



REPUBLIC OF SIERRA LEONE

MINISTRY OF BASIC AND SENIOR SECONDARY EDUCATION

POLICY GUIDELINES ON SCHOOL APPROVALS



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FOREWORD

Human capital development is at the core of the Government of Sierra Leone's priorities and the Ministry of Basic and Senior Secondary Education (MBSSE) plays a key role in setting out the policy framework for ensuring universal access to quality education for all learners. This includes detailed policy guidelines that set out the processes for different aspects of the education sector.

Approving schools to operate, and approving schools to receive financial support from Government are key foundations of the Ministry of Basic and Senior Secondary Education's role in overseeing and supporting schools. These Policy Guidelines on School Approvals aim to provide clarity to schools to understand what they need to do in order to gain these approvals from the Ministry, and to provide a consistent and fair framework for these processes. This is split into two Approval Levels.

Firstly, it is vital for ensuring child safety that all education institutions in the country are meeting a set of defined standards, and that the Ministry is aware of, and has approved, every education institution. As such, Level One Approval is required for all schools operating in Sierra Leone regardless of the ownership structures, and the Minimum Criteria for Level One Approval are structured to ensure that all schools are at the very least, safe, and have a management and workforce able to ensure children's safety.

Secondly, after they have Level One Approval and are authorised to operate, many schools would also wish to receive financial support from government, including school subsidies. The Government cannot provide this financial support to private schools. For other ownership structures though, it is important that the Ministry ensures that as well as being safe, the schools are also in a position to competently receive and administer government funding. The Minimum Criteria for Level Two Approval therefore set out the standards required for a school to be eligible to receive financial support, subject to the budgets being available. Where budgets are constrained, and there are more schools that are meeting these minimum standards than can be incorporated within the available budgetary envelope, a prioritisation process is set out to ensure that access to financially supported schools is provided equitably to children across the country.

Moreover, it is important that these Minimum Criteria for Level One and Level Two Approval are not seen as the only targets that schools should be working towards. Once schools are authorised to operate, and when they are receiving government financial support, they should be working towards a more challenging set of targets in order to maximise the quality of learning, access and inclusion. These targets are set out as Additional Criteria, and progress towards these will continue to be monitored as part of the ongoing re-assessment process for School Approvals.

Overall, these policy guidelines aim to provide clarity for the processes by which schools are authorised to operate, and become eligible to receive financial support from Government. School leaders, school proprietors, parents, children and communities now have clear criteria for their schools to achieve, and clear processes to gain the benefits available from meeting those criteria, to help ensure that Free Quality School Education is available to all children in Sierra Leone.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

These policy guidelines were drafted under the leadership of the Ministry of Basic and Senior Secondary Education (MBSSE). The Ministry would like to thank Fab Inc and the Education Workforce Initiative (EWU) for their support throughout the development of these guidelines, as well as the Education Partnerships Group (EPG) for their review and input. We are also grateful to the Foreign Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) for supporting the work of Fab Inc, EWI and EPG in the policy development process.

Our profound gratitude goes to Dr. Albert Dupigny who has led the drafting of these guidelines, ensuring that they provide a clear and lasting framework to stakeholders at the central, district and school levels.

Finally, we would like to extend our deepest appreciation to the members of the Operations, Planning and Policy (OPP) pillar chaired by the Chief Education Officer (CEO), Dr. Yatta Kanu, for providing quality leadership and extensive oversight during the development of these guidelines.

ACRONYMS / ABBREVIATIONS

ACRONYM / ABBREVIATION	EXPLANATION
BECE	Basic Education Certificate Examination
CEO	Chief Education Officer
DEO	District Education Officer
GoSL	Government of Sierra Leone
HTC	Higher Teacher's Certificate
IV	Inspection Visit
JSS	Junior Secondary School
MBSSE	Ministry of Basic and Secondary School Education
MOF	Ministry of Finance
MOPED	Ministry of Planning and Economic Development
NPSE	National Primary School Examination
PQTR	Pupil-Qualified Teacher Ratio
PS	Permanent Secretary
PTR	Pupil-Teacher Ratio
SAR	School Assessment Report
SID	School Inspection Document

SMC	School Management Committee
SOP	Standard Operating Procedure
SSS	Senior Secondary School
TSC	Teaching Service Commission
WASH	Water, Sanitation and Hygiene
WASSCE	West Africa Senior School Certificate Examination

GLOSSARY OF TERMS / DEFINITIONS

TERM	DEFINITION
Level One Approval	The approval to operate as a school in Sierra Leone, required by all schools.
Level Two Approval	The approval to be eligible to receive government funding.
Qualified Teacher	A teacher with a professional teaching qualification, at Teaching Certificate (TC) level or above.
Amalgamation	When two separate, existing schools combine to operate as one combined school going forwards.
Proprietor	The owner of the school. This may be the head teacher/principal, or it may be a separate person.
Financial Support	This refers to school subsidies and teacher salaries.
Withdrawal	In the context of the School Approval Policy Guidelines, 'withdrawal' refers to the process of a school requesting to give up its approval status. In the case of Level Two Withdrawal this means requesting to stop receiving government financial support. In the case of Level One Withdrawal this means requesting to stop operating and close down. Note that this is different to the Use of Subsidy Policy Guidelines where 'withdrawal' refers to the process in which school leaders access the subsidy funds.

INTRODUCTION

These policy guidelines are intended to provide an overview of the eligibility criteria for all non-private and private schools at Level One Approval (approval to operate), and all non-private schools at Level Two Approval (eligible for financial support). This includes schools who wish to become approved to operate or are currently approved to operate and wish to seek financial assistance from the Government.

It sets out guidelines for the application process for Level One and Level Two Approvals, the steps required, timeframes, and the process for those schools that do not meet the criteria. The policy guidelines are applicable from the 2022/23 school year, with compliance of the Minimum Criteria for Level One and Level Two Approval required by the start of the 2023/24 school year. It is the policy of the Government of Sierra Leone that, from the start of the 2023/2024 school year, no school will be operating without Level One Approval.

Applications intended to be processed by the beginning of the academic year should be submitted by 15 December of the previous year. For example, all applications for Level One Approval in time for the 2023/24 school year should be submitted by 15 December 2022.

