shedras* shall be provided with a balanced mid-day meal, breakfast for the needy schools, and all three meals for those in public boarding facilities such as in hostels, Monastic *Lobdras* and *Shedras* to foster their physiological and psychological development through innovative approaches for financing and execution of feeding programmes.
- 16.11 The Ministry of Education in collaboration with relevant agencies shall develop school feeding and boarding admission guidelines to guide school feeding programmes and to ensure sustainability, effective and efficient use of resources.
- 16.12 All schools shall promote agricultural programmes that are integrated with the local food production systems to supplement nutrition and ensure sustainability of feeding programmes, to educate children about food, nutrition, and sustainable farming practices.
- 16.13 All educational institutions with feeding programmes shall provide balanced diet, nutritious and sufficient food.
- 16.14 All schools shall institute and strengthen scouting programmes to support the holistic development of children and young people.
- 16.15 All educational institutions shall promote sports and physical education for all round development and wellbeing of children. The National Sports Policy shall be developed to outline the professionalism of sports, its standards, and safety protocols.
- 16.16 Recreational, educational and remedial services and programmes for youth in schools, Monastic *Lobdras*, *Goenzin Dratshangs* and *Shedras*, and out-of-education shall be

provided. [already addressed in 16.15]

16.17 All educational institutions shall foster genuine care for others, connect to their community, develop a sense of belongingness, and promote volunteerism.

17. Human Resources

Human Resources are critical in realising educational goals and national aspirations. Adequate and competent human resources with the right aptitude and attitude, and supply of critical human resources are pre-requisites for an effective and efficient education system. Hence, it is imperative that all educational institutions are adequately staffed with competent and well-motivated human resources. In addition to the following overarching policies, the Teacher Human Resource Policy 2014 and amendments thereof shall also guide the educational professionals within the Ministry of Education.

Policy statements

17.1 Teachers

- 17.1.1 The Ministry in collaboration with relevant agencies shall attract competent high calibre graduates with the right aptitude and strong commitment to education to undertake pre-service courses in education. Towards this endeavour, the Government shall strategize and invest to recruit the best of the best in the teaching profession.
- 17.1.2 There shall be a competitive selection process in place for recruitment of competent candidates in all the educational institutions with the right aptitude and strong commitment to education.
- 17.1.3 All teachers shall undergo a comprehensive background check, including adverse records, and drug test, as appropriate during the recruitment, and periodically thereafter. Those failing to meet the above requirements shall not be employed to safeguarding children from risk or harm.
- 17.1.4 All teachers working in educational institutes, both private and public, shall undergo a pre-structured entry orientation programme.
- 17.1.5 Teachers, either national or international, highly specialized in fields where their service is required, including teachers teaching in schools with SEN programme, shall be recruited to meet the critical human resource needs.
- 17.1.6 Incentive and reward mechanisms shall be put in place to enhance performance and retain effective teachers. Further incentives shall be put in place to attract and retain education professionals to remote locations, high altitudes, and boarding schools.
- 17.1.7 Clear career pathways, advancement opportunities and, specialization choices, shall be put in place for education professionals.
- 17.1.8 Efficient deployment systems shall be put in place to ensure all education institutions are adequately staffed with appropriately qualified and competent teachers. The Transfer and Placement Guideline shall guide the deployment of teachers.
- 17.1.9 Teachers shall be encouraged and supported to undertake continuous professional development to enhance their knowledge, improve their skills and upgrade their qualifications in relevant fields.

