

# Ministry of Education



*Education Sector Simplified Policy on  
School Health, Nutrition and HIV&AIDS*

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## ***Abbreviations & Acronyms***

AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome	MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
ARV	Anti-retroviral	NGO	Non Governmental Organisation
BSS	Behaviour Surveillance Survey	OVC	Orphans and Vulnerable Children
CBO	Community Based Organisation	PTA	Parent Teacher Association
CPCE	Cyril Potter College of Education	PAHO	Pan American Health Organisation
EDUCAIDS	The Global Initiative for Education and HIV & AIDS	PEP	Post Exposure Prophylaxis
EFA	Education for All	PLHIV	People Living with HIV
FBO	Faith-Based Organisation	SHN	School Health & Nutrition
FRESH	Focusing Resources for Effective School Health	SSRP	Secondary School Reform Project
GPSU	Guyana Public Service Union	STI	Sexually Transmitted Infection
GTU	Guyana Teachers Union	UNESCO	United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
HIV	Human Immuno-deficiency Virus	UNICEF	United Nations Children Fund
HFLE	Health & Family Life Education	WHO	World Health Organisation
ILO	International Labour Organisation		
KAPB	Knowledge, Attitude, Practices and Beliefs		
MoE	Ministry of Education		
MOH	Ministry of Health		

## *Preface*

This booklet is a simplification of Guyana's Education Sector Policy on School Health, Nutrition and HIV& AIDS. It was designed for students, teachers, managers, employers, and other providers of education and training in educational institutions in Guyana. The booklet is intended to be an easy-to-use education and reference tool for Guyana's education sector – both formal and informal, and public and private. Its simplified content will allow for easier assimilation of the policy, and, consequently, greater understanding of individual, institutional and organizational rights and obligations.

Education is a basic human right for children. It improves their lives and gives them a strong foundation for continued learning. Guyana is committed to Education for All, and has planned that by 2015 all children, those in difficult circumstances, and those belonging to ethnic minorities, have access to and complete free and compulsory primary education of good quality.

Guyana also seeks to ensure that its young people and adults have access to appropriate learning and life-skills programs and that the quality of children's education is improved, especially in literacy, numeracy and essential life skills. The Policy is intended to improve the education, health and nutrition of school children, teachers and members of the education sector in Guyana. This user-friendly version of the Policy was deemed necessary to ensure that the main target groups know and understand the Policy provisions.

*(Ministry of Education)*

# 1. ABOUT THE POLICY

## 1.1 Aim

The aim of the School Health and Nutrition and HIV Prevention Policy is to promote and facilitate implementation of Health and Nutrition Programming and HIV Prevention throughout the education sector in Guyana.

## 1.2 Application

The policy applies to all students, teachers, non-teaching staff, managers, employers, and other providers of education and training in all public and private, formal and non-formal educational institutions in all parts of the education sector of Guyana.

## 1.3 Context

- Guyana's commitment to education for all.
- Education as a basic human right for all children.
- The importance of education to children's social and psychosocial wellbeing.
- Guyana's 2015 goal of all children having access to FREE and COMPULSORY primary education.
- Guyana's education sector goal of ensuring that Guyanese have access to learning and life-skills programmes.

## 1.4 Guiding Principles

1. The Guyana Government's aim of "Education for all".
2. The priorities and perspectives of the Revised National Policy Document on HIV&AIDS in Guyana, 2006.
3. Two international frameworks: FRESH (Focusing Resources on Effective School Health) and UNAIDS Global Initiative on Education and HIV & AIDS – EDUCAIDS.
4. A Guide to HIV and AIDS Policy Development for the Education Sector (CARICOM-EDC-UNESCO)
5. An HIV/AIDS Workplace Policy for the Education Sector in the Caribbean (ILO-UNESCO).
6. PAHO's work on "Health Promoting Schools"
7. UNICEF's "Child Friendly Schools".

## **2. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF STAKEHOLDERS**

### **2.1 Ministry of Education (MoE): School Health, Nutrition and HIV&AIDS Coordination Unit (SHN/HIV)**

- Give administrative support to the MoE.
- Develop SHN/HIV strategies.
- Communicate SHN/HIV policy and strategic plan.
- Advise the Ministry of Education about SHN/HIV.
- Develop partnerships with key stakeholders.
- Promote advocacy concerning SHN national and regionally.
- Co-ordinate training in SHN/HIV at the national and regional levels.
- Assist with implementing SHN/HIV activities at regional levels.