Schools that are currently approved (at the Level One Approval level) and receiving financial support from the Government (at the Level Two Approval level) initially maintain these approval levels but are still required to meet the Minimum Criteria and are also subject to ongoing re-assessment processes detailed in the guidelines. A re-assessment process will take place every three years. Re-assessment will be triggered automatically after three years and does not need to be applied for.

School Approval has two levels, each of which has separate eligibility criteria and processes.

Level One Approval

The criteria are set out to ensure schools are, in the first instance, safe, and have physical structures that meet construction standards, governance systems that can provide oversight of academic and safeguarding issues, and a workforce that is able to ensure minimum standards of learning and children's safety. This is defined in line with construction standards, the school safety policy and the School Infrastructure and Catchment Area Planning Policy. For any school not meeting these Minimum Criteria, the government may close or change the management of the school with immediate effect.

Given the importance of the Minimum Criteria for Level One Approval, all these should be met by all schools from the start of the 2023/24 school year.

Level Two Approval

It is the policy of the Government of Sierra Leone, through the MBSSE, that schools should, whenever necessary and possible, be financially supported in the delivery of education, and that such support must be conditional on the further attainment of some basic level

of provision and capacity, operating systems, alignment to the Governments' plans for the system, and its expansion. This support is referred to as Level Two Approval.

The criteria for Level Two Approval are set out to ensure that schools are safe, and in a position to competently receive and administer government funding. Any school not meeting these Minimum Criteria for Level Two Approval will not be allowed to receive government funding with effect from the start of the 2023/24 school year.

It is not required for a school to apply for Level Two Approval, but it is not possible to receive financial support without Level Two Approval.

Additional Criteria

Building on these Minimum Criteria, a range of Additional Criteria will also be used to promote improvements. These Additional Criteria have been selected to represent the factors which impact most directly on learning, access and inclusion. It is expected that alongside meeting the Minimum Criteria, schools work towards meeting these Additional Criteria which will be evaluated during the re-assessment process.

This staging is necessary to allow schools sufficient time to achieve the most crucial minimum safety standards and be able to competently receive and administer government funding, whilst working towards the longer-term improvements in quality targeted by MBSSE.

Types of Government Support

Depending on the level of approval that is granted, the budget available and the prioritisation exercise, the Government can provide a range of support. This includes school subsidies, teacher salaries, in-kind materials (for example textbooks and learning materials), school feeding and exam fees (for NPSE, BECE and WASSCE).

The types of schools that are eligible for each type of support, depending on budgets, are set out below.

Level One Approved Schools which intend to always remain private schools

- Depending on budget availability, these schools are eligible for:
 - NPSE and BECE exam fees only

Level One Approved Schools which intend to apply for Level Two Approval and government financial support in the future

- Depending on budget availability, these schools are eligible for:
 - In-kind materials
 - School feeding
 - All exam fees (NPSE, BECE and WASSCE)

Level Two Approved Schools

- Depending on budget availability, these schools are eligible for:

- In-kind materials
- School feeding
- School subsidies
- Teacher salaries
- All exam fees (NPSE, BECE and WASSCE)

For the purposes of these policy guidelines, the school subsidies and teacher salaries (which are only applicable for Level Two schools) are specifically referred to as ‘financial support’.

Guidelines regarding the use of school subsidies, for those schools that receive them, are set out in the Use of School Subsidy Policy Guideline.

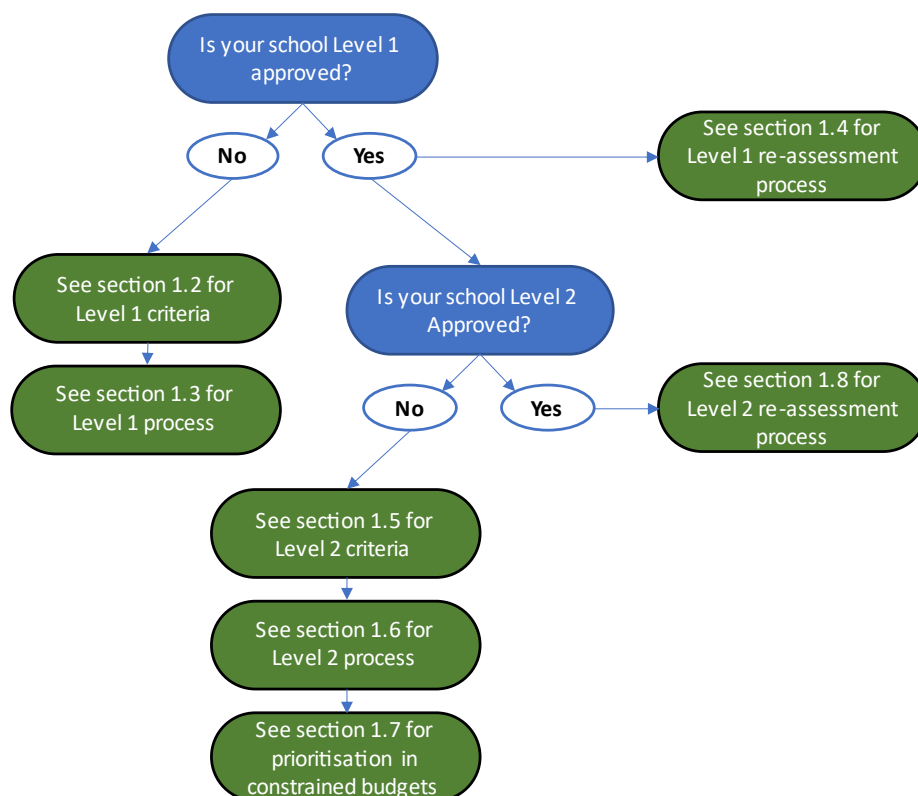
Private Schools

Private schools are required to apply for and gain Level One Approval, as well as being subject to Level One re-assessment. However, the Level One Application Form distinguishes between schools which intend to apply for Level Two Approval and funding in the future, and private schools which do not intend to ever apply for Level Two Approval. Private schools are not able to apply for Level Two Approval and would therefore be required to change ownership structure before applying for and receiving Level Two Approval.

