

# INCLUSIVE EDUCATION POLICY (2021)



Ministry of Education  
Republic of Maldives

## **INCLUSIVE EDUCATION POLICY**

- |                                    |          |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
|------------------------------------|----------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Introduction and name</b>       | <b>1</b> | <p>(a) This policy is formulated under Article 8 (d) of Act No. 24/2020 (Education Act) of the Ministry of Education, to ensure the rights of all students to education, to provide equal and equitable opportunities for all categories of students with complex learning profiles in pre-schools, primary schools, and secondary and higher education schools to promote the full development of all their abilities and potential.</p> <p>(b) The policy is named "Inclusive Education Policy"</p> <p>(c) The meaning of the key concepts and terminology used in this policy are included in Appendix-A.</p> |
| <b>Definition of the policy</b>    | <b>2</b> | <p>(a) The "Inclusive Education Policy" is defined as the guidelines, principles, roles and responsibilities for the implementation of all activities conducted within the mainstream system or through alternative learning pathways, to provide education for all categories of students with complex learning profiles and children under special circumstances, to the maximum of their potential.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| <b>Persons the policy is aimed</b> | <b>3</b> | <p>(a) This policy is aimed at students with complex learning profiles described in Article 6 of this policy</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |

**Objectives of  
the policy**

- 4** (a) The objectives of this policy are as follows:
1. To achieve the actions described in Article 8 (a) (b) and (c) of Act No.24/2020 (Education Act) by providing opportunities to all the students with complex learning profiles to study in Maldivian schools as described in (d) of this article, and to describe the required standards and resources.
  2. To outline the roles and responsibilities of the bodies involved in implementing the policy.
  3. Establish an education system with a conducive environment that facilitates equal opportunities for all categories of students described in this policy to acquire skills, play sports, and participate in extra co-curricular activities.

**Principles of  
the policy**

- 5 (a) The principles set out below should be upheld in the provision of inclusive education.

**1. Respecting and Valuing Diversity**

To establish an inclusive education environment where individual differences are respected and accepted.

**2. Committed Leadership**

School leaders understand and support the principles and values of inclusive education and strive to develop the standard of education provided to all students.

**3. Whole School Approach**

Establish procedures that facilitate every member of the school community, including teachers, support staff, volunteers, families, and students to work collaboratively to ensure all categories of students with complex learning profiles in the school are included in all aspects of school life.

**4. Collaboration with School Community**

Plan and implement the Inclusive Education Policy through means that increase the involvement and participation of students, parents and caregivers, relevant associations, and volunteer organizations.

**5. Multi-Sectoral Approach**

To establish a systematic approach for all relevant institutions to work collaboratively to address the challenges and remove the barriers in providing inclusive education.

**6. Competent, Skilled and Capable Workforce**

The workers of education institutions confidently address the challenges in inclusively educating

students and learn about the modifications that must be brought to teaching and assessment techniques, to become competent, skilled, and capable workers.

#### **7. Accessible, Positive Learning Environment**

To establish an educationally facilitating environment which is safe for children with physical disabilities and students with complex learning profiles.

Design all schools equipped with the necessary resources and tools that facilitates learning for all students.

#### **8. Effective Transition**

To prepare students for life, establish a system through which the students can transition from early childhood to school to work, to vocational training effectively.

#### **9. Monitoring, Evaluation and Accountability**

Establish a reliable monitoring and evaluation system to evaluate all stakeholders in the education system on the implementation of the Inclusive Education Policy at the school, at the regional and national level, and hold all stakeholders accountable.

**Categories of  
Students with  
Complex  
Learning  
Profiles**

- 6 (a) Students have been categorized under this policy by taking their individual differences into account, to ensure the provision of teaching resources and tools and to orientate all stakeholders to the required modifications to teaching. Therefore, caution should be exercised in using students' actual names or the term used under Article (a) Students with Complex Learning Profiles, to avoid the infringement of students' human rights.

- (b) The Students with Complex Learning Profiles stated in Article (a) are classified under the three categories described below:

**1. Students with disabilities.**

Students with disabilities have been classified under this policy based on Regulation Number 54-R/2021 (Identifying people with disabilities and compiling and maintaining the list of persons with disabilities).

- 1.1 Students with visual impairment
- 2.1 Students with hearing or speech impairment
- 3.1 Students with physical disabilities
- 4.1 Students with mental disabilities
- 5.1 Students with multiple disabilities (having more than one disability)

**2. Students with additional learning needs**

- 2.1. Students with learning Disabilities
  - Students with Dyslexia
  - Students with Dysgraphia
  - Students with Dyscalculia
- 2.2 Students with Gifts and Talents
- 2.3 Students with Learning Difficulties
- 2.4 Students with Autism Spectrum Disorder
- 2.5 Students with Attention-deficit Hyperactivity Disorder

**3. Students under special circumstances**

- 3.1 Students whose learning is negatively impacted by a natural disaster (Pandemics, COVID-19, Tsunamis, Emergency Situations).
- 3.2 Students whose learning is negatively impacted by abuse.
- 3.3 Students whose learning is negatively

impacted by various family problems.