- 17.1.10 Professional development shall be targeted to develop competency of teachers in their subject areas based on national priorities and emerging needs through coordinated resource sharing.
- 17.1.11 Opportunities, programmes and support systems shall be put in place to continually develop and enhance educational leadership capacity.
- 17.1.12 Mechanisms shall be put in place to maintain continuity of student learning and instructional hours resulting from teacher absenteeism in classes due to circumstances such as continuing professional development, transfers, leave, or resignation, and attrition.
- 17.1.13 All teachers shall refrain from providing private tuition. Schools shall provide in-school-remedial classes for those learners who require learning support.
- 17.1.14 Bhutan Professional Standards for Teachers shall be implemented to enhance knowledge and competency based teaching and learning, and guide professional development, career progression, and recognition.
- 17.1.15 An autonomous governing body under the auspices of the Ministry shall be instituted to regulate the teaching profession and promote professional standards through registration, certification, and licensure.
- 17.1.16 The relevant regulatory body shall develop and periodically review standards for teachers and code of conduct to ensure professionalism.
- 17.1.17 Support systems and mechanisms shall be put in place for education professionals' wellbeing and overall welfare, morale and motivation, including responses to allegations of harassment and abuse.
- 17.1.18 All teaching professionals shall have 18 hours of contact teaching in a week. The Teacher requirement in the schools shall be ascertained based on the teaching hours for each subject determined by the prescribed curriculum.
- 17.1.19 Teacher workload guidelines shall be developed and regularly reviewed to enable effective instructional delivery. The guidelines shall include the number of subjects a teacher shall teach, classroom contact hours, and a teachers' scope of responsibilities.
- 17.1.20 A minimum of two trained teachers shall be deployed in every school irrespective of its enrolment for smooth functioning.

17.2 Other education personnel

- 17.2.1 All personnel working in educational institutes, both private and public, shall undergo a pre-structured entry orientation programme.
- 17.2.2 Sufficient additional human resources shall be made available to provide effective and inclusive special education services.
- 17.2.3 All personnel working with children shall undergo a comprehensive background check, including adverse records, and drug test, as appropriate during the recruitment, and periodically thereafter. Those failing to meet the above requirements shall not be employed in view of safeguarding children from risk or harm.
- 17.2.4 The Ministry of Education shall encourage and promote qualified Bhutanese, from the

private and public sector in areas of critical human resource, to volunteer in supporting school administration and in enhancing learning outcomes of learners or areas following the set protocols.

- 17.2.5 Education institutions shall have trained and certified counsellor(s) to provide learners with career guidance and psycho-social support.
- 17.2.6 All ECCD centres shall have a minimum of one facilitator/~~teacher~~/Instructor trained in early childcare and education to professionalise ECCD facilitators for smooth functioning of the centre.
- 17.2.7 All NFE Centres and Community Learning Centres shall have a minimum of one Instructor trained in non-formal education for smooth functioning of the centre.
- 17.2.8 All Youth Centres and Youth Friendly Integrated Service Centres shall have adequate human resources as appropriate to provide the required support services.
- 17.2.9 Health personnel shall be deployed in educational institutions to provide first aid services to learners as appropriate.

18. Financing Education

Education is a basic necessity to enhance literacy, skills, and personal development to lead a productive and meaningful life. Sustainable investment in education leads to knowledge based society that has direct influence on the socio-economic development of the country. Consistent commitment in education financing is crucial to strengthen the access and provision of equitable quality education, without which education can possibly face immediate shock that can have a long and lasting implications. Financing education, thus, is of paramount importance to formulate funding mechanisms to build on the achievements made to realize the national and international goals to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning. Considering the priority and higher returns of early investment in education, the Royal Government of Bhutan endeavours to ensure that adequate investments in education are made.

Policy statements

- 18.1 The government shall ensure adequate fund allocation in order to provide equitable access to quality and inclusive education. The government will strive towards achieving international standards in allocating public expenditure for education.
- 18.2 Innovative funding mechanisms shall be explored to supplement public investment to support, strengthen and sustain provision of quality education at all levels.
- 18.3 A financing model within the education shall be explored to enable effective and equitable distribution of resources **and its utilization** to respond to the changing priorities of education sector.

19. Educational Administration and Governance

To enhance and ensure efficiency and quality in the delivery of services, and to support the Ministry and agencies in managing programmes, projects, and services, it is important to outline the broad roles and responsibilities at each level of service delivery. In this regard, the following key agencies shall play a vital role in ensuring effective administration and governance of education in the country:

Policy statements

19.1 The Ministry of Education shall:

- 19.1.1 Provide the overall policy directive, guidelines, and monitoring for development of education in the country;
- 19.1.2 Facilitate effective coordination and collaboration within the Ministry, with other agencies, local governments and schools for the development and implementation of educational policies, plans, and services;
- 19.1.3 Review its structure and mandates from time to time to enhance Sherig Service Excellence and delivery.
- 19.1.4 Develop and disseminate information on national education status in the country.