The guidelines also outline the criteria and process for if a school with Level Two Approval wishes to withdraw from Level Two Approval and stop receiving government financial support.

Structure of Policy Guidelines

These policy guidelines are structured to explain the criteria, approval process and re-assessment process for each level of approval in turn. In addition, these guidelines set out the processes for determining Level Two Approval prioritisation in the case of constrained budgets, the process if schools wish to withdraw from Level Two Approval, the appeal process governing all levels of approval, and the accountability, roles and responsibilities of key actors within the system. The diagram below aims to help guide users to the sections that are most relevant to them in these policy guidelines.



Guidance on specific situations

These policy guidelines also cover a number of specific situations, from establishing a new school, to combining two schools, to reopening a previously closed school. While this should cover the majority of situations under which school proprietors seek approval, if in doubt as to which situation applies, please contact the relevant District Education Office with details provided in Annex A.

Situation	Action
Creating a school	The new school is required to apply for Level One approval.
Merging schools	<p>If one or both of the schools is not yet Level One approved, the newly amalgamated school is required to apply as a new school for Level One Approval.</p> <p>If both of the schools are Level One approved, the newly amalgamated school is automatically granted Level One Approval.</p> <p>If one or both of the schools is not yet Level Two approved, the newly amalgamated school is required to apply as a new school for Level Two Approval.</p> <p>If both of the schools are Level Two approved, the newly amalgamated school is automatically granted Level Two Approval.</p>

Re-opening a previously closed school	The school is required to apply for Level One approval.
Where a school changes its ownership	The school is required to notify the MBSSE within one month and is required to undergo an immediate re-assessment of their current approval level.
Where a school wishes to also operate a new school level	A school which wishes to also operate a new school level, for example a Junior Secondary School which wishes to add a Senior Secondary School. The new school level is not automatically granted any level of approval and is required to apply as a new school for Level One Approval.

SECTION 1: POLICY GUIDELINES

1.1 LEVEL ONE APPROVAL CRITERIA

All schools operating in Sierra Leone require Level One Approval. This applies to existing schools which are currently operating without approval, and all new schools proposed before they can operate. The Level One Approval criteria, approval process and re-assessment processes and requirements apply to all ownership types (including, but not limited to, Government, Mission/Religious, Community and Private schools).

Prior to applying to open a new school, potential applicants are strongly encouraged to liaise with the Directorate of Planning and Policy in MBSSE, to ensure alignment with the Government's school infrastructure plans.

The criteria are structured in such a way to ensure schools are, in the first instance, safe, and have a management and workforce able to ensure children's safety.

For Level One Approval the school must meet all of the following Minimum Criteria, evidence of which is to be submitted in the "Level One Approval application form¹":

¹ Note that the Level One Approval application form includes information on: the details of the applicants, the details of the school, the envisaged location of the school, surrounding schools, the proposed infrastructure, estimated enrolments, the cost and financing, curriculum and staff requirements, and other aspects regarding school administration and operating. This is available from MBSSE (see Section 1.3 for the process). The Level One Approval application form should be completed as fully as possible. However, it can be noted that not all this information is specific to Level One approval.

Minimum Criteria for Level One Approval

- The proprietor and the head teacher/principal must prove they have not have criminal records. They should also have no record of tax evasion, or bankruptcy in the past ten years (if this is the case, this issue can be raised by concerned stakeholders to the District Education Office).
- Evidence of entitlement to use the land for educational purposes – such as ownership/rent/lease of the land occupied by the school.
- Existing schools must provide evidence of a functioning oversight committee. Proposed new schools must demonstrate their intent to set up an oversight committee, including having identified members and presenting their written consent to be part of the oversight committee. An oversight committee refers to:
 - a School Management Committee (SMC), in the case of a pre-primary or primary school.
 - a Board of Governors in the case of a junior secondary school or senior secondary school.
- School has a safe/clean/potable water source that is either piped, from a well or from a borehole, *and* has an available hand washing facility.
- School has adequate playing space i.e., sufficient space for all pupils of the school to run and play, of about 2.5m² per learner.
- The school building is safe and conforms to MBSSE building regulations.
- School has developed and implemented a comprehensive child safeguarding policy including publicising a safeguarding reporting process that children, teachers and parents have been made aware of.
- Proper and hygienic WASH facilities, including the provision of separate toilets for female teachers and girls.
- New schools must ensure alignment with the School Infrastructure and Catchment Area Planning Policy.

These Minimum Criteria will come into effect on the start of the 2022/2023 school year for new schools and must be met and Level One Approval granted before opening. For existing schools, where these Minimum Criteria are not met, a plan for immediate rectification will be required, and all Minimum Criteria must be met before the start of the 2023/24 school year.

All the Minimum Criteria for Level One are required, at all times, in order to remain a Level One Approved school.

Where it is found that these standards are not being met, the Government may close or change the management of the school with immediate effect, depending on the circumstances.

In addition to this, schools are expected to work towards a set of Additional Criteria. These Additional Criteria have been chosen to seek to impact most directly on learning, access and inclusion. While it is not expected that all schools meet these criteria immediately, they will be monitored as part of the re-assessment process, and schools will be expected to have clear plans in place to work towards achieving these, with agreed timeframes for doing so.