3.4 Students whose learning is negatively impacted by various accidents.

3.5 Students whose learning is negatively impacted by any medical condition (blood transfusions, asthma, sweaty hands).

3.6 Students whose learning is negatively impacted by being subjected to bullying by another student or person.

3.7 Students whose learning is negatively impacted by being exposed to various crimes.

3.8 Students with Social, Emotional and Behavioural Disabilities.

3.9 Students who have been rendered homeless following a natural or other disaster.

**Providing  
Inclusive  
Education**

- 7 (a) This policy defines approaches for inclusive education as providing fair and equal opportunities for students with complex learning profiles by facilitating learning through various successful approaches and provision of resources, as described in the Act No. 24/2020 (Education Act).
- (b) Individualized Curriculum Plans (ICPs) must be developed for children under special circumstances and education provided accordingly.



- (c) The following approaches must be adopted to ensure that all students achieve the goals outlined in Maldives National Curriculum (2015).
1. Universal design for learning
  2. Differentiated instruction
  3. Co-teaching strategies
  4. Utilizing assistive technology in teaching based on the learning situation of students.
  5. Assessing the students' standard according to the principles of formative assessment.
  6. Formulating and implementing students' intervention Plans with the support of Response to Intervention.

(d) The following resources should be established in schools to provide education to students with complex learning profiles in accordance with the principles of inclusion specified in Article 8 (d) of Act No. 2020/24 (Education Act).

1. Arrangements established to teach visually impaired students using Braille or digital technology or assistive technology.
2. Arrangements established to teach students with hearing or speaking disabilities using 'sign language' or digital technology or assistive technology.
3. Design school classrooms, laboratories, libraries, and toilets in accordance with 'Universal Accessibility' standards for students with physical disabilities.
4. Make available curriculum content and textbooks in digital format for students who face various issues in reading and writing and hard copies of books.
5. Establish easy access to special resources and other assistive and digital technology tools in providing education to students with disabilities, in accordance with their learning needs.

- (e) The following procedures must be established in schools to teach gifted and talented students.
1. To provide gifted and talented students equal opportunities to study through the formal education system, design instruction according to the principles of 'Differentiated instruction' and 'project-based learning' or 'inquiry-based learning'.
  2. To further develop the gifts and talents of the students, organize and conduct creative and critical thinking programs and facilitate easy access to career counseling and career guidance.
  3. Establish alternative learning pathways of various levels for gifted and talented students to progress in accordance with their learning status and organize and conduct internship programs to provide career exposure.
- (f) An environment conducive to inclusive education equipped with modern technological resources must be established to accommodate all categories of students this Policy is aimed, and in regard to the circumstances faced by the students. Alternative learning pathways for students to progress must be established, with internship programs in place to provide career exposure.
- (g) Bring necessary modifications to examination procedures to accommodate all categories of students this Policy is aimed, in regard to the circumstances faced by the students.

- (h) In providing inclusive education student must be given the opportunity to study in a suitable program from the four programs described below, in regard to the circumstances faced by the students.

#### **1 - Home-based Learning**

This is an educational program provided at home for students with complex learning profiles unable to attend school due to a heightened level of disability or due to a pandemic or a disaster or any other acceptable reason.

#### **2- School Readiness**

This is a program conducted for students with complex learning profiles to equip them with the necessary skills and to prepare them for the teaching and learning environment of the mainstream education system.

#### **3 - Early Intervention**

This is a program conducted for students with complex learning profiles at the foundation level, in accordance with the circumstances faced by the students, to equip them with and develop the necessary skills to achieve the goals of the foundation stage through the formal education system.

#### **4- Mainstream Education**

This is a program designed to provide inclusive education to students with complex learning profiles within the mainstream education system.

- (i) The general policies of the Ministry of Education must be followed in enrolling students with complex learning profiles in schools.