19.2 The agency responsible for Technical and Vocational Education and Training & Zorig-Chusum shall:

- 19.2.1 Provide the overall policy directives and guidelines for the provision of Technical and Vocational Education and Training in the country;
- 19.2.2 Facilitate effective coordination and collaboration within the agency, with the Ministry of Education, other relevant agencies, local governments, and TTIs/IZCs for the development and implementation of educational policies and plans; and
- 19.2.3 Review its structure and mandates from time to time to enhance efficiency and service delivery.

19.3 The professional bodies responsible for the development of school curriculum and standardized assessment and examinations shall:

- 19.3.1 Provide the overall frameworks and guidelines, on the basis of policy directives and guidelines from the Ministry of Education, for the development and implementation of curriculum, assessment and standardised examinations in the country;
- 19.3.2 Develop teaching, learning and assessment resources for schools, teachers and learners;
- 19.3.3 Conduct research into effective curriculum, pedagogy and assessment design and practices;
- 19.3.4 Develop and implement initial professional development programs as part of the roll-out of new or revised curriculum and standardised assessment and examinations;
- 19.3.5 Consult and collaborate with relevant agencies on matters that influence their core business;
- 19.3.6 Review its structure and mandates from time to time to enhance efficiency and service delivery.

19.4 The professional bodies responsible for the Tertiary Education in Bhutan shall:

- 19.4.1 Facilitate effective coordination and collaboration with the Ministry of Education or other central agencies, local governments and TEIs for the development and implementation of educational policies, plans, and services;

19.4.2 Review their structure and mandates from time to time to enhance efficiency and service delivery.

19.4.3 Coordinate and report educational data to the Ministry of Education periodically.

19.5 Zhung Dratshang/Dratshang Lhentshog shall:

19.5.1 Facilitate effective coordination and collaboration within Monastic *Lobdras* and *Shedras*, with the Ministry of Education, other agencies, and local governments for the development and implementation of educational policies, plans, and services;

19.5.2 Review its structure and mandates from time to time to enhance efficiency and service delivery;

19.5.3 Ensure that the quality and performance of the Monastic *Lobdras*, *Goenzin Dratshangs* and *Shedras* are maintained through regular monitoring;

19.5.4 Ensure systematic planning and budgeting for Monastic *Lobdras*, *Goenzin Dratshangs* and *Shedras* and programmes;

19.5.5 Coordinate and report educational data to the Ministry of Education periodically.

19.6 Dzongkhags/Thromdes shall:

19.6.1 Provide overall guidance to schools in line with the policy directives, guidelines, and instruction from the Ministry of Education, for effective implementation.

19.6.2 Support and facilitate coordination, collaboration, and implementation of educational plans, programmes and services;

19.6.3 Ensure systematic planning and budgeting for programmes and ECCD centres, schools, NFE centres, Community Learning centres, and Youth Centers;

19.6.4 Ensure quality performance of ECCD centres, schools, NFE centres, Community Learning centres, and Youth Centres, through regular monitoring and supervision;

19.6.5 Coordinate and submit reports on education programmes, and educational data to the Ministry periodically.

19.7 TEIs/ Schools/ECCDs/NFE Centres/CLCs/ Monastic Lobdras, Goenzin Dratshangs and Shedras shall:

19.7.1 Assess delivery of quality and inclusive educational programmes on a regular basis, and develop and implement their improvement plans;

19.7.2 Form Management Team with senior members from all disciplines including local communities to make collective decisions on current policy issues, soliciting opinions, views and feedback to strengthen the delivery of educational services in line with the provisions of this policy;

19.7.3 Engage learners in the respective educational institute's policy formulation, decision making, and governance processes;

19.7.4 ECCD Centres/Schools shall engage the community through management boards, parent teacher meetings/associations, parenting education awareness programme,

alumni associations and community services;

19.7.5 Develop evidence based educational plans and programmes for the academic calendar year, and then implement, monitor and evaluate periodically.