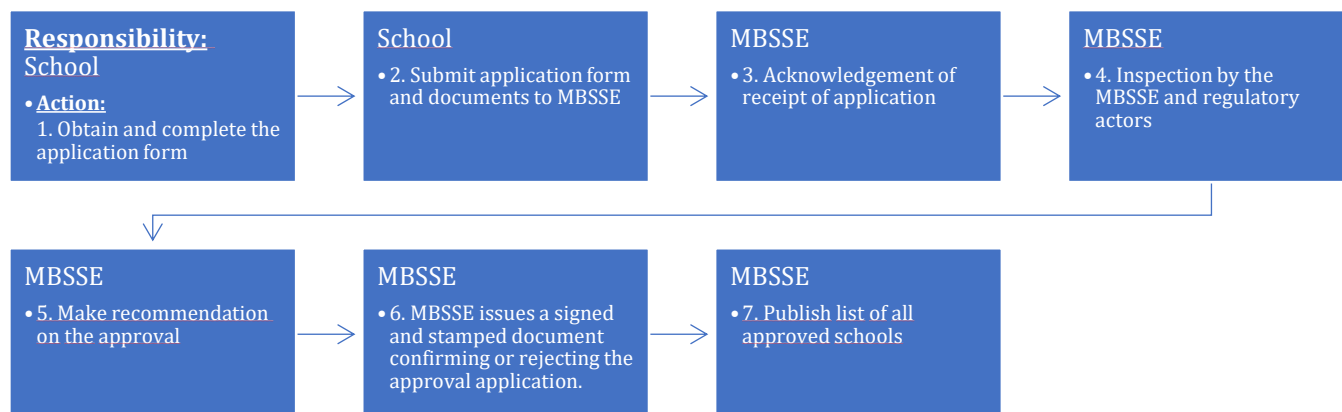
Additional Criteria

- Adequate and proper and hygienic WASH facilities, including the provision of separate toilets for female teachers and girls. The female pupil per toilet ratio should be at the most 25:1, whilst for males the ratio should be 30:1.
- Appropriate number of teachers for the curriculum to be offered with a targeted optimum pupil-to-qualified-teacher-ratio (PQTR) of 20 for pre-primary, 40 for Primary and Junior Secondary, and 35 for Senior Secondary. These teachers should meet minimum standards and be recruited in line with applicable TSC policies. In the case of Senior Secondary Schools (SSS), this includes graduate qualifications for teachers. Secondary schools should also have sufficient subject specialists, particularly in core subjects of Language, Maths and Science. The complete school workforce should also cover the additional functions required including administration, child welfare, community liaison, safety and hygiene.
- Up-to-date and correct records including staff time books, attendance registers, lesson plans and use of learning materials.
- A school size sufficient for efficient use of the teaching staff (for the majority of primary, junior secondary and senior secondary schools, this is suggested as at least 180 pupils, and is governed by the School Infrastructure and Catchment Area Planning Policy) or provisions for quality multi-grade teaching, multi-subject specialists or part-time staffing in the case of smaller schools. This should also take into account optimum class size targets of 20 for pre-primary, 40 for Primary and Junior Secondary, and 35 for Senior Secondary.
- Compliance with the Radical Inclusion policy including both the physical infrastructure (such as ramps and other provisions including toilets which clearly show the structure to be disability-friendly and inclusive) and a workforce trained to identify and meet the specific learning needs of all children.

Section 1.3. details that where schools do not meet these Additional Criteria during the re-assessment process, the school will be expected to submit a school improvement plan within six months, setting out the plans for how these Additional Criteria will be met, with relevant timeframes according to their current conditions.

1.2 LEVEL ONE APPROVAL PROCESS

The process for applying for Level One Approval is described below:



1.2.1 Step 1: Obtain and complete the application form

The application forms for school approval can be obtained from the District Education Offices free of cost or can be downloaded from the Ministry of Basic and Senior Secondary Education Website at: www.education.gov.sl. Where online applications are available, these will be the preferred means of applying.

1.2.2 Step 2: Submit application form and documents to MBSSE

All applications shall be submitted by the proprietor through the relevant District Director/Deputy Director (see Annex A) or online through the Ministry Website and must contain documentation to support each criterion, including:

- a) Completed Level One Approval Application Form (See sample in Annex B).
- b) Documentation on land ownership.
- c) Clear colour photographs (not photocopies or black and white images) of the site including each classroom, water source and WASH facilities and all the infrastructure indicated in the Minimum Criteria and Additional Criteria sections.
- d) Evidence of the membership of the School Management Committee and/or Board of Governors and any evidence of meeting minutes. For proposed new schools, this should detail the proposed members and written intent of joining the Committee/Board from each member.
- e) Completed child safeguarding policy and safeguarding reporting process.

Applications intended to be processed by the beginning of the academic year should be submitted by 15 December of the previous year. For example, all applications for Level One Approval in time for the 2023/24 school year should be submitted by 15 December 2022.

1.2.3 Step 3: Acknowledgement of receipt of application and acceptance for processing

The District Director/Deputy Director of Education shall acknowledge receipt of the application in writing within five working days of receipt, together with notification of acceptance for processing if all the relevant information is received or otherwise a request for additional information required if lacking the required information.

In difficult to reach areas, acknowledgement may be sent by text message if mobile phone coverage is available. Online applications will be acknowledged within two working days of receipt of the application.

1.2.4 Step 4: Inspection by the MBSSE

The MBSSE will verify the information provided in the application through a physical inspection by a team. The MBSSE shall endeavour to undertake this within 90 days of the application being accepted for processing. The constitution of the inspection team (including members from other institutions as well as MBSSE) is detailed in Section 2. A minimum of two days advance notice of inspection will be given.

A School Inspection Report will be prepared, shared with the school for comment, finalised and shared (including the applicant submission) to the Chief Education Officer.

1.2.5 Step 5: Make recommendation on the application

A recommendation on whether the application should be approved or not following the inspection will be made subject to endorsement and verification by the Chief Education Officer or as devolved. Approval (or otherwise) will be made by the Minister or as devolved.

1.2.6 Step 6: MBSSE issues a signed and stamped document

The MBSSE will issue a document to the school informing them of the decision that is signed and stamped by the appropriate MBSSE official. This will be issued within 90 days of the inspection. If the decision is to grant approval, this will be an approval certificate. If the decision is not to grant approval, the reasons for this decision will be detailed by MBSSE in a letter.

If the decision is not to grant Level One Approval:

- In the case of a new proposed school, this school is not allowed to open and operate as a school. The proprietor may take into account the reasons for rejection and apply again when these reasons are satisfied.
- In the case of an existing school, the Government may close or change the management of the school with immediate effect, depending on the circumstances. Where the Government chooses not to close the school, the proprietor must rectify the reasons for rejection, and apply again within one year with the reasons satisfied. The Government may close or change the management of the school at any point during this process until the reasons are satisfied. If the reasons are not

rectified by the second application, and the decision is not to grant Level One Approval for a second time, this school will be particularly considered for closure or change of management.

