



**POLICY ON  
SCHOOL ZONING IN FIJI**



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## 1.0 POLICY OBJECTIVE

1.1 The purpose of this policy is to provide a framework to guide the Ministry of Education, Heritage & Arts (hereinafter abbreviated to as MoEHA) to address access, quality and equity in all schools in Fiji. The purpose of school home zoning is:-

- (a) to avoid overcrowding, or the likelihood of overcrowding, at the school; and
- (b) to ensure that the selection of students for enrolment at the school is carried out in a fair and transparent manner; and
- (c) to enable the MOEHA to make the best use of existing network of schools and educational resources;
- (d) to improve the performance by all schools and ensure equal distribution of high, average and low achieving students in all schools;
- (e) to ease traffic congestion and reduce travelling costs incurred unnecessarily by parents;
- (f) to enable proper and fair administration of provision of transport assistance to students;
- (f) to remove social stratifications such as parents occupation, socio economic status, ethnicity and religious affiliations and encourage parents within the same zone to work together to improve the school.

## 2.0 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 In 2010, a Cabinet approval was given to the Ministry of Education for school zoning with the underlying principle that zoning will ensure that all schools are adequately inhabited and there will be no overcrowding in schools as free choices in school enrolments will be restricted. Zoning will lead to the improvement of quality performance by all schools, as there will be an equal distribution of high, average and low achievers in all schools. Zoning will remove social stratifications such as parents' occupation, socio-economic status, ethnicity and religious affiliations. Thus, it will prompt parents and communities within a zone to work together in promoting accessible, safe and affordable education for their children. Parents and communities can better organize safety measures for their children in their school home zone and community.
- 2.2 This approval for school zoning to be done was seen as complementary to balancing limited resources to the rights of parents to educate their children as per their wishes.

## 3.0 DEFINITIONS

- 3.1 **Catchment Areas** - help schools to identify their communities and give parents an indication of their zone school.
- 3.2 **Eligible student** – student who qualifies for bus fare assistance scheme.

- 3.3 **Enrolment scheme** – scheme or procedures devised by individual schools as approved by MoEHA to enroll students within the school home zone.
- 3.4 **Feeder School** - primary school within a designated school home zone, which works in conjunction with a secondary within that same school home zone in order facilitate the placing of students upon reaching secondary school age.
- 3.5 **Head of School** - refers to the Head Teacher and/or the Principal, of a school.
- 3.6 **Reasonably convenient school** – school that is opted by students who do not have a school within their home zone which may be convenient to the student considering the cost and distance of travel and proximity to the parent’s workplace.
- 3.7 **“Out of zone” students** – students who (aspire to enroll or) are enrolled in schools not within their home zone or the school’s home zone.
- 3.8 **School home zone** –zone or area between residences of students or children located within 2 kilometers radius from the school
- 3.9 **Urban Schools** – schools located in the urban, sub-urban and peri urban areas less than 15 km from the nearest urban centre.

#### 4.0 RELEVANT LEGISLATIONS AND AUTHORITIES

4.1 Constitution of Fiji -2013

4.2 Education Act 1978

- 4.3 MoEHA Strategic Development Plan (2015-2018)
- 4.4 Suva Education Declaration – 2005
- 4.5 Education for All – (EFA 2000)
- 4.6 Sustainable Development Goals
- 4.7 Cabinet Memorandum on Zoning – CP (2010), 21<sup>st</sup> April, 2010

## 5.0 POLICY

- 5.1 The concept of home school zone shall involve the defining of catchment areas for schools at different levels. Such catchment areas, which are determined and approved by the MoEHA shall be referred to as the school home zone.
- 5.2 All schools shall formulate an enrolment scheme, aligned to the school home zone scheme as formulated by MOEHA, which shall outline a home zone with clearly defined boundaries, that must be approved by the Permanent Secretary for Education.
- 5.3 Students who live within a school's home zone shall have absolute right to be enrolled in that school regardless of religion, ethnicity, race, background or status.
- 5.4 MoEHA shall provide the full transport assistance to new and continuing eligible students attending schools within the school home zone. The transport assistance outside the zone shall be borne by the student and/or the student's family.
- 5.5 All schools shall not exceed student/teacher ratio of 30 : 1 per stream unless in cases of emergency or aftermath from a natural disaster upon the approval from the Permanent Secretary for Education Heritage & Arts (herein after abbreviated to as PSEHA).