19.7.6 Coordinate and submit reports on educational programmes, and educational data to the parent agencies periodically.

19.7.7 Maintain and update records of learners, staff, facilities, including financing and performance in education databases such as Education Management & Information System, tertiary education statistics system, etc., periodically, and make them available to parent agencies.

20. Implementation, Monitoring & Evaluation

The effectiveness of policy lies in its successful implementation, monitoring and appropriate changes and improvements as they are identified. To this end, clear processes, governance arrangements and timelines for implementation, monitoring and evaluation are required.

Policy statements

20.1 The Ministry of Education in collaboration with key stakeholders shall develop an implementation plan to achieve the policy goals and objectives.

20.2 The Ministry of Education and respective agencies shall carry out a periodic monitoring of the implementation plan.

20.3 Evaluation of the policy shall be conducted by an external agency after five years and at regular intervals thereafter.

21. Amendments and way forward

20.1 The Ministry of Education, as the lead agency, in collaboration with other relevant agencies shall review and amend this policy periodically.

20.2 An appropriate legal framework shall be developed to support and sustain the provision of accessible, inclusive, equitable quality educational services.

22. Glossary

- Academic calendar:** The schedule of events occurring in the academic year; that includes term times, assessment and examination dates.
- Academic year:** The customary annual period of instruction at an educational institute. In Bhutan this is the period from February till December each calendar year.
- Access Scheme:** Additional merit for a student to overcome long-term educational disadvantage experienced due to circumstances outside their control.
- Accreditation:** The process of self-study and external review for quality assurance, accountability and for quality improvement of education institutions. It is an assurance that a program or institution meets established quality standards.
- Assessment:** Evaluation of a student's progress in learning and their achievements or performance through a scientific method of collecting learning evidences, analysing and interpreting to strategize interventions
- At risk:** Exposed to the possibility of danger or harm.
- Behaviour management:** Approaches and strategies that facilitate fostering positive behaviour, and build a positive social and physical environment for learners. Behaviour management can adopt a whole school approach, or other forms.
- Bullying:** Unwanted, aggressive behaviour by an individual or group that intentionally or effectively physically, psychologically, emotionally and/or sexually intimidates another. Bullying involves a real or perceived power imbalance including buying protection. The behaviour is repeated, or has the potential to be repeated, over time.
- Child:** A person under the age of eighteen years.
- Child abuse:** Physical, psychological, emotional and/or sexual maltreatment of a child, including neglect by an adult. Child abuse involves an imbalance of power, and can be repeated behaviour, or behaviour that has the potential to be repeated.
- Child protection:** Refers to the systemic protection of children from violence, exploitation, abuse and neglect. Article 19 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child provides for the protection of children in and out of the home.
- College:** Refers to an institution responsible for the delivery of tertiary education. Any college shall be either a constituent college of a university, affiliated to a university, or an autonomous branch of a foreign university, and in all cases, governed by the related university's rules and regulations.
- Community Learning Centre:** A local educational institution outside the formal education system, usually set up and manage local people to provide various learning opportunities in the fields of livelihood skills program, life skills, and literacy.
- Competency-based learning:** Refers to systems of instruction, assessment, grading, and academic reporting that are based on learners demonstrating that they have learned the knowledge and skills they are expected to learn as they progress through their education.
- Continuing education:** An instructional program that facilitates adult learners to update their knowledge and skills in a particular area.
- Curriculum:** A planned integrated course of academic studies for schools and monastic Lobdras, Goenzin Dratshangs and Shedras
- Disabilities:** Social position resulting from the interaction between persons with impairments and attitudinal and environmental barriers that hinder their full and effective participation in

society on an equal basis with others.

Dratshang Lhentshog: The Council for Religious Affairs.

Early Childhood Care and Development: Refers to the care of young children and their gross and fine motor skills, language, cognitive, social, emotional, self-care, spiritual and moral development during early childhood.

Early childhood education: Refers to activities and experiences designed to aid the gross and fine motor skills, language, cognitive, social, emotional, self-care, spiritual and moral development of young children. It should be noted that while educational experiences may be planned, they are not necessarily formal. For example, play based experiences is common in early childhood education.