- If the schools are unsatisfied with the process, they may appeal through a formal appeals process. This process is detailed in Section 1.12.

1.2.7 Step 7: Publish list of all approved schools

A list of all Level One approved schools during the year, together with their School Identification Number (SIDs), shall be published (gazetted) in September of each year. The MBSSE will also formally notify the TSC, MOF, MOPED and relevant stakeholders to add the school to their systems.

1.3 LEVEL ONE RE-ASSESSMENT PROCESS

School approval is granted for a three-year period. This section sets out the process for re-approval and is applicable to all schools that were approved prior to these guidelines, and all those that are granted approval in future.

Alongside this, the process for schools that apply for Level One Approval but who are rejected is set out in Step 6 of Section 1.2.

The reassessment is automatic and does not require an application by the school.

If a school gains Level Two Approval at any point during this cycle, it is then considered as part of the Level Two Re-Assessment Process set out in Section 1.7 and no longer requires Level One Re-Assessment.

If a school applies for Level Two Approval but is not granted Level Two Approval, it is still considered as part of the Level One Re-Assessment Process – so if a school is meeting the Minimum Criteria during this inspection, then this can be used to extend for a further three-year period in lieu of an additional visit.

In the first years of the implementation of this Policy Guideline, the re-assessment process may be brought forward for some schools in order to reduce a large inspection burden occurring every three years. The three-year cycle will then apply to those schools going forwards from that initial re-assessment.

In implementing re-assessment, the MBSSE will use:

- a) Regular school visits from MBSSE staff in carrying out the functions of their other normal duties.
- b) The Annual School Census and TSC teacher records will be used as a basis to monitor that a Level One Approved school continues to meet the criteria under which it was approved, as well as the prevailing MBSSE standards for schools.

Based on information from the above, schools that are identified to be at risk of not meeting the Minimum Criteria for Level One will be prioritised for re-inspection by MBSSE during the three-year cycle. The re-inspection process is the same as set out in Step 4 to Step 7 of Section 1.2.

Where the Minimum Criteria for Level One are found to not be met, the Government may close or change the management of the school with immediate effect, depending on the circumstances.

Where the Additional Criteria are found to not be met, the school will be expected to submit a school improvement plan within six months, setting out the plans for how these Additional Criteria will be met, with relevant timeframes according to their current conditions. During the next re-assessment cycle, schools that are found to not be meeting these plans and progressing towards meeting the criteria may be subject to changes to their administration (including the School Management Committee / Board of Governors).

1.4 LEVEL TWO APPROVAL CRITERIA

Level Two Approval means that a school is eligible to receive financial support, subject to the budgets being available.

All new and existing schools applying to be eligible to receive financial support (Level Two Approval) must first have attained Level One Approval. There will be no exceptions to this.

A Level One Approved school becomes eligible to submit a Level Two Approval application after one full school year of being a Level One Approved school. After this, the application can be made at any time.

It is not required for a school to apply for Level Two Approval, but it is not possible to receive government financial support without Level Two Approval. Private schools are not eligible to apply for Level Two Approval and would therefore be required to change ownership structure before applying for and receiving Level Two Approval.

If a school's Level One Approval is temporarily revoked or suspended for any reason, the school is not able to apply for Level Two Approval until after one full school year of uninterrupted Level One Approved status.

In some circumstances, schools with Level Two Approval may wish to withdraw from Level Two Approved status and stop receiving government financial support. However, a school cannot then re-apply for Level 2 Approval within one full school year following their withdrawal. This is explained in more detail within Section 1.10.

The financial support from Level Two Approval is dependent on the availability of funds from the Government of Sierra Leone. This is explained in more detail in Section 1.6 and interacts with the process described in Section 1.5. Schools that are eligible, but that are not able to be approved within the available budgetary envelope will need to reapply again the following year.

The criteria are structured in such a way to ensure that Level Two Approved schools are safe, and also in a position to competently receive and administer government funding.

To be eligible for Level Two Approval the school must meet all of the following Minimum Criteria for Level Two Approval, which is to be submitted in the Level Two Approval application form:

Minimum Criteria for Level Two Approval

- Evidence of having met (and still meeting) all Level One Minimum Criteria and have been operating for at least one full school year.
- In the case of a Secondary School (JSS and SSS), the Principal must have at least a first degree with qualification(s) in Education.
- Evidence of meeting minutes from at least one School Management Committee or Board of Governors meeting at least once per term in the past full school year.
- Evidence of a school improvement plan agreed by the proprietor, head teacher/principal and SMC/Board of Governors.
- A bank account to receive funds into and a designated Finance Officer approved by the School Management Committee or Board of Governors.

All the Minimum Criteria for Level Two are required at all times in order to remain a Level Two Approved school.

Where it is found that these standards are not being met, the Government may remove financial support with immediate effect. The process for removing financial support is the same as set out in Step 5 to Step 7 of Section 1.11, although this may be carried out at any point during the school year, not just at the end.

For existing schools with financial support, where these Minimum Criteria are not met, a plan for immediate rectification will be required, and all Minimum Criteria must be met beginning from the 2023/24 academic year.

In addition to this, schools are expected to meet a set of Additional Criteria. These are the same Additional Criteria as for Level One. These Additional Criteria have been chosen to seek to impact most directly on learning, access and inclusion. While it is not expected that all schools meet these criteria immediately, they will be monitored as part of the re-assessment process, and schools will be expected to have clear plans in place to work towards achieving these, with agreed timeframes for doing so.

Additional Criteria

- Adequate, proper and hygienic WASH facilities, including the provision of separate toilets for female teachers and girls. The targeted optimum female pupil per toilet ratio is 25:1, whilst for males this is 30:1.
- Appropriate number of teachers for the curriculum to be offered with a targeted optimum pupil-to-qualified-teacher-ratio (PQTR) of 20 for pre-primary, 40 for Primary and Junior Secondary, and 35 for Senior Secondary. These teachers should meet minimum qualification standards and be recruited in line with applicable TSC policies. In the case of Senior Secondary Schools (SSS), this includes graduate qualifications for teachers. Secondary schools should also have sufficient subject specialists, particularly in core subjects of Language, Maths and Science. The complete school workforce should also cover the additional functions required including administration, child welfare, community liaison, safety and hygiene.

