Ministry of Education, National Heritage, Culture & Arts and Youth and Sports

POLICY IN

EFFECTIVE IMPLEMENTATION OF INCLUSIVE EDUCATION IN FIJI

CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TOPIC</th>
<th>PAGE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.0 POLICY OBJECTIVE</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.0 POLICY</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.0 BACKGROUND</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.0 DEFINITIONS</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.0 RELEVANT LEGISLATIONS AND AUTHORITIES</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.0 PROCEDURES</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.0 GUIDELINES</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.0 EFFECTIVE DATE</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.0 REVIEW DATE</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.0 KEY SEARCH WORDS</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.0 APPROVED BY THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
1.0 POLICY OBJECTIVE

The purpose of this policy is to provide a framework that will ensure and strengthen access to quality education for all students with special needs in all Special Education Schools, Regular Early Childhood, Primary, Secondary and Vocational Schools throughout Fiji. Quality education shall reflect the spirit of equity, inclusion, access and achievement of educational outcomes that would guide and direct the journey of one’s lifelong learning and the opportunity to enjoy one’s quality of life. Moreover all children should be given the opportunity to learn together wherever possible regardless of difficulties, disabilities or differences.

2.0 POLICY

With this policy, the Ministry of Education (MoE) shall;

2.1 strengthen and support the Special Education Unit [SEU] for improved coordination and effective service delivery
2.2 conduct meaningful assessments in all schools to identify levels of learning disabilities for intervention and management of remedial action to maximize learning outcome
2.3 conduct meaningful assessments in all schools to identify challenges in inclusion of students with special needs and to provide necessary support with staffing and infrastructure
2.4 implement and strengthen Early Intervention Programs in Special Education Schools and Early Childhood Centers to strengthen and support the early years of foundational learning as basis for success and further learning
2.5 assist with the reimplementation and upgrading of pre-service and in-service teacher education in teacher training institutions to provide the necessary human resource support of inclusion in the regular schools as well as in the special education schools
2.6 strengthen and support Vocational Training Programmes in special schools and vocational training centers in order to provide employment opportunities and to support lifelong learning
2.7 review the existing curriculum to show inclusivity, flexibility and adaptability as reflected in the 2007 National Curriculum Framework
2.8 provide establishments required for essential and appropriate staffing
2.9 improve access to education for all students with special needs at early childhood, primary, secondary and vocational education levels.

2.10 provide educational outreach programmes in the communities as a means of sharing information and awareness on the students’ special needs and interventions

2.11 establish Legislation and Regulations that are responsive to the needs of children with Special Needs.

3.0 BACKGROUND

3.1 Inclusive education is based on the following key principles:

3.1.1 All children belong – this implies that all children no matter how severe their disabilities are, or how intensive their needs are can be accommodated in the regular class in their neighborhood schools.

3.1.2 All children can learn – learning that takes place may not be the same for all students but it is still learning that can be nurtured and developed by teachers and other school staff in school settings.

3.1.3 All children have the right to live a normal lifestyle – students with special needs need to be able to participate in the schools’ day to day activities, only then will their potential and achievement get recognized.

3.1.4 The process of education is a lifelong journey beginning from prenatal development right to one’s twilight years, involving children, families, and teachers, school communities, local communities, non government organizations and the Government.

3.2 History

This policy was first implemented after being formally endorsed by the Minister for Education on the 24th of August 2010.

Inclusive education has been in existence in Fiji since the 1960’s. Most of the Catholic Church schools in Fiji enrolled students with disabilities. However students with obvious
or severe disabilities were often left out. Schools such as St Joseph’s Secondary School and Marist Brothers High School were two of the first schools to include students with disabilities. In 1967 the first special school was established by the Fiji Crippled Children’s Society to provide education for students with severe physical and hearing impairments. This was led by Mr Frank Hilton, a volunteer teacher from Australia and thus the school was named Hilton Special School. Later more special schools were established around the country and to date there are 15 special schools with two vocational training centers. These special schools are located only in the main town areas. Access to education for children who live in the outer islands and rural areas are therefore very limited. Inclusive education is therefore vital as it allows all children to be educated within their neighborhood schools, the schools they would be attending if they did not have a disability.

4.0 DEFINITIONS

4.1 A child with a disability/special need

Any child who is diagnosed and medically proven to have, hearing impairment, speech impairment, visual impairment, serious emotional disturbance, physical impairment specific learning disabilities and other health impairments that adversely affects the child’s educational performance to the degree that he/she cannot be educated in the regular school environment without additional support and special services.

