



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

POLICY IN **SCHOOL ZONING IN FIJI**

TOPIC		PAGE
1.0	POLICY OBJECTIVE	02
2.0	POLICY	02
3.0	BACKGROUND	03
4.0	DEFINITIONS	04
5.0	RELEVANT LEGISLATIONS AND AUTHORITIES	04
6.0	PROCEDURES	05
7.0	GUIDELINES	07
8.0	EFFECTIVE DATE	07
9.0	REVIEW DATE	07
10.0	KEY SEARCH WORDS	07
11.0	APPROVED BY THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION	07

1.0 POLICY OBJECTIVE

The purpose of this policy is to provide a framework to guide the Ministry of Education, National Heritage, Culture & Arts and Youth & Sports (MoE) to address access, quality and equity in all schools in Fiji. This is aligned to UNESCO's purpose of school zoning to:

- 1.1 enhance student access to All education Divisions and Districts in Fiji
- 1.2 create the necessary conditions for achieving universal primary and secondary education;
- 1.3 promote the equitable distribution of benefits amongst all the different communities, religions and populations in Fiji;
- 1.4 improve all aspects of the quality of education to ensure measurable learning outcomes are achieved, especially in literacy, numeracy and essential life skills;
- 1.5 optimizes the efficient use of existing capital, human and financial resources.

2.0 POLICY

- 2.1 The concept of school zoning shall involve the defining of catchment areas for schools at different levels. Such catchment areas, which are determined and approved by the MoE shall be referred to as the school home zone.
- 2.2 All schools shall formulate an enrolment scheme which shall contain a home zone with clearly defined boundaries.
- 2.3 Students who live within a school's home zone shall have absolute right to be enrolled in that school.
- 2.4 MoE 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's family.
- 2.5 All schools shall have a maximum student/teacher ratio of 40 : 1 per stream.

3.0 BACKGROUND

School enrolment in Fiji, according to law, is dependent on the choice of the parents. The Education Act Cap 263, section 3 notes that *'pupils should be educated in accordance with the wishes of their parents'*. Parents therefore have the right to enroll their children in any school of their choice. Consequently it has resulted in the uneven distribution of students. Some schools have large enrolment figures while some have half-full classrooms. This result in increase workload that placed undue pressure on teachers in bigger schools compared to those serving in schools with low enrollment figures.

Parental and student choices are usually guided by the schools' performance records and other factors such as sports. The free choice of schools for parents means some students travel long distances to get to their schools. This creates pressure on the transportation systems in the country, especially in urban areas. It also means that parents pay more in terms of transport costs, which for some families, is a burden.

To curtail these, the Minister for Education National Heritage, Culture & Arts and Youth & Sports presented the proposal for school zoning in Fiji as a Cabinet Memorandum on 21st April, 2010 with the underlying principle that:

- 3.1 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.
- 3.2 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.
- 3.3 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.
- 3.4 School zoning will ensure that all students have access to education provisions at all levels and will accommodate the smooth progression of Class 8 students to Form 3 level.
- 3.5 The implementation of school zoning will not only ease traffic congestion during "peak hours" but also enhance time management and proper planning for families.

Zoning furthermore complements issues of access, equity and quality of education for children in Fiji and the following objectives as well;

- (i) Reduces bus fares
- (ii) Numbers in each school better matches the capacity of the buildings.
- (iii) Students will be together for long and allows better bonding
- (iv) Allows projected growth
- (v) Keeps students close to home
- (vi) Enables schools that are facing declining roll to grow and polarization removed.
- (vii) It allows improvement of underperforming schools
- (viii) Improves access to better schooling for disadvantaged groups by breaking the link between schooling access and residence.
- (ix) School Zone allows students, parents and school staff to interact on a regular basis by sharing school news, assignments, attendance and homework.

4.0 DEFINITIONS

- 4.1 **All other students** – those students who do not fall under a) - g) in 6.3.1.
- 4.2 **Eligible student** – student who qualifies for bus fare assistance scheme guideline
- 4.3 **Home zone** – students' residences that are located within 2km away from the school.
- 4.4 **“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.
- 4.5 **School home zone** – residential areas within the 2km radius of a school from which the school is mandated to give priority to the enrolment of its children.
- 4.6 **Special programmes** – programmes such as special education facilities and staff, particular subjects, etc.
- 4.7 **Urban Schools** – schools located in the urban, suburban and peri urban areas less than 10km from the nearest urban centre.
- 4.8 **Zoning** – catchment areas or boundaries for schools at different levels.

