



**POLICY ON  
EFFECTIVE IMPLEMENTATION OF SPECIAL AND INCLUSIVE  
EDUCATION IN  
FIJI**

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## **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 hools (Early Childhood Education, Primary, Secondary, Vocational and Tertiary institutions) throughout Fiji. Quality education shall reflect the spirit of equity, inclusion, access, progress and achievement of educational outcomes that will 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. This policy will reflect on the current conventions and rights of people with disabilities in the view of the rights-based approach of the development of disability.

## **2.0 POLICY**

With this policy, the Ministry of Education, National Heritage, Culture & Arts (herein after abbreviated to MoENHCA) shall;

- 2.1 Strengthen and support the Special and Inclusive Education Section (herein after abbreviated to as SEIS) 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, teaching and learning resources and infrastructure
- 2.4 Implement and strengthen Early Intervention Programs in Special Education Schools and Early Childhood Centres to strengthen and support the early years of foundational learning as basis for success and further learning
- 2.5 Assist with the re implementation 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 centres in order to provide employment opportunities and to support lifelong learning.

- 2.7 Review the existing curriculum to show inclusivity, flexibility and adaptability to reasonably accommodate the needs of children with special needs.
- 2.8 Provide establishments required for essential and appropriate staffing, such as Inclusive Education Officer- Primary, Inclusive Education Officer Secondary, and Inclusive Education Officer- ECE.
- 2.9 Improve access to quality education for all students with special needs at early childhood, primary, secondary, tertiary 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.
- 2.12. Monitor and evaluate the effective implementation of special and inclusive education programmes in schools.

### **3.0 BACKGROUND**

#### **3.1 Introduction**

This policy was first endorsed by the Minister for Education, National Heritage, Culture & Arts (herein after abbreviated to ME) on the 24<sup>th</sup> 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.

3.1.1 Inclusive education is based on the following key principles:

3.1.1.1 All children should experience a sense of belonging– 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 neighbourhood schools.

3.1.1.2 All children can learn –provided they are given a proper learning environment, appropriate equipment, appropriate motivation and parental support. 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.

3.1.1.3 All children have the right to fully participate in all school activities and live a normal lifestyle – only then will their potential and achievement be recognized.

3.1.1.4 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 Rationale**

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 centres. 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 neighbourhood 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 in the next phase of learning.

#### **4.3 Visual Impairment**

Low Vision/ Totally Blind/Deaf- Blind/Partially Blind /children wearing glasses

#### **4.4 Hearing Impairment**

Partial Hearing/Deaf

#### **4.5 Speech impairment**

Difficulty or inability to speak or communicate effectively

#### **4.6 Physical impairment**

The physical capability to move, coordinate actions or perform physical activities is significantly limited.

#### **4.7 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

#### **4.8 Multiple disabilities**

Combination of two and more of the above disabilities.

**4.9 Special Education or Special Needs Education** is the education of students with special needs in a way that addresses the students' individual differences and needs.

#### **4.10 Inclusive Education**

The way in which children with special needs are placed in general education classrooms.

### **5.0 RELEVANT LEGISLATIONS AND AUTHORITIES**

5.1 Constitution of the Republic of Fiji -2013 [Chapter 2 Section 42 –(1)-(3)]

5.2 Biwako Millennium Framework for Action Towards an Inclusive, Barrier -free and Rights -based Society for Persons with Disabilities in Asia Pacific 2003 - 2012

5.3 Fiji Human Rights Commission Act (1999)

5.4 Fiji National Council for Persons with Disabilities (FNCDP) Act 1994

5.5 Ministry of Education Corporate Plan - 2012

5.6 National Policy on Persons living with Disabilities 2008 -2018

5.7 Peoples Charter for Change, Peace and Progress: Pillars 4 and 9 (2008)

- 5.8 Social Justice Act -2011.
- 5.9 The Fiji Education Commission Report – 2000.
- 5.10 UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities: Article 24
- 5.11 UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities: Article 24

## **6.0 PROCEDURES**

### **6.1 Strengthening the Special and Inclusive Education Section (SIES) within the MoENHCA**

- 6.1.1 The SIES is strengthened within the MoENHCA 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.
- 6.2.6 Support counselling programs for parents and caregivers.