4.2 Early Intervention

Refers to services given to very young children with special needs generally from birth up to six years. The earlier the children’s needs are identified and appropriate intervention measures taken, the better opportunity there is for the child to succeed.

5.0 RELEVANT LEGISLATIONS AND AUTHORITIES

5.2 UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities: Article 24
5.3 Biwako Millennium Framework for action towards an inclusive, barrier free and rights based society for persons with disabilities in Asia Pacific 2003 -2012
5.4 Social Justice Act 2001
5.5 Fiji National Council for Persons with Disabilities (FNCDP) Act 1994  
5.6 Suva Declaration - 2005  
5.7 National Policy on Persons living with Disabilities 2008 -2018  
5.8 Fiji Human Rights Commission Act (1999)  
5.9 Ministry of Education Corporate Plan - 2011  
5.10 The Fiji Education Commission Report – 2000

6.0 PROCEDURES

6.1 Strengthening the Special Education Unit within the MoE

6.1.1 The SEU is strengthened within the MoE to improve the coordination of service delivery.  
6.1.2 Strengthening of working relations with existing education officers in all education districts.  
6.1.3 Establishment of Special/Inclusive Education Officer to assist with the review and develop curriculum to meet special needs of students  
6.1.4 Annual Budget allocation is provided for its operation  
6.1.5 Continued partnership across line Ministries and Non-Government Organizations.

6.2 Meaningful Assessment is carried out

6.2.1 Validated educational and medical assessment tools are used by qualified teachers and medical professionals to carry out meaningful assessment for our children with special needs / disabilities.  
6.2.2 Appropriate placement, support staff, support equipment and appropriate educational resources are provided to assist learning and teaching.  
6.2.3 In-service and Pre-service Teacher Education at all teacher training institutions to include assessment and intervention in the education of students with all degrees of disabilities.  
6.2.4 Educational Intervention and remedial measures are taken to maximize educational outcomes.  
6.2.5 Structured teaching instructions are used for effective learning.
6.3 **Strengthening of Early Intervention Programmes in all Special Education Schools in Fiji**

6.3.1 Strengthen early identification and referral systems.
6.3.2 Develop curriculum for Early Intervention
6.3.3 Develop Community based programmes throughout Fiji working with existing social support frameworks.
6.3.4 Strengthen and affirm early intervention programmes in all special education schools and regular early childhood centers
6.3.5 Provision of adequate staffing and training needs locally and overseas.

6.4 **Strengthening Teacher Education in the area of Special Education**

6.4.1 All teachers teaching in both regular and special education schools will receive quality special education/inclusive education training that is responsive to the needs of all students in all schools (pre-service and in-service)
6.4.2 Assessment of curriculum at all teacher training institutions
   a. Diversification of TVET Curriculum for Disabled students
   b. Identify different types/level of disabilities and design appropriate TVET curriculum for each group/level of disabilities
   c. Review existing TVET curriculum in existing special need centers.
   d. Funding assistance for implementation of new curriculum.
   e. Provision of trained TVET teachers.

6.5 **Strengthening of Vocational Training Centers for transition for employment and life skills**

6.5.1 Review current vocational training programs in special schools and vocational centers.
6.5.2 Provision of financial assistance by Ministry of Education facilities useful and meaningful implementation capabilities.
6.5.3 Upgrading of Vocational Training Centers to meet the needs of students with disabilities.
6.6 **Design of the School Curriculum reflects a society that honors and celebrates diversity**

6.6.1 Flexible and adaptable curriculum to meet needs of all students.
6.6.2 Meaningful assessment provides basis for effective instructional planning and teaching practices.
6.6.3 Effective teaching strategies and techniques are used to optimum teaching and learning.
6.6.4 User-friendly environment is conducive for teaching and learning.

6.7 **Strengthening of Special Education Schools and Establishing Provision required for essential and appropriate staffing**

6.7.1 Ensure that special schools are familiar with its responsibilities in the implementation of the Education policy.
6.7.2 Assist with the establishment of special education units attached to regular primary schools in order to accommodate students whose best interest is met at the special education setting.
6.7.3 A staffing formula for staffing of special Education schools is put in place.
6.7.4 Support teaching staff is available to preschool, primary, secondary schools and tertiary levels where students with disabilities are involved
6.7.5 Make suitable recommendations and plans for staff development programmes both locally and overseas.
6.7.6 Strengthening partnership between the regular schools and special education schools.
6.7.7 To improve the access to education at preschool, primary, secondary and tertiary education of students with disabilities.

6.8 **Infrastructural Requirement**

Re-designed building structures within revised building codes to provide easy wheelchair access
Teaching Resources
Adaptations of teaching and learning materials are made to meet needs of all students.
6.8.1 Effective teaching and learning strategies and techniques maximizes learning outcomes.