5.0 RELEVANT LEGISLATIONS AND AUTHORITIES

- 5.1 Education Act 1978
- 5.2 Fiji Islands Education Commission Report – 2000
- 5.3 Suva Education Declaration – 2005
- 5.4 Education for All – (EFA 2000)
- 5.5 Millennium Development Goals – (MDG 2000)
- 5.6 MOE Strategic Development Plan (2009 - 2011)
- 5.7 People's Charter for Change, Peace and Progress – 2008
- 5.8 Principles and Values of the MOE
- 5.9 Cabinet Memorandum on Zoning – CP (2010), 21st April, 2010

6.0 PROCEDURES

6.1 ZONING

- 6.1.1 Zoning will be implemented only to schools in the urban areas
- 6.1.2 The boundaries of the zone must be within the 2km radius around a school and it may overlap the boundaries of the zones in any neighbouring zones.
- 6.1.3 Access to school will be more convenient for students residing within the home zone.
- 6.1.4 The home zone must be designed to allow better access for every student to attend a reasonably convenient school.

6.2 ENROLMENT SCHEME

- 6.2.1 Each school shall develop an enrolment scheme approved by the Permanent Secretary for Education, National Heritage, Culture & Arts and Youth & Sports (PSE). The enrolment scheme shall specify the priorities for "out of zone" students.

6.3 OUT OF ZONE STUDENTS ENROLMENT

- 6.3.1 Schools shall have no discretion in selecting out of zone students to fill available places. However, selection of "out of zone" students to take up available places shall adhere to the school's enrolment scheme where the following are prioritized;
 - a) Students accepted for enrolment in a special programme run by the school;
 - b) Students who are members of the school's faith;
 - c) Children of the school's teachers;
 - d) Children whose parents work within the school zone;
 - e) siblings of current students;
 - f) siblings/children of former students;
 - g) children of board employees and
 - h) finally, all other students.
- 6.3.2 Where there are more applicants, then a place for '*all other students*' shall be the school head's discretion.
- 6.3.3 All parents/guardians of students/children who opt to enroll their children outside their school home zone shall sign an undertaking with the school indemnifying MoE from paying the extra fare outside the school home zone.
- 6.3.4 The available places in schools shall be within the student/teacher ratio of 40 : 1 per stream. Availability of space or furniture shall not be used as criteria for available places.

6.4 DISCIPLINING NON-COMPLYING SCHOOLS AND SCHOOL HEADS

- 6.4.1 Schools breaching this policy shall not be paid any grants until the breach is rectified
- 6.4.2 Schools and officers proven guilty of breaching this policy shall be disciplined.
- 6.4.3 MoE shall be indemnified if schools breach the contents of this policy.
- 6.4.4 Adherence to the contents of this policy shall be monitored by the Deputy Secretary of Education - Primary/Secondary (DSPS), MoE.

6.5 ENROLMENT DATES

- 6.5.1 The dates issued below must be observed by the parents, school heads and school management.
- 6.5.2 Schools shall cease to enroll children who live within their school's home zone on the second Friday of January each year.
- 6.5.3 Schools shall begin to enroll "out of zone" students on the third Monday of January each year.

6.6 RESIDENCES ISOLATED FROM ANY SCHOOL HOME ZONES

- 6.6.1 Students who do not have a school within the 2km home zone may apply for a place in a school outside their home zone.
- 6.6.2 If a child cannot find a place outside their home zone, MoE shall place the child in a school close to their place of residence or in a government boarding school.

6.7 CHILDREN IN FEEDER SCHOOLS

- 6.7.1 Children in schools offering Forms 1 & 2 shall be integrated automatically in the same school to do Form 3 if they so choose.
- 6.7.2 Children in Primary schools which are feeder to specific secondary schools shall be given preference for enrolment in those secondary schools.

6.8 SELECTION OF STUDENTS INTO FORM 3

- 6.8.1 All students who have successfully completed primary education up to class 8 level shall progress automatically to Form 3.

6.9 BUS FARES & SCHOOL ZONING

- 6.9.1 MoE shall provide bus fares to cover eligible students within the home zones which are the equivalent of one stage student's bus fare.
- 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.

7.0 GUIDELINES

7.1 OVERLAPPING SCHOOL ZONES

- 7.1.1 If a residence is located where there is an overlapping of school zones, parents may send their children to a school closest to their home and if that school is full then the child should be sent to the next school within that zone.
- 7.1.2 If all schools within the home zone are full, parents may send their children to a school outside their home zone provided the principal has a place in that school for the child.

8.0 EFFECTIVE DATE.....27/09/11

9.0 REVIEW DATE.....27/09/12

10.0 KEY SEARCH WORDS

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

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



.....
Signature

27/09/11

.....
Date