Education personnel: All staff who work in educational institutes to support learner's formal and informal education, health and wellbeing, and intellectual, social and emotional development, such as Teachers, Principals, Lams, Lopens, Professors, Lecturers, Instructors, School Guidance and Counsellors, Dzongkhag/Thromde Education Officers, Librarians, Lab assistants, Warden, Matron, Caregivers, ECCD facilitators, etc.

Education: Any form of teaching and learning, including through an educational institute, both formal and non-formal.

Educational institutes: Places of learning that offer structured educational courses and/or programs and attended by learners. It refers to all places of learning from early childhood to adult.

Educational personnel: Refers to all personnel working in the educational institute campus such as teachers, warden and matrons, support staff, caregivers, counsellors, sports personnel, etc.

Educational professionals: Inclusive of the following education personnel: Principals, Vice Principals, teachers District Education Officers, Thromde Education Officers, Curriculum Officers, Education Monitoring Officers, Counsellors in schools and the Ministry of Education

Examination: A formal test of a person's knowledge or competency in a subject or area of learning.

Family: A group of people related by birth or who reside together and have caring responsibilities for another in the residence and relate to each other as family. Care givers and guardians are included within a family group.

Fee: An amount of money charged for educational tuition or related educational activity

Formal education: Certified education services provided by educational institutes.

Formative assessment: An ongoing process of gathering and interpreting evidence of student learning through formal and informal procedures, conducted by teachers during the teaching and learning process in order to monitor learning progress in student learning. Formative assessment is often used to guide teachers to modify teaching strategies, or learning activities to enhance learners' learning and achievement. It may also be used to prepare learners for summative assessment.

Geden Tsugla Dutshog: Monastic Education Council of Bhutan.

Harm: Physical, Mental or emotional injury, especially that which is deliberately inflicted

Harassment: Behaviour which is intended to trouble or annoys or upset someone often through threats/demands. It is often repeated, or has the potential to be repeated, and involves unequal power relations.

Inclusive education: The process of valuing, accepting and supporting diversity in schools and ensuring that every child has an equal opportunity to learn.

Learners: Children in ECCDs, students in schools and tertiary education institutes, monks and nuns in monasteries and nunneries, learners in NFE and CLCS, etc. who is learning about a particular subject through structured courses provided by education institutions

Learner friendly: Educational institutes and learning environment that are conducive to learning, aesthetically appealing and welcoming, which ensure safe and supportive school enrolment regardless of their background or ability. Learners have equal opportunities to enter the educational institutes and to participate in learning inside and outside the classroom.

Learning experience: Refers to any interaction, course, program, or other experience in which learning takes place, whether it occurs in traditional academic settings (schools, classrooms) or non-traditional settings (outside-of-school locations, outdoor environments), or whether it includes traditional educational interactions (learners learning from teachers and professors) or non-traditional interactions (learners learning through games and interactive software applications)

Learning outcomes: What learners are expected to know and be able to do at the end of a period of learning (for example at the end of a grade, term, grade level, primary education, basic education).

Learning standards: Statements that define of what learners are expected to know and be able to do at the end of each stage. Sometimes, it is referred to as benchmark

Lobdra: Monastic school where learners are taught general subjects with more emphasis on art and skills development such as the conduct of rituals and mask dances.

Merit: Having the quality of being suited to enter a phase of education or training, that is, attaining certain minimum academic performances, possessing certain behavioural attributes, attitudes, aptitudes, talents and potential suited to a particular standard or field of study. Assessment of merit takes into consideration the recognised situational advantages and disadvantages surrounding an individual's performance and effort. It also considers learners' economic circumstances, gender and/or special educational needs.

Ministry: The Ministry of Education.

Monastic education: The Buddhist traditional form of education

National Curriculum Framework: A document that provides a road map to what learners are expected to learn and be able to perform at different key stages. It is an overarching curriculum document that guides the drafting of curriculum frameworks for different subjects.

National Education Assessment: It is the system of assessing the national standard of learners' learning and performance in schools. Generally, a specific key stage is chosen and the test is administered, either nationwide or through random sampling.