Curriculum Specification
6.8.2 Regular curriculum requirements are user-friendly and conducive for learning and teaching
6.8.3 Appointment of a ‘special Needs’ teacher in each primary and secondary school.
6.8.4 Meaningful assessment and effective teaching strategies maximizes learning outcomes.

Integration and Inclusion
6.8.5 Strengthen human relations and appreciation and value for diversity.
6.8.6 Nurture humane qualities in building a caring society that reflects compassion and understanding for those with some disabilities
6.8.7 Co-ordinate with tertiary institutions regarding enrolment and placement needs.
6.8.8 Provision of grants to assist tertiary students with disabilities

6.9 Conduct of Awareness Programmes

Promoting Positive Image for Persons with Disabilities
6.9.2 Establish and strengthen Special/Inclusive Education quarterly publication.
6.9.3 Establish and strengthen a quarterly contribution to the media.
6.9.4 Develop and strengthen the inclusion of special education in the education curriculum.
6.9.5 Develop and strengthen a bi-annual school based poster design, essay writing and oratory competition on inclusive education themes.
6.9.6 Strengthen collaboration with educational team to promote special/inclusive education across community settings in Fiji.
6.9.7 Establishing Legislation and Regulations that are Responsive to the Needs of children with Special Needs

6.10 **Review of current government policies on Special Education**

6.10.1 Overseas and local consultants to review current government policies on special/inclusive education.

6.10.2 Review reports are completed, received and accepted.
   6.10.2.1 Action Plan of review report prioritizing recommendations is prepared and accepted for implementation
   6.10.2.2 Budgetary implications to be worked out in phases.

6.11 **Establishing legislation and regulations that are responsive to children with special needs**

6.11.1 Legislation and Regulation Board (LRB) established

6.11.2 LRB formulates legislation and regulations on the following:
   a. Infrastructure
   b. Resources
   c. Equipment
   d. Educational Institutions
   e. Teacher Qualification and Training
   f. Placement of children
   g. Assessment Procedures
   h. OHS Regulations
   i. Access (User friendly environment)

6.12 **STUDENT – TEACHER RATIO**

Students with disabilities who attend special education schools and regular schools are categorized under the following categories
6.12.1 Age

- 6.12.1.1 Birth to 8 years: Early Intervention
- 6.12.1.2 6 years – 10 years: Junior Class
- 6.12.1.3 10 years – 14 years: Intermediate Class
- 6.12.1.4 15 – 18 years: Senior Class
- 6.12.1.5 19 years – 30 years: Vocational Studies

6.12.2 Disability types

- a) Vision Impairment – Low Vision/ Totally Blind/ Deaf-Blind/ Partially Blind
- b) Hearing Impairment – Partial Hearing/ Deaf/ Deaf & mute
- c) Speech impairment – inability to speak or communicate effectively
- d) Physical impairment— the physical capacity to move, coordinate actions or perform physical activities is significantly limited.
- e) Intellectual impairment— when a person has certain limitations in mental functioning. These limitations will cause a child to learn and develop more slowly than a typical child
- f) Multiple disabilities – Combination of two and more of the above disabilities.

6.12.3 Degrees of disabilities

1) Mild loss of hearing/vision/physical/intellectual.
2) Moderate loss of hearing/vision/physical/intellectual
3) Severe/Profound loss of hearing/vision/physical/intellectual

One child with mild disability is equivalent to two regular children (1:2)
One child with moderate disability is equivalent to four regular children (1:4)
One child with severe/profound disability is equivalent to six regular children (1:6)
7.0 GUIDELINES
7.1 The MOE will continue to seek assistance from overseas embassies and agencies for specialists in the areas listed while it provides scholarships to train manpower needs for the nation.
   
a. Braille Writers
b. Audiologists
c. Speech Therapists
d. Occupational Therapists
e. Physio Therapists
f. Educational Psychologists
g. Counselors
h. Behaviour analysts

7.2 Specialists will be stationed at their respective schools; however, they will be mobile to provide essential services to all special schools including providing assistance and advice through the Education Districts for children with special needs in the regular schools.

8.0 EFFECTIVE DATE .................................................................16/12/11

9.0 REVIEW DATE .................................................................16/12/12

10.0 KEY SEARCH WORDS
    Special Education, Inclusive Education

11.0 APPROVED BY THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION, NATIONAL HERITAGE, CULTURE & ARTS AND YOUTH & SPORTS, HONOURABLE FILIPE BOLE

.................................................. ......................................
SIGNATURE DATE