5.6 The application of this Policy shall only be implemented by urban schools and the content does not apply to rural schools or international students.

## **6.0 PROCEDURES**

### **6.1 Enrolment Scheme**

6.1.1 It shall be the responsibility of the PSEHA, in concurrence with the Honourable Minister for Education (hereinafter referred to as HME), to approve and determine the school home zones with clear boundaries for schools under the enrolment scheme.

6.1.2 The PSEHA shall define the school home zone geographically for each urban Primary and Secondary School to clearly demarcate school boundaries. Such boundaries shall be furnished to each respective school so that it can be included in their enrolment scheme.

6.1.3 Each school shall then develop its enrolment scheme aligned to the school home zone scheme of MOEHA, to be approved by the PSEHA in concurrence with the HME.

6.1.4 A school's enrolment scheme must be consistent with the policies as set out by the Ministry and must—

- (a) define a home zone for the school; and
- (b) set out the enrolment procedures or criteria for selecting applicants who live outside the home zone; and

- (c) identify any special programmes offered by the school and the criteria on which students will be accepted onto any special programme
- (d) maintain the teacher student ratio to a maximum of 30:1.

6.1.5 Students not having schools within the home zone may apply to be enrolled to their nearest school or apply to be enrolled at a reasonably convenient school as may be determined by the PSEHA.

6.1.6 Each school shall develop an enrolment scheme aligned to this Zoning Policy and approved by the PSEHA. The enrolment scheme shall explicitly specify the priorities for “out of zone” students.

6.1.7 All schools shall clearly display its enrolment scheme in the main school notice board.

6.1.8 A copy of the school enrolment scheme shall also be sent to all current parents/guardians of the school before the next date of enrolment.

## **6.2 Enrolment Dates**

6.2.1 The dates issued below shall be strictly observed by the parents, school heads and school management.

6.2.2 Schools shall start enrolling students who live within their school's home on Monday, week 10 of Term 3 and complete on last Friday of Term Three, each academic year.

6.2.3 Schools shall begin to enrol “out of zone” students on the second Monday of December each year and the enrolment for “out of zone”

students must be strictly carried out under the “first come, first serve basis” and as per criteria outlined under Section 6.3.

### 6.3 Exceptions to School Home Zone

6.3.1 A student who lives in the school home zone of a school under an enrolment scheme has the right to be enrolled at that school.

6.3.2 A student who lives outside the school's home zone can be enrolled at the school, in the following order of priority only if—

- (a) he or she is offered a place at the school in accordance with the procedure or criteria concerning recruitment of students outside the zone as set out in the urban enrolment scheme;
- (b) he or she is accepted for enrolment in a special programme run by the school;
- (c) the PSEHA has agreed or directed with the concurrence of the Minister that the student be enrolled at the school; or
- (d) preference for certain subject combinations that are not offered by the school in the student's home zone;
- (e) preference for vernacular subjects such as hindi, *Na Vosa Vaka Viti*, *Urdu*, *Tamil*, *Telugu*, Chinese languages such as *Mandarin*, *French* or *Cantonese* which may not be offered by a school within the student's home zone;
- (f) one or both of the child's parents is a teacher at the same school;
- (g) one or both of the child's parents work within the school zone;



- (h) one or all of the child's biological sister(s) or brother (s) are enrolled or teaching in the same school;
- (h) one or both of the child's parents are school board members or school board employees;
- (i) under exceptional circumstances if a student requires transfer from a school (**school A**), the head of the school at which the student wishes to enrol agrees, by arrangement with the Head of School A, to enrol the student; and the PSEHA endorses the proposal.