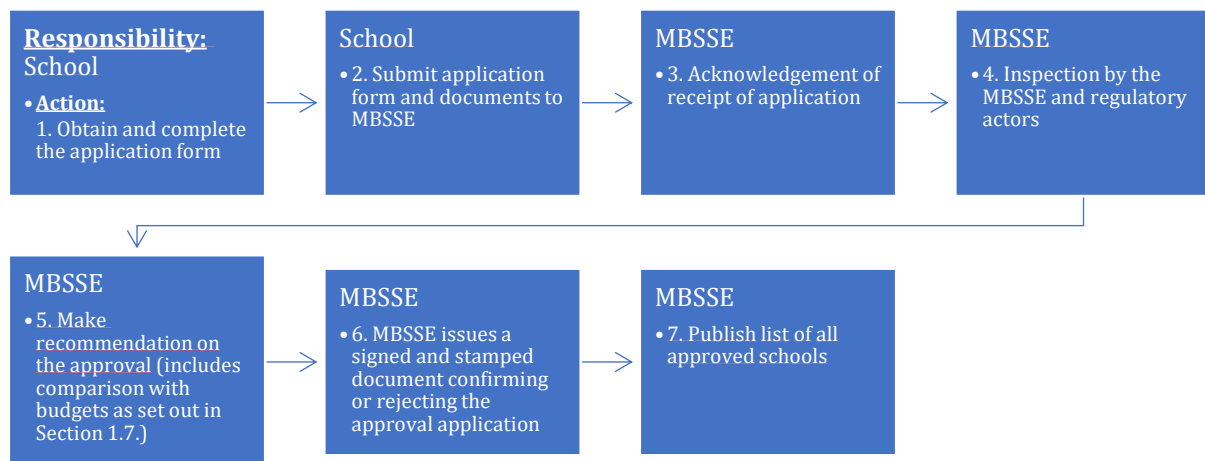
- Up-to-date and correct records including staff time-books, attendance registers, lesson plans and use of learning materials.
- A school size sufficient for efficient use of the teaching staff (for the majority of primary, junior secondary and senior secondary schools, this is suggested as at least 180 pupils, and is governed by the School Infrastructure and Catchment Area Planning Policy) or provisions for quality multi-grade teaching, multi-subject specialists or part-time staffing in the case of smaller schools. This should also take into account targeted optimum class sizes of 20 for pre-primary, 40 for Primary and Junior Secondary, and 35 for Senior Secondary.
- Compliance with the Radical Inclusion policy including both the physical infrastructure (such as ramps and other provisions including toilets which clearly show the structure to be disability-friendly and inclusive) and a workforce trained to identify and meet the specific learning needs of all children.

Section 1.6 details that where schools do not meet these Additional Criteria during the re-assessment process, the school will be expected to submit a school improvement plan within six months, setting out the plans for how these Additional Criteria will be met, with relevant timeframes according to their current conditions.

It should be noted that as they are recipients of government funding, Level Two Approved schools are expected to make greater progress towards meeting these Additional Criteria, in line with the guidelines regarding the use of school subsidies set out in the Use of School Subsidy Policy Guideline.

1.5 LEVEL TWO APPROVAL PROCESS

The process for applying for Level Two Approval is described below:



1.5.1 Step 1: Obtain and complete the application form

Application forms for school approval are obtained from the District Education Offices free of cost or can be downloaded from the Ministry of Basic and Senior Secondary Education Website at: www.education.gov.sl. Where online applications are available, these will be the preferred means of applying.

1.5.2 Step 2: Submit application form and documents to MBSSE

All applications shall be submitted by the proprietor through the relevant District Director/Deputy Director (see Annex A) or online through the Ministry Website and must contain documentation to support each criteria, including:

- a) Completed Level Two Approval Application Form (See sample in Annex C).
- b) Clear colour photographs (not photocopies or black and white images) of the site including each classroom, water source and WASH facilities and all the infrastructure indicated in the Minimum Criteria and Additional Criteria sections.
- c) Evidence of meeting minutes of School Management Committee and/or Board of Governors at least once per term for the past school year.
- d) Evidence of alignment with GoSL school infrastructure plans.
- e) School improvement plan approved and signed off by School Management Committee and/or Board of Governors.
- f) Details of nominated Finance Officer approved by School Management Committee or Board of Governors.
- g) Bank account details.

Applications intended to be processed by the beginning of the academic year should be submitted by 15 December of the previous year. For example, all applications for Level Two Approval in time for the 2023/24 school year should be submitted by 15 December 2022.

1.5.3 Step 3: Acknowledgement of receipt of application

Acknowledgement of receipt of application shall be made in writing within 5 working days of receipt by the District Director/Deputy Director of Education. In difficult to reach areas acknowledgement may be sent by text message if mobile phone coverage is available. Online applications will be acknowledged within 2 working days of receipt of the application.

1.5.4 Step 4: Inspection by the MBSSE

The MBSSE will verify the information provided in the application through a physical inspection. The MBSSE shall endeavour to undertake this within 90 days of the application being accepted for processing. A minimum of two days advance notice of inspection will be given.

A School Inspection Report will be prepared, shared with the school for comment, finalised and shared (including the applicant submission) to the Chief Education Officer.

1.5.5 Step 5: Make recommendation on the approval

The recommendation made on the Level Two Approval application form, following inspection, shall be subject to the availability of funds, endorsement and verification of the Chief Education Officer and the approval of the Minister or as devolved.

This step includes the process for determining Level Two Approval prioritisation in constrained budgets as set out in Section 1.7.

1.5.6 Step 6: MBSSE issues a signed and stamped document

The MBSSE will issue a document to the school confirming the decision that is signed and stamped by the appropriate MBSSE official. This will be issued within 90 days of the inspection. If the decision is to grant approval, this will be an approval certificate. If the decision is not to grant approval, the reasons for this decision will be detailed by MBSSE in a letter.

If the decision is not to grant Level Two approval:

- The proprietor may take into account the reasons for rejection, and apply again when these reasons are satisfied.