### **2.2 Regional Coordination and Accountability**

#### **A. Education Departments:**

- identify Regional Programme Coordinators (RPC) to assist in strategic planning and regional implementation.

#### **B. Regional Programme Coordinators (RPC)**

- Ensure that the Policy and Strategic Plan are reflected in the relevant work plans.
- Coordinate the Education Department's implementation of the Strategic Plan.

- Communicate the Policy and Plan to education sector employees and other education stakeholders regionally.
- Provide the SHN/HIV Unit with data concerning SHN/HIV activities.
- Submit annual activity monitoring reports to relevant Heads of the Departments.

### **2.3 The Ministry of Health (MoH)**

- Act as the main partner of the MoE in all SHN/HIV activities.
- Agree on a Memorandum of Understanding with the MoE.
- Give technical support to the MoE in relation to for SHN/HIV.
- Function as implementing agency for some SHN/HIV activities

## 2. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF STAKEHOLDERS

### 2.4 Development Partners

- Assist with SHN/HIV strategic plan and activities implementation.
- Contribute funding and technical support.

### 2.5 (NGOs, CBOs and FBOs)

- Help develop SHN/HIV Strategic Plan and implement activities.
- Implement activities supportive of strategic plan, policies, and guidelines.
- Follow procedures for SHN/HIV activities of NGOs, CBOs and FBOs in schools.

### 2.6 Members of the Educational Institutions

#### A. Ministry staff:

- ensure policy provisions are applied at the work place.

#### B. Boards of Educational Institutions:

- provide oversight of implementation.

#### C. Administrators/management:

- Advise the Board of policy implications.
- Develop institutional SHN/HIV Plan and Strategies.

- Ensure that the Policy is reflected in School Improvement Plans.
- Agree on appointment of an SHN/HIV Focal Point or Committee.
- Ensure safe and sanitary work and study environments.
- Integrate strategies and mechanisms for monitoring and evaluation.
- Provide data to regional and national SHN/HIV coordinators.

#### D. Teachers:

- Adhere to the Policy and support its implementation.

#### E. Representatives of employees' and student organizations:

- Encourage the implementation of the SHN/HIV Policy and programme.

#### F. Parent-Teacher Associations:

- Work with education institutions, school boards and the wider community
- Mobilise materials, funding, and technical support from stakeholders.

## 3. LIFE SKILLS BASED HEALTH EDUCATION

Life skills based education will be delivered in complimentary modes, comprising five main methods – Information, Student Education, Teacher Training, Workplace Education and Parent and Community Education

### 3.1 Information

- Information provided must be accurate, appropriate, relevant, and in keeping with human rights legislation.

### 3.2 Education

- The Health and Family Life Education (HFLE) curriculum will provide curricular education on SHN/HIV issues in Guyana.
- HFLE will be used to teach health issues.
- Peer Education Programmes will promote peer-education strategies and peer support groups such as Abstinence Clubs and Counselling Groups.
- The MoE will collaborate with appropriate organizations in training peer educators

- Through HIV Education, all students in education institutions will have access to HIV&AIDS education. He aim is to promote healthy living, provide the right environment, and discourage inappropriate behaviors.

### 3.3 Teacher Training

- All CPCE trainees will undertake a compulsory module in the teaching of the HFLE curriculum.

### 3.4 Workplace Education

- Employees of the MoE will be allowed to participate in relevant education programmes on HIV&AIDS and nutrition.

### 3.5 Parent and Community Programmes

- Education institutions will collaborate with Parent-Teacher Associations, School Boards and the wider community in building awareness, support and participation of parents in SHN/HIV education programmes.



## 4. SAFE AND SANITARY SCHOOL ENVIRONMENTS

Education institutions shall foster and maintain a social climate and physical environment that will promote health, well-being, non-violence and safety in working and learning.