## **6.4 Children in Feeder Schools**

6.4.1 Children in Primary schools which are feeder to specific secondary schools shall be given preference for enrolment in those secondary schools.

## **6.5 Enrolment may be nullified if based on false information or temporary residence**

6.5.1 The Head of School that has an enrolment scheme may nullify the enrolment of a student if he or she believes upon reasonable evidence that the student's enrolment or pre-enrolment form falsely claimed, for the purpose of securing enrolment, that—

- (a) the student was living in the school's home zone when the student enrolled at the school; or
- (b) the student has used a temporary residence for the purpose of gaining enrolment at the school.

6.5.2 The Head of School who intends to nullify the enrolment of a student must immediately—

- (a) advise the student's parents, by giving a notice in writing, of the date the termination of enrolment will be effected; and
- (b) advise the PSEHA of the name of the student and the date of termination of the enrolment.

6.5.3 Any termination of enrolment must be effected at the end of the school term for consideration of the right to education.

6.5.4 In the event that if there is a student found out of school home zone and is not in the exceptions as provided under Section 6.3 of this Policy, the school shall forfeit the Tuition Fee Free Education Grant for that student and the school head shall be liable for disciplinary proceedings.

## **6.6 Permanent Secretary may direct to enrol**

6.6.1 The Permanent Secretary, in concurrence with the Minister, may direct any Head of School to enrol a student whose enrolment has been terminated.

6.6.2 The PSEHA may direct the Head of School to enrol any student whose application for enrolment has declined if the PSEHA is satisfied that—

6.6.2.1 The Head of School has declined the application on the ground that the applicant is not living in the school's home zone, but in fact the applicant is living in the school's home zone.

## **6.7 Monitoring and Compliance**

6.7.1 It is an offence for Head of Schools to enrol students who are not within the school home zone that do not follow the priority criteria as provided in this Policy based on:

- a. Grade, marks or academic results
- b. Social status or background

6.7.2 A Head of School found guilty of committing such an offence as provided in this section may face disciplinary action.

6.7.3 Adherence to the contents of this policy shall be monitored by the Deputy Secretary of Education - Primary/Secondary (DSPS), MoEHA.

## **6.8 Residences isolated from any School Home Zones**

6.8.1 Students who do not have a school within the 2km home zone may apply for a place in a convenient school outside their home zone.

6.8.2 If a child cannot find a convenient school outside their home zone, the MoEHA shall place the child in a school close to their place of residence or a school that MoEHA considers to be convenient for the student given his/ her circumstances.

## **6.9 Bus Fares & School Zoning**

6.9.1 MoEHA shall provide bus fares to cover eligible students within the home zones.

6.9.2 Eligible students who have been assisted for more than one stage transport assistance shall continue to receive assistance unless there is a change in residence or school home zone.

6.9.3 All parents/guardians of students/children who opt to enroll their children “outside their school home zone” as per section 6.3 may not receive any transport assistance from MoEHA.

**6.10 Overlapping School Zones**

6.10.1 If a residence is located where there is an overlapping of school zones, parents can send their child to a school of their choice within their home zone.

6.10.2 If all schools within the home zone are fully enrolled, parents may send their children to a school outside their home zone based on the criteria outlined under 6.3 in this Policy.


7.0 EFFECTIVE DATE..... 4/9/17 .....

8.0 REVIEW DATE..... 4/9/20 .....

**9.0 KEY SEARCH WORDS**

Enrolment dates, Enrolment scheme, Feeder schools, Overlapping school zones, zoning, school home zone, out of zone

10.0 APPROVED BY THE PRIME MINISTER AND MINISTER FOR EDUCATION, HERITAGE & ARTS, HONOURABLE JOSIA VOREQE BAINIMARAMA.

  
SIGNATURE

4/9/17.  
DATE