1.5.7 Step 7: Publish list of all approved schools

A list of all Level Two approved schools during the year, together with their School Identification Number (SIDs), shall be published (gazetted) in September of each year. The MBSSE will also formally notify the TSC, MOF, MOPED and relevant stakeholders to add the school to their systems.

Note that guidelines regarding the use of school subsidies, for those schools that receive them, are set out in the Policy Guidelines on the Use of Subsidy.

1.6 DETERMINING LEVEL TWO APPROVAL PRIORITISATION IN CONSTRAINED BUDGETS

In the event that more schools apply and meet the Level Two Minimum Criteria than can be incorporated within the available budgetary envelope, there will be a prioritisation process to determine which schools are granted Level Two Approval.

It is important to note that this prioritisation process only concerns schools being newly approved for Level Two Approval. Schools that are already Level Two Approved are not affected or included in this process.

It is also important to note that this prioritisation process does not affect the amount of subsidy payable to Level Two Approved schools. This amount is not affected for schools that are already Level Two Approved or schools newly approved for Level Two Approval.

The Level Two Approval Process described in Section 1.6.5. refers in Step 5 to this process of determining Level Two Approval prioritisation in constrained budgets. To identify if this situation applies, steps 1-3 of the process below will be carried out every year. If this situation does apply, then steps 4-6 of the process below will be carried out to decide which schools get Level Two Approval. Schools that are eligible but are not able to be approved within the available budgetary envelope will need to reapply again the following year.

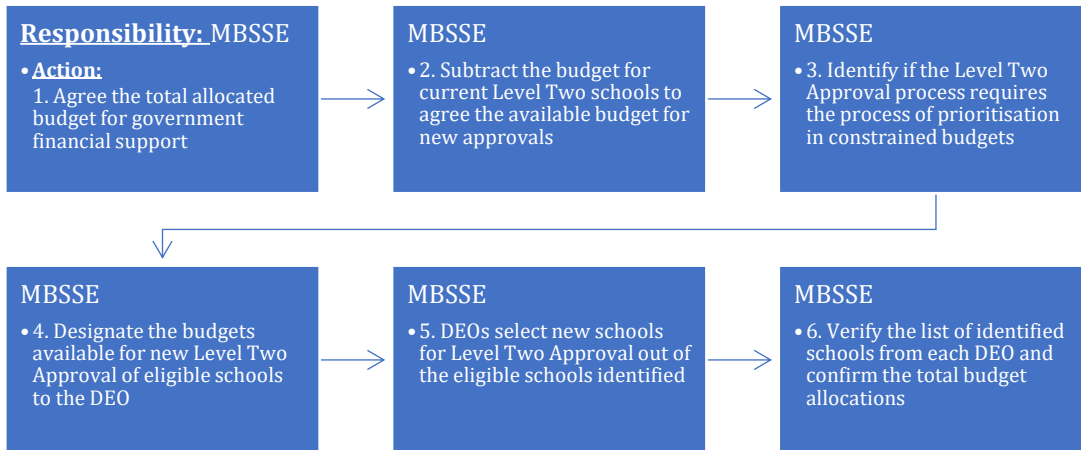
The process follows a two-stage prioritisation:

1. The budgets available for new approval of eligible schools are designated to the DEO.

- The eligible schools identified for new approval are selected by the DEO, and then verified by MBSSE at the central level.

Local councils play a role in the verification, but decision making is within MBSSE.

The process follows the steps described below:



1.6.1 Step 1: Agree the total allocated budget for government financial support

The MBSSE will liaise with the Ministry of Finance, the Ministry of Planning and Economic Development and other ministries as needed, to agree the total allocated budget for government financial support for schools for the upcoming period.

1.6.2 Step 2: Agree the available budget for new approvals

The MBSSE will then compare the agreed total allocated budget with the current obligations in terms of the schools already with Level Two Approval and their number of pupils. The MBSSE will then subtract the current obligations from the total allocated budget, to agree the available budget for new Level Two Approvals in the upcoming period.

1.6.3 Step 3: Identify if the Level Two Approval process requires the process of prioritisation in constrained budgets

The MBSSE calculates the total budget requirements of the list of schools that have been recommended as eligible for Level Two Approval, and their enrolments, as described in Section 1.6.5. The total budget requirements of the eligible schools are then compared to the available budget for new Level Two Approvals.

If the total budget requirement of the eligible schools is less than the available budget, then steps 4-8 are not needed, and those eligible schools are then subject only to the endorsement and verification process as described in Section 1.6.5.

If the total budget requirement of the eligible schools exceeds the available budget, then steps 4-8 will be followed to decide prioritisation and which schools are identified for Level Two Approval.

1.6.4 Step 4: Designate the budgets available for new Level Two Approval of eligible schools to the DEO

The MBSSE, in conjunction with the Ministry of Finance, and other ministries as needed, will designate the budgets available for new approval of eligible schools to the DEOs. This will be based on the shares of children that are not yet in supported schools within that local council. Private schools will be removed from the data before undergoing this process.

1.6.5 Step 5: DEOs select new schools for Level Two Approval out of the eligible schools identified

Each DEO, supported by the local councils, will then identify the schools to be approved from the list of eligible schools. This is based on factors to prioritise support to schools in underserved areas and maximise the ability for children to access financially supported schools. These factors are: the distance of that school to the nearest Level Two Approved school, and the relative wealth of the area. An equal weighting is applied to these two factors. This will ensure a school that is far from other Level Two Approved schools, and in a poorer area, is prioritised to get Level Two Approval.

Support will be provided to DEOs in the calculation of this school-level prioritisation, and additional details on this process may be updated in accompanying Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs).

1.6.6 Step 6: Verify the list of identified schools from each DEO and confirm the total budget allocations

The MBSSE verifies the list of identified schools from each DEO against the Annual School Census data and school inspection reports as necessary. The MBSSE also verifies the total list of identified schools and their total budget implications against the total budget allocation. In the event of discrepancies, the MBSSE will follow up with DEOs, local councils and schools as necessary.