National Examination System: The set of protocols adopted and practiced during the conduct of national high stakes examinations at selected grades.

Non-Formal Education: Education that has tailored learning experiences to meet the learning needs of the population in a given community, generally targeting learners who did not go to school or could not continue studies.

Principal: The educator who has executive authority for a school.

Priority: Educational institutes that are given resourcing priority at a given point in time due to particular circumstances affecting the community (e.g. secondary schools in low socioeconomic communities).

Professional Development: Structured, semi-structured and informal forms of education that enhance the knowledge and pedagogical skills of educational personnel with the aim of improving

teaching and learning.

Programme: Provision of several related projects, activities or services designed to support educational goal, to educate, to promote, and build skills for learners.

Quality Assurance: The systemic and systematic monitoring and evaluation of service and program provision to assure the required standards are met, maintained and improved.

Safe and supportive environment: Educational environment that is child-centred, gender-sensitive, inclusive, community-involved, environmentally friendly, protective, intellectually, emotionally and spiritually healthy, and free of any form of violence against children.

Sampa-Semke: Notion, thought, idea, or anything arising or dawning in the mind.

School: A formal educational institution governed by the Ministry of Education.

Services: An agency that performs a public service subject to government regulation. This includes youth, health, child care and protection.

Shedra: Monastic institute where learners are engaged in in-depth learning with an emphasis on literature, language and research.

Special communities: Communities that are accorded priority by the Royal Government of Bhutan, the Ministry of Education or the local government, due to particular unique circumstances of that community (e.g. remoteness, high altitude, populated by an ethnic minority).

Special educational needs: A child or young person who has significant learning difficulty than most children, or young person of the same age, or has a disability, which prevents or hinders from making use of facilities of a kind, provided for others of the same age in mainstream educational institutes.

Standard physical facilities: Standard infrastructure in an educational institute which shall include classrooms, appropriate furniture and teaching and learning equipment, learning support facilities such as libraries and counselling rooms, administrative facilities, water and sanitation facilities, games and sports facilities and equipment, as issued by the Ministry of Education or relevant agencies.

Standardized holistic school level assessment: A set of tools developed to measure holistic development and progress of a student in the school

Summative assessment: Assessment that measures student's achievement at the end of a period of learning. It is used to communicate information on student achievement to learners, teachers, parents and guardians, and others.

Teaching and learning materials: Curriculum resources which include teachers guide, textbooks, manuals, notebooks, stationery, and other supporting materials that aids teaching and learning.

Higher Education Institutes (HEIs): Educational institutes offering Formal and structured education courses providing a high level of learning activities in specialised fields of education. It includes advanced vocational or professional education affiliated to a university.

Higher Education: Formal and structured education courses providing a high level of learning activities in specialised fields of education. It includes advanced vocational or professional education (ISCED levels 5 to 8).

Tha Damtse Ley-Judrey: Sublime values of solemn devotion and trust based on interconnectedness, relationship and bonding, and cause and effect.

University: Institute of post-secondary learning offering degree level courses or higher.

Violence: The intentional use of physical or emotional force or power, threatened or actual, against oneself, another person, or against a group or community, which either results in or has a high likelihood of resulting in injury, death, psychological harm, mal-development, or deprivation.

Vocational skills: Skills needed for an occupation, trade, or a profession acquired either through orientation or practical or first-hand skills to prepare learners to work in various jobs such as in trade, craft, or in technical areas.

Youth centre: A place where information or services relating to health, career, and employment are provided targeting youths.

Youth: People in the age group of 13 to 24 years.

Zacha-Drosum: Etiquette of how one eats, one behaves, and how one walks/moves based on national values.

Zhung Dratshang: Central monastic body of Bhutan.