**No STIGMA NO DISCRIMINATION NO VIOLENCE**

### 4.1 Creating an Environment Free of Stigma, Discrimination and Violence

#### A. Preventing Stigma and Discrimination

- Education institutions MUST adhere to a Code of Conduct
- The Code MUST make it clear that stigmatisation or discrimination shall not be tolerated against persons living with HIV, associated with someone living with HIV, or a person perceived as living with HIV.
- A person who discriminates will be sanctioned.

#### B. Preventing abuse at school or work

- The Code of Conduct MUST clearly identify expectations concerning staff/students.
- The must guided by Mutual respect and trust; Adherence to the principles of the international Convention on the Rights of the Child

#### C. Non-Violence

- Administrators and teachers MUST endeavor to maintain a violence-free environment. Physical or verbal abuse of others within the institution must not be tolerated.

### 4.2 Creating a hygienic environment

#### A. Universal Precautions

- Administrators, other employees and students MUST follow universal precautions to avoid accidental exposure to blood or high-risk body fluids.
- The institution MUST also have a post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP) procedure in place, including counselling and guidance for the employee or student and access to anti-retrovirals (ARVs).

#### B. First Aid

- First Aid kits MUST be available for emergency use at all places of employment.
- Physical education instructors and technical/vocational education teachers, MUST complete first aid and injury prevention course.

### C. Management of Sharp Instruments

- Use of sharp instruments for work **MUST** be carefully monitored and controlled.
- Unauthorised use of sharp instruments **MUST NOT** be allowed.

### D. Employees and Students with open wounds

- Bleeding or discharging wounds **MUST** be kept covered.
- If wound cannot be covered, stay away from the institution or get doctor to certificate the risk level.

## 4.3 Creating a Sanitary and Safe Environment

- Schools, Departments of Education, Regional Democratic Councils, and MoE are responsible for creating a safe and sanitary environment in which:
  - a. No Smoking allowed
  - b. No drug and alcohol abuse permitted
  - c. Sanitary facilities and clean water are provided
  - d. Asbestos is not used in school buildings
  - e. Fire fighting equipment is provided
  - f. Facilities are provided for disadvantaged and special needs students.



## 5. SCHOOL HEALTH AND NUTRITION SERVICES

The MoE shall implement mechanisms to provide psycho-social support in schools, and work with NGOs, CBOs and FBOs to develop systems that provide emotional, educational and spiritual support. The services should aim at Reducing Risk, Providing Care, Psycho-social Support and Other Health Services

### 5.1 Reducing risk

- Education, information and training in risk reduction
- Free condoms available for employees, or information provided on how to obtain them
- Teachers, parents, and students collaborate on risk reduction measures for students of legal age

### 5.2 Care and treatment for the HIV infected

- Education institutions facilitate access to medical services
- Provide advice on nutrition

### 5.3 Psycho-social support

- MoE providing the relevant mechanisms in schools
- Support given must be confidentially kept

### 5.4 Other health Services

- MoE shall provide other services such as deworming, immunization, screening and referral for various problems.



## 6. HEALTH, NUTRITION AND HIV/AIDS RELATED SCHOOL POLICIES

### 6.1 Testing, Confidentiality and Disclosure of HIV&AIDS

#### A. Testing and medical advice

- MoE shall not engage in the compulsory testing for HIV of employees or students.
- Employees and students may voluntarily take tests and counseling.
- Information will be provided on Voluntary Counseling and Testing sites

#### B. Ensuring Confidentiality

- All health records about employees or students HIV/AIDS status MUST be kept securely and confidence.
- Only with written permission can anyone have access to the records.

#### C. Disclosure

- Disclosure on HIV status of an employee or student is voluntary.
- Institutional procedures shall be established to ensure confidentiality
- Sanctions will be imposed for breaches of confidentiality.

### 6.2 Employment, Care, Treatment and Support of people affected by HIV&AIDS

- Rights of those infected or affected by HIV&AIDS MUST be respected.
- Heads of education institutions shall be responsible for creating an enabling environment that is free from stigma and discrimination.

#### A. Recruitment and admission

- Employers MUST NOT consider HIV status as part of the employment procedures.
- Decisions about admission to an education institution MUST not be based on HIV status.

#### B. Employee rights and careers

- Employees living with HIV MUST have job security.
- They MUST not be overlooked with opportunities for development and promotion.
- They may be transferred from work positions through a physician's recommendation.

