

**Nagaland Board of School Education  
Kohima**

**CIRCULAR**

Dated Kohima, the 20<sup>th</sup> October 2022

No. NBE-8/Ad-Misc(10)/2022-23/        ::        The Board take this opportunity to draw the attention of all concerned on some growing issues and also to reiterate some concerns previously communicated to the schools. With the advancement of technology, we are faced with an onslaught of technological changes, both positively and negatively. The COVID-19 Pandemic has ushered in the use of technology in education which became a lifeline for the continuation of learning.

The role of social media in our society especially amongst the students is of great concern. Keeping this in mind, the Board would like to stress upon the following concerns for consideration and careful deliberation:

1.     **POCSO Act 2012:** All schools should continue to check and monitor cases of gender specific violence and strictly comply with the guidelines, norms and procedures prescribed in the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act, 2012. Students should also be made aware of the Act so that they know their rights and respond accordingly if such cases arise.
  
2.     **Behavioural problems:** There is a disturbing increased report of students in uniform being involved in inappropriate behaviours. With the exposure to social media, behavioral and attitudinal changes have negatively affected us. Students are reported to be involved in inappropriate lifestyle like unhealthy relationships and promiscuous activities. Schools should check and create awareness among the students.
  
3.     **Mental Health:** The Covid-19 pandemic has created a global crisis for mental health including children. Schools are currently the best place to develop a comprehensive mental health programme for children. A comprehensive mental health programme should be part of the school health programme. It should include health instructions at all classes, easily accessible health services, a healthy, nurturing and safe environment. Schools should focus on early identification and intervention to help attain immediate educational and behavioural goals and to prevent long term negative outcomes in the overall personality of children. Schools should have proper school counselors and teachers who may be trained in counseling who will ensure that school counseling program is comprehensive in design and is delivered systematically to all students.
  
4.     **Internet usage:** With the pandemic, online classes became the norm for schooling and as such, it paved the way to unregulated usage of internet by children. There are many threats that lurk in the shadow of internet usage like cyber bullying, identity theft, inappropriate content, negative body image, etc. Not to mention the detrimental effects on students by making them more prone to anxiety, depression and other psychological disorders. All these pose a threat to a child's safety and emotional wellbeing. As Heads of Institutions, we need to make a conscious effort

to educate our students as well as parents on internet usage. They should be taught to build online resilience and cultivate appropriate digital skills.

5. **Substance abuse and tobacco use:** Substance abuse among children is a rising concern today. As such, schools should create awareness on the harmful effects of drugs and how drugs weaken a person's immune system, mental, social and emotional well being of a person.

Schools should take initiatives and necessary measures to prevent tobacco use among students. Awareness programmes should be organized by schools which will help students to learn the ill effects of drug and tobacco use and abstain from those harmful substances. Schools may seriously look into this area.

6. **Junk foods:** Consumption and selling of junk foods within the school vicinity should be avoided at all cost. Schools should create awareness on the consumption of junk foods through various activities like competitions on hygiene and sanitations, debate on food safety, promote nutrition and health awareness through posters, collage and other visual aids, etc. School staff should conduct inspection of lunch boxes to minimize consumption of junk foods. Schools with canteen facility should provide healthy and safe food to children.

7. **Bullying and ragging:** Bullying and ragging in any form should be curbed. As stated in '*General Rules*' page 50, schools should constitute an Anti-Bullying and Ragging Committee for preventive measures and also recommend appropriate actions and penalties for bullying and ragging cases.

8. **Moral values:** The moral values that we hold to so dear in life some years ago are fast declining with the advancement of civilization. And we see that reflected in our society today especially in school going children. Moral values like honesty, dignity of labour, integrity, respecting elders, etc., should be inculcated and revived. The decline in moral values in our society is of concern. Schools can give orientation on the importance of good moral conduct.

9. **Corporal punishment:** Heads of Institutions should see that any form of corporal punishment which can cause physical/psychological harm to the student should be strictly avoided as this is punishable by law. As stated by the National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR) schools should develop a mechanism and frame clear cut protocols to address the grievances of students. The Right to Education Act, 2009 (RTE) also prohibits 'physical punishment' and 'mental harassment' under Section 17(1) and makes it a punishable offence under Section 17(2).

10. **School uniform:** School uniform should be appropriate and modest. Schools should ensure that appropriate dress code is maintained. Schools should also ensure that uniforms are clean and well maintained by the students. Students should not be burdened with unnecessary apparels other than the required uniform.