འབྲུག་ཙན་དན་བཞོན་པའི་རྒྱལ་ཁབ་ནང་།
In the Kingdom of Bhutan adorned with cypress trees
དབལ་ལུགས་གཉིས་བསྟན་མིང་སྐྱོང་བའི་མགོན་།
*The Protector who reigns over the realm of spiritual
and secular traditions,*
འབྲུག་རྒྱལ་པོ་མངའ་བདག་རིན་པོ་ཆེ།
He is the King of Bhutan, the precious sovereign.
སྐུ་འཕྱུར་མེད་བརྟན་ཅིང་ཆབ་སྲིད་འཕེལ།
May His being remain unchanging, and the Kingdom prosper,
ཚེས་སངས་རྒྱས་བསྟན་པ་དར་ཞིང་རྒྱས།
May the teachings of the Enlightened One flourish,
འབངས་བདེ་སྲིད་ཉི་མ་ཤར་བར་ཤོག།
*May the sun of peace and happiness
shine over all people.*

For comments/feedback/clarifications, please contact:

*Dochu
Policy and Planning Division
Ministry of Education
dochu@moe.gov.bt
Date: 28th July 2022*

Inclusive and Special Educational Needs (Alternative Policy Statement to if SEN needs to be under separate section under this policy)

People with disabilities constitutes about 2.1 percent of the total population (PHCB 2017), and childhood disability is 21.3% (Two-Stage Child Disability Study 2011), and they also constitute the major proportion of children out of school or who have never attended any form of school education. In order to cater to children with disabilities, it is important to value, accept, and support them through inclusive education approaches. This requires adaptation, accommodation, and modification of policies, plans and programmes, facilities, and support services. Such interventions not only help them to develop their skills and promote lifelong learning to lead an independent and meaningful life, it will also contribute to achieving the national and international goals.

The following policy statements shall be read in conjunction with the policy statements indicated under different sections under this policy.

Policy Statement

1. ECCD centres shall be responsive to the needs of children in their care, and be inclusive of gender, disability, and socio-economic status.
2. All school going age children with disabilities shall have equitable access and opportunity to free, quality, and inclusive basic education.
3. All education institutes shall be responsive to and support education of children/learners with disabilities by providing equitable access to and participation in school, ability-based support services, facilities, and assistive technologies/devices, including trained personnel.
4. Access to higher secondary education including TVET, through various pathways and equivalencies on the basis of minimum competencies and merit, shall be made available.
5. There shall be designated schools with Special Educational Needs program appropriately supported and equipped with safe and accessible physical facilities, including classrooms, Science and ICT laboratories, libraries, counselling rooms, functioning water-and-sanitation and hygiene, and sporting facilities.
6. Identified Monastic *Lobdras*, *Goenzin Dratshangs* and *Shedras* shall put in place appropriate measures for learners with special educational needs across all grades to ensure equitable access to and participation in monastic education.
7. *Zhung Dratshang*, the Ministry of Education, and other relevant government agencies shall collaborate to facilitate the enhancement of quality and inclusive education. Collaboration shall include areas such as sharing of resources and provision of education support services, including building capacities of teachers, development of teaching and learning materials, ICT education, and physical education, life-skills education, besides others.
8. The curriculum design, development, and pedagogy shall be inclusive and responsive to learners with disabilities, and shall strengthen blended learning.
9. Bhutanese Sign Language shall be continuously developed, standardized, strengthened, and appropriately supported in educating learners who are deaf and hard of hearing.

- 10 Teachers and other related professionals, either national or international, highly specialized in fields where their service is required, including teachers teaching in SEN programme, shall be recruited to meet the critical human resource needs.
11. Examinations and Assessment systems shall have appropriate arrangements, including facilities, support services, assistive technologies/devices for learners with disabilities to ensure all learners are able to demonstrate their learning outcomes.
12. Access to TEIs, including TVET, and scholarship schemes within and outside Bhutan shall be made for learners with disabilities.
13. Non-formal education and its programmes shall be flexible to and support learners with disabilities.
14. All education institutions shall provide safe and secure, supportive, inclusive, and conducive environment that is safe, free from abuse, harassment and violence including bullying.
15. Children with disabilities shall be supported with interventions such as transportation, accommodation, and school feeding programmes to help complete basic education.
16. The government shall ensure adequate fund allocation to support provision of equitable access to quality and inclusive education.

For comments/feedback/clarifications, please contact:

*Dochu
Policy and Planning Division
Ministry of Education
dochu@moe.gov.bt
Date: 28th July 2022*