## 6. HEALTH, NUTRITION AND HIV/AIDS RELATED SCHOOL POLICIES

### C. Students and the right to study

- Administrators/ teachers shall follow policies for students with health problems.
- HIV or AIDS are not causes for denial of normal study opportunities or segregation. If a student is unable to cope with the workload, the institution should try to accommodate the student, as would be the case for any major illnesses or disability.
- Reasonably accommodate employees with severe ARV side effects or AIDS-related illnesses to enable them to continue working as long as possible.

### D. Employee, Student and Family Assistance Programmes

- To reduce the impact of HIV and AIDS on work and study, education institutions shall consult with representatives of employees and students to establish or extend employee, student and family services.
- Services may include: compassionate leave; referrals to support groups or to tutorial programmes for students; financial counseling.
- Special attention shall be paid to the needs of employees and students who care for HIV-positive relatives; to

employees who are single parents and affected by HIV&AIDS; to students who care for HIV-positive relatives; to students who are orphans and/or vulnerable in other ways.

### E. Disciplinary Procedures and Grievance Resolution

#### - Grievances:

- a. Communication channels to enable PLHIV and those affected by HIV and AIDS to raise concerns, grievances and to access support.
- b. Complainants will have the right of appeal related to unfair dismissal, denial or unjustified restriction of employment or work related rights and benefits.
- c. Disciplinary procedures for students shall be in line with the regulations of the non academic standards and norms of the MoE.

#### - Refusal to work or study with an individual living with HIV

- There is no justification for refusing to work, study or be present in the education institution with HIV positive individuals.

- Employees or students who are not prepared to work or engage in learning activities with an HIV-positive individual shall be offered education and counseling.
- If counselling fails, the education institution will follow the relevant procedures.
- An employee or student shall use existing mechanisms of redress, if verbal or physical abuse occurs.

**- Violation of medical confidentiality**

- Employees or students who acquire information about the HIV status of someone else shall not disclose such information, unless authorized to do so.
- An employee or student may be disciplined if found violating medical privacy of another.

**- Care and Support of Orphans and Vulnerable Children (OVC)**

- Educational institutions have a responsibility to identify and support any student who is ill, orphaned, vulnerable or with special needs so that he/she is able to continue and complete their education.
- Youth organizations are encouraged to address the educational needs of orphans, vulnerable children and

students with special needs including life skills and HIV&AIDS Education.

- Bursary and other schemes shall be encouraged to make provisions to cover the educational needs of students who are ill, orphaned, vulnerable or with special needs at all levels of the education sector.



## 7. Glossary

### **Administrator**

A Principal or Head Teacher, Deputy Head, Dean or other officer who plays a managerial role at the education institution or services

### **Affected Person**

A person whose life is changed by HIV and AIDS.

### **AIDS**

Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome is a range of medical conditions that occurs when a person's immune system is seriously weakened by infection with the Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV).

### **Anti-retrovirals**

Drugs used to kill or slow down the multiplication of retroviruses such as HIV.

### **Capacity Building**

The training and development of human resources to function effectively at given tasks.

### **Community**

Local institutions outside the education institution which provide leadership or support on social, economic and political issues relevant to citizens, such as private employers or business, non-governmental social welfare organizations, health care providers, faithbased organisations.

### **Child**

Anyone under the age of 18. Children in Guyana must attend school up to the age of 15.

### **Discrimination**

Any distinction, exclusion or preference made on the basis of HIV status or perceived HIV status. Discrimination consists of actions or omissions that are derived from stigma and directed towards those individuals who are stigmatized.

### **Education institution**

Any establishment or setting where formal or non-formal takes place. For the purposes of this policy, education institutions include pre-primary, primary and secondary schools, post-secondary vocational/technical training, further and higher education institutions, and places of adult and non-formal education.

### **Education service(s)**

Other components of a nation's education and training system, public or private, other than an education institution.

### **Educator**

Any person who imparts knowledge and skills within the education sector

## 7. Glossary

### **Employee**

An administrator, teacher or non-teaching support staff employed in an education institution or Services.

### **Employer**

A person who engages others to perform certain tasks for payment of a wage or salary

### **Gender**

All attributes associated with women and men, boys and girls, which are socially and culturally ascribed and which vary from one society to another and over time.