**Responsibilities 8  
of The Ministry  
of Education**

- (a) To provide inclusive education, The Ministry of Education must observe the following.
  - 1) Formulate the Inclusive Education Policy, with the various departments and sections of the Ministry of Education providing the necessary support to establish the resources required by the schools to implement the policy.
  - 2) To inculcate a culture of inclusivity in Maldivian Schools, develop and implement education policies, principles and regulations that do not overlap or contradict each other.
  - 3) Provide schools specialized teachers and professionally capable people needed to cater to the individual differences of the students.
  - 4) Establish a sound system to provide schools the assistive and digital technology resources and tools required for inclusive education.
- (b) Develop a separate policy or guidelines to conduct 'Early Identification and Early Intervention program' and establish a sound system to conduct these programs in cooperation with the relevant institutions, schools, and other stakeholders.
- (c) Enlist local and international support to sustainably develop inclusive education.

- (d) Publish, make available and manage all the relevant policies, regulations, and information on the Ministry's website to create public awareness.
- (e) The Ministry's website and all media resources to uphold the standards of 'Inclusion Digital Accessibility'.
- (f) Ensure that all teacher training courses have the inclusive education component.
- (g) Ensure that all information required for inclusive education is incorporated into the Maldives Education Management Information System (MEMIS) and to publish the statistics of students with complex learning profiles annually.
- (h) Review once every five years after the Policy is implemented.

**Responsibilities 9  
of the  
Department of  
Inclusive  
Education**

- (a) To provide inclusive education, the Department of Inclusive Education must observe the following.
1. Introduce the Universal Design concept ‘Shaamil Veshi’ to schools to strengthen the provision of inclusive education.
  2. Convert the specialized centers established in mainstream schools to teach various categories of students to ‘Inclusion Resource Centers’, and the special education classes to ‘Inclusion Support’ classes.
  3. Formulate the standards and policies required to teach by taking students’ individual differences into account.
  4. Publish, make available and manage all the relevant policies, regulations, and information on inclusive education on the Department’s website to create public awareness.
- (b) Plan and conduct various programs to orientate school leaders, teachers, parents and other stakeholders, to the approaches to inclusive education described in Article 7(c) of the policy and provide technical assistance to schools in this regard.
- (c) Establish a sound referral system in the department and assist schools.
- (d) Establish a permanent technical assistance system for schools, to promote inclusive education and enhance the technical capacity of teachers.

- (e) Hold seminars and conferences to raise community awareness in inclusive education, at the local and international level.
- (f) Form a Technical Committee to strengthen the provision of inclusive education and implement the policy based on their professional advice and guidance.
- (g) Establish a system to manage the information of students with complex learning profiles through MEMES, monitor their progress, and provide the support required by the schools.
- (h) Establish a sound system to conduct the 'Early Inclusion Program'.
- (i) Establish a system to identify and reward the schools that implement this Policy systematically.
- (j) The Department's website and all media resources to uphold the standards of 'Inclusion Digital Accessibility'.



**Responsibilities of the Schools**

- 10 (a) To provide inclusive education, schools must observe the following.
1. Prepare a detailed registry of the children with special needs enrolled in the school and ensure that the information is incorporated into MEMIS before the month of September of every year.
  2. Establish a referral system in the school to identify the status of students with complex learning profiles.
  3. Work with different organs of the Ministry of Education to procure the resources needed to teach students in accordance with their learning circumstances.
- (b) Design buildings in accordance with the standards of 'Universal Accessibility' and work with relevant stakeholders to procure the required resources (Example: to enlist the support of the Council and various organizations to design places such as the school library, laboratory, toilets to make them easily accessible to all students).
- (c) Provide children with complex learning profiles fair and equal opportunities to learn and develop their skills, play sports, and participate in extra-curricular activities within the formal education system.
- (d) Prepare and use "Individual Education Plans" (ICPs) to teach students with complex learning profiles, revising the plans termly to bring necessary adjustments.

- (e) Form an 'Inclusive Committee' for the school in accordance with the special regulations set by the Department of Inclusive Education and seek their professional advice and guidance to establish a system for the provision of inclusive education.
- (f) Work with different organs of the Ministry of Education to set up the procedures to implement 'Early Inclusion'.
- (g) In consultation with the Inclusion Committee, provide those among the students with disabilities who needs additional time and support to learn, the opportunity to continue schooling until the age of 21.

**Responsibilities of the Parents**

- 11 (a) To provide inclusive education, parents must observe the following.
1. Send the students to school regularly and monitor their progress.
  2. Maintain the medical reports of the students and keep the school the students are enrolled informed of any changes.
  3. Provide full cooperation to the teachers in evaluating the students' curriculum plan.
  4. Consult relevant authorities and inform the school if any behavioural problems are being displayed by the student.
  5. Complete all formalities to list disabled students on the 'persons with disabilities' register.
  6. Ensure that the child with additional educational need receives all the rights entitled to the child under various legal Acts.