**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 Early Childhood Centres
- 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)

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

- 6.5.1 Review current vocational training programs in special schools and secondary vocational centres.
- 6.5.2 Upgrading of Vocational Training Centres to meet the needs of students with special needs.

**6.6 Design of the School Curriculum reflects a society that honours 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 optimise learning and teaching.
- 6.6.4 User-friendly environment so that it is conducive for learning and teaching.

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

- 6.7.1 Ensure that special and inclusive schools are familiar with its responsibilities in the implementation of the Education policy.
- 6.7.2 Assist with the establishment of special or inclusive 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 and inclusive schools is put in place.
- 6.7.4 Support teaching staff is available to preschool, primary, secondary schools and tertiary levels where students with special needs 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 institutions for students with special needs.

## **6.8 Infrastructural Requirement**

Modification of building structures within revised building codes to provide easy wheelchair access/ toilets/taps.

### **6.8.1 Teaching Resources**

- 6.8.1.1 Adaptations of curriculum and learning and teaching materials are made to meet needs of all students.
- 6.8.1.2 Effective learning and teaching strategies and techniques maximizes learning outcomes.

### **6.8.2 Curriculum Specification**

- 6.8.2.1 Regular curriculum requirements are user-friendly and conducive for learning and teaching.
- 6.8.2.2 Appointment of a 'Special Needs Co-ordinator' in each primary and secondary school.
- 6.8.2.3 Meaningful assessment and effective teaching strategies maximizes learning outcomes.

### **6.8.3 Integration and Inclusion**

- 6.8.3.1 Strengthen human relations and appreciation and value for diversity.
- 6.8.3.2 Nurture humane qualities in building a caring society that reflects compassion and understanding for those with some disabilities
- 6.8.3.3 Co-ordinate with tertiary institutions regarding enrolment and placement needs.
- 6.8.3.4 Provision of scholarships and grants to assist tertiary students with disabilities

## **6.9 Conducting Awareness Programmes**

### **6.9.1 Promoting Positive Image for Persons with Disabilities**

- 6.9.1.1 Establish and strengthen Special/Inclusive Education quarterly publication.
- 6.9.1.2 Establish and strengthen a quarterly contribution to the media.
- 6.9.1.3 Develop and strengthen the inclusion of special education in the education curriculum.
- 6.9.1.4 Develop and strengthen a bi-annual school based poster design, essay writing and oratory competition on inclusive education themes.
- 6.9.1.5 Strengthen collaboration with educational team to promote special/inclusive education across community settings in Fiji.
- 6.9.1.6 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 Review reports are completed, received and accepted.
- 6.10.2 Action Plan of review report prioritizing recommendations is prepared and accepted for implementation
- 6.10.3 Budgetary implications to be worked out in phases. Each child to receive disability grant per year.

## **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 special needs who attend special education schools and inclusive schools are categorized under the following categories:

### 6.12.1 Age

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

### 6.12.2 Disability types

- 6.12.2.1 Mild loss of hearing/vision/physical/intellectual.
- 6.12.2.2 Moderate loss of hearing/vision/physical/intellectual
- 6.12.2.3 Severe/Profound loss of hearing/vision/physical/intellectual

### 6.12.3 Degrees of disabilities

- 6.12.3.1 One child with mild disability is equivalent to -two normal children (1:2)
- 6.12.3.2 One child with moderate disability is equivalent to four- normal children (1:4)
- 6.12.3.3 One child with severe/profound disability is equivalent to six normal children (1:6)

**7.0 GUIDELINES**

7.1 The MoENHCA 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/de-braille Readers and Writers
- b. Audiologists
- c. Speech Pathologists
- d. Occupational Therapists
- e. Physiotherapists
- f. Educational Psychologists
- g. Counsellors
- h. Behaviour analysts
- i. Orientation and Mobility Trainers

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 .....18<sup>th</sup> November, 2013**

**9.0 REVIEW DATE.....18<sup>th</sup> November, 2016**

**10.0 KEY SEARCH WORDS**

Special Education, Inclusive Education

**11.0 APPROVED BY THE HONOURABLE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION, NATIONAL HERITAGE, CULTURE & ARTS, AMBASSADOR FILIPE BOLE.**

  
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**SIGNATURE**

  
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**DATE**