### **HIV**

HIV belongs to a unique group of viruses known as retroviruses- these viruses reverse the usual flow of genetic information within an infected cell. It is a virus that weakens the body's immune system, ultimately causing AIDS.

### **Infected Person**

A person who is living with the human immunodeficiency virus that causes AIDS

### **Legal age**

The age of consent for sex in Guyana is now 16, and the age of legal majority is 18. As yet, the age for consent for treatment and testing has

not yet been established in the country.

### **Opportunistic Infection**

Infection by organisms that usually only cause diseases in people with weakened immune systems. Persons living with advanced HIV infection suffer opportunistic infections of the lungs, brain, eyes, and other organs. Opportunistic infections common in persons diagnosed with AIDS include Pneumocystis Carinii pneumonia; Kaposi's sarcoma; cryptosporidiosis; histoplasmosis; other parasitic, viral and fungal infections; and some types of cancer.

### **Orphan**

A person under the age of 18 years who has lost one or both parents (suggestion)

### **Parent**

The biological and adoptive parents or custodians, or legal guardians of children

### **Peer educator or peer counsellor**

The trained employee or student who develops or implements a developmental counseling programme to meet the social, psychosocial and educational or training needs of employees or students in relation to HIV and AIDS.



## 7. Glossary

### **Physician**

A medical doctor licensed in accordance with the regulations of the state or other competent health licensing authority.

### **Post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP)**

Measures and treatment given to a person who has recently been exposed to disease causing organisms, to prevent them from developing the disease.

### **Prevalence**

A measure of the proportion of people in a population affected with a particular disease at a given time.

### **Procedures**

Laws and Bills which deal with protection of children from abuse, rape and other abuses.

### **Psychosocial support**

The support meant to address challenges of isolation, depression, anxiety, other psychiatric impairment and serious interpersonal problems as a result of HIV and AIDS. The purpose of psychosocial support is to ensure that quality of life and motivation to live are effectively optimized.

### **Reasonable accommodation**

Any modification or adjustment to a job or to the workplace that is reasonable, practicable and shall enable a person living with HIV or AIDS

to have access to or participate or advance in employment.

### **Screening**

Measures to assess HIV status, whether direct (HIV testing) or indirect (assessment of risk-taking behaviour), asking questions about health or about medication used in this policy in the context of exclusion from employment or education.

### **Sex and gender**

The term 'sex' refers to biologically determined differences, while the term 'gender' refers to differences in social roles and relations between males and females. Gender roles are learned through socialization. Gender roles are affected by age, class, race, ethnicity and religion, and by the geographical, economic and political environment.

### **Sexual Abuse**

Abuse of a person targeting their sexual organs, e.g. rape, touching their private parts, or inserting objects into their private parts.

### **Sharps**

Objects such as needle or other instruments used in health care that are able to penetrate the skin and potentially cause infection.

### **STI**

Sexually transmitted infections, which include, among others, syphilis, chancroid, chlamydia, gonorrhoea. They include conditions commonly known as sexually transmitted infections (STIs)

## 7. Glossary

### **Social dialogue**

Any form of information sharing, consultation or negotiation (with or without formal agreements concluded) between educational authorities, public and private, and employees or their representatives (i.e., workers' representatives as defined below). In the context of this policy social dialogue is applied to students and other stakeholders.

### **Stigma**

A dynamic process of devaluation that significantly discredits an individual in the viewpoints of others

### **Student**

A person attending formal or non-formal classes or pursuing studies at a school, training institution, college, university, or any other education institution

### **Teacher**

A person engaged part-time or full-time in education of students, formal or non-formal.

### **Termination of employment**

Dismissal by an employer.

### **Universal precautions**

A simple standard of infection control practice to be used to minimize the risk of blood-borne pathogens.

### **Voluntary Counselling and Testing (VCT)**

VCT is voluntary HIV testing that involves a process of pre- and post- test counselling, that helps people to know their sero-status and make informed decisions.

### **Vulnerable Student**

Any person receiving education and training from a learning institution, but is susceptible to circumstances that infringe upon the fulfilment of their fundamental human rights.

### **Workplace**

Occupational settings, stations and places where workers spend time



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