**The Referral System**

- 12 (a) This policy defines Referral System as a system to assess the learning circumstances of the student, based on the permanent data gathered on the student's education, to choose the best educational program and educate the student through it.
- (b) Under this system, schools must observe the following to obtain all the required information about the education of the students with complex learning profiles.
1. Obtaining information on various areas related to students' education.
  2. Conduct field visits, interviews, and observations to assess the learning circumstance of the student.
  3. Adopt an analytical view when gathering information about the student and cover their success stories for case studies and identify the challenges they face and the areas they need additional support.

- (c) The school must conduct a needs analysis based on the collected information. The following must be observed when conducting the needs analysis of the students.
1. Prepare the list of diagnosed students and students with complex learning profiles.
  2. Identify the students who needs additional functional assessments and conduct the assessment.
  3. In accordance with the assessment, arrange the chosen educational program to teach the child and allocate the required resources.
  4. Identify students who need additional assistance and plan assessments and interventions.
  5. Plan and conduct various programs to orientate the school, teachers, and parents to the referral system.
- (d) Once the students' information described in the referral system has been recorded on MEMIS, the schools must monitor these records.

**Monitoring,  
Evaluation and  
Accountability**

- 13 (a) This Policy defines monitoring, evaluation and accountability as assessing how and how much the Inclusive Education Policy is being implemented by the whole school and analyze the findings to determine the modification that should be brought to the education system and individual schools.

- (b) Schools will be monitored in accordance with Article (a) under the following phases.
  - 1. School-level monitoring (school self-evaluation)
  - 2. Regional-level monitoring (Evaluation to be led by Teacher Resource Centers and hub schools).
  - 3. Central-level Monitoring (Quality Assurance Department to continue monitoring and evaluation).
  
- (c) All activities for School and Regional level monitoring, evaluation and accountability must be conducted in accordance with the standards outlined in the 'Monitoring Framework for Inclusive Education' formulated by The Department of Inclusive Education.
  
- (d) The following should be included in evaluating schools.
  - 1. Form an Evaluation Committee comprising representatives from all the fields of the school.
  - 2. The Evaluation Committee must discuss and seek solutions for the feedback collected and submitted to the committee from parents, students, and teachers to identifying the obstacles for inclusive education.
  
- (e) As the policy will be implemented when the central, regional, and school level resources for inclusive education have been provided, monitoring, evaluation and accountability measures must be implemented in an efficient and sustainable manner.

- (f) The implementation of the Policy and monitoring should be continued with attention to compliance with the disaster management plans and Ministry of Education's Emergency Response Plan.

## **APPENDIX-1**

Definitions of special terms used in this policy.

**Term**

**Meaning**

- |   |                                       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
|---|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1 | Inclusive Education                   | Refers to the provision of education with equal and equitable learning opportunities to learn, acquire skills, and participate in sports and other co-curricular activities with students of that age group, within the formal education system, without discrimination, to develop all their abilities and potential to the maximum.                                                 |
| 2 | Student with complex learning profile | Refers to all categories of students with complex learning profiles, such as students with disabilities, gifted and talented students, children who need additional assistance to learn, and students whose studies have been negatively impacted by special circumstances, and students whose studies can be negatively impacted due to social, psychological, or emotional reasons. |
| 3 | Categories of Inclusion               | Refers to all students with disabilities, students with complex learning profiles and students whose studies have been negatively impacted by special circumstances.                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| 4 | Individualized Curriculum Plan (ICP)  | Refers to an individual learning curriculum plan describing the main components of the national curriculum, life skills and main capabilities, prepared for students with complex learning profiles.                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| 5 | Early Identification                  | Refers to a system used for the identification of children with complex learning profiles early in their childhood.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |

6	Early Intervention	Refers to a system established through which the child is supported to develop their skills early in their childhood.
7	Inclusion Support Class	Refers to the resource units established to provide education to the various categories of students with complex learning profiles.
8	Hub School	Refers to the school selected to provide education to students with complex learning profiles at the regional level.
9	Mainstream Class	Refers to regular classes being taught according to the national curriculum.
10	Students with complex learning profiles	Refers to gifted and talented learners or students with learning difficulties or students with learning problems or students who require special assistance and resources for teaching and learning.
11	Disabled Students	Refers to students who are unable to function independently and requires assistance due to a physical impairment, mental impairment, health, or psychological problem or due to the barriers present in the society.



- 12 Students under special circumstances Refers to children whose studies have been negatively impacted by a natural disaster or a family problem, abuse, accident, or health problem or due to being exposed to various crimes, and students whose studies have been negatively impacted by social, psychological, emotional, or other reasons.
- 13 Facilitating environment Refers to a concept designed to create an environment in the school that facilitates the learning for all students, in accordance with the standards of the Universal Design for Learning.