The list of identified schools is then subject to the final endorsement and verification process as described in Section 1.6.5. This includes the endorsement and verification of the Chief Education Officer and the approval of the Minister or as devolved.

1.7 LEVEL TWO RE-ASSESSMENT PROCESS

The Level Two re-assessment process refers to schools that have been granted Level Two Approval. This includes schools that were previously approved before the introduction of these Policy Guidelines who have retained their status, or schools that have been granted approval under the processes set out in these Policy Guidelines.

The process for schools that apply for Level Two Approval but who are rejected is set out in Step 6 of Section 1.5.

The Level Two re-assessment process applies to all Level Two Approved schools on a three-year cycle. This re-assessment is automatic and does not require an application by the school.

In the first few years of the implementation of this Policy Guideline, the re-assessment process may be brought forward for some schools in order to reduce a large inspection burden occurring every three years. The three-year cycle will then apply to those schools going forwards from that initial re-assessment.

In implementing re-assessment, the MBSSE will use:

- a) Regular school visits from MBSSE staff in carrying out the functions of their other normal duties.
- b) The Annual School Census and TSC teacher records will be used as a basis to monitor that a Level Two Approved school continues to meet the criteria under which it was approved as well as the prevailing fully shared MBSSE standards for schools.

Based on information from the above, schools that are identified to be at risk of not meeting the Minimum Criteria for Level One and the Minimum Criteria for Level Two will be prioritised for re-inspection by MBSSE during the three-year cycle. The re-inspection process is the same as set out in Step 4 to Step 7 of Section 1.5.

Where the Minimum Criteria for Level One are found to not be met, the Government may remove financial support with immediate effect and may also close or change the management of the school with immediate effect, depending on the circumstances.

Where the Minimum Criteria for Level Two are found to not be met, the government may remove financial support with immediate effect. The process for removing financial support is the same as set out in Step 5 to Step 7 of Section 1.11, although this may be carried out at any point during the school year, not just at the end.

Where the Additional Criteria are found to not be met, the school will be expected to submit a school improvement plan within six months, setting out the plans for how these Additional Criteria will be met, with relevant timeframes according to their current conditions. During the next re-assessment cycle, schools that are found to not be meeting these plans and progressing towards meeting the criteria may be subject to changes to their administration (including the School Management Committee / Board of Governors).

It should be noted that as they are recipients of government funding, Level Two Approved schools are expected to make greater progress towards meeting these Additional Criteria, in line with the guidelines regarding the use of school subsidies set out in the Use of School Subsidy Policy Guidelines.

1.8 LEVEL ONE WITHDRAWAL CRITERIA

In the context of the School Approval Policy Guidelines, 'withdrawal' refers to the process of a school requesting to give up its approval status. In the case of Level Two Withdrawal this means requesting to stop receiving government financial support. In the case of Level One Withdrawal this means requesting to stop operating and close down. Note that this is different to the Use of Subsidy Policy Guidelines where 'withdrawal' refers to the process in which school leaders access the subsidy funds.

In some circumstances, schools with Level One Approval may wish to stop operating and close down. Whilst this is allowed, it is important that there are procedures in place to minimize any potential disruption resulting from closing down of a school in a locality.

A school that wishes to withdraw from Level One Approved status means that the school owner wishes to stop operations of the school altogether and close down the school. It is not possible for any school to withdraw from Level One Approval and yet continue to operate as an education entity providing educational services at any level (pre-primary, primary, JSS or SSS).

It is important that school owners/proprietors consider any decision to withdraw from Level One Approved status very carefully. Once the withdrawal process is complete and withdrawal from Level One Approved status has been granted, this will be taken into consideration during evaluation of any applications for Level One Approval they may wish to make in the future.

It is important to understand that even after the school owner/proprietor has made an application to withdraw from Level One Approved status, the school is legally obliged to continue providing educational services to the community unless the application has been approved by the MBSSE and the terms of school closure have been agreed between the Ministry and the School Owner/Proprietor. During this time the school must meet all Level One criteria.

It is also important to understand that applying for Withdrawal from Level One status doesn't guarantee that the application will be accepted/approved. The Government has the right to reject the Level One Withdrawal application to ensure children's education is not disrupted. This may include requiring the current school owner to continue running the school for an agreed length of time, whilst alternative provisions are being made for students attending the school, in which case they must continue to do so in accordance with the Level One Approval Criteria. Failure to do so may result in legal and financial action against the School Owner/Proprietor.

Level Two Approved schools cannot withdraw from Level Two and Level One Approved status in the same academic year. They must first withdraw from Level Two Approved status and then apply for withdrawal from Level One approved status in the subsequent school year.

In considering the application for the Withdrawal from Level One Approval, the government may decide to, require the proprietor/owner to continue/ transfer the ownership to a new proprietor/owner / take ownership of the school directly, or allow the school to close down. The decision taken will depend on a number of criteria including the reason for withdrawal, availability, enrolment and capacity of other schools in the area, presence and interest from other proprietors and school building ownership status (rented, owned, leased). The decision will also take into account the level and qualification of teaching staff in the school and the school's academic record.

In particular, this decision will take into account if there are feasible alternative schools (i.e. schools of the same level that accept the genders of students currently enrolled at the withdrawing school, and have capacity to accept the relevant numbers of students in each

grade) in the nearby area as the school that wishes to withdraw, if there are other interested proprietors to take over the school, or if the government is able and willing to take over the school.

Schools can make a withdrawal application at any time during the school year. However, the withdrawal, if approved, will only come into effect from the end of the following school year. In order to be considered for withdrawal at the end of the following school year, the application to withdraw must be submitted and received by the District Director/Deputy Director by the 30th April. In other words, a withdrawal application submitted before 30th April 2023, that was successfully approved before the 2023/24 school year begins but would still not come into effect until the end of that school year, with the school closing or switching ownership as of the 2024/25 school year.

The minimum duration of the notice of intent to withdraw has to be one full school year in order to give students who had entered the school a chance to find an alternative. Additionally, students in the final and next to final (penultimate) grade of a level of schooling must be allowed to continue and complete the level in the same school. This is because the Continuous Assessment (CASS) requirements of WAEC end of level examinations would cause the school to which they transfer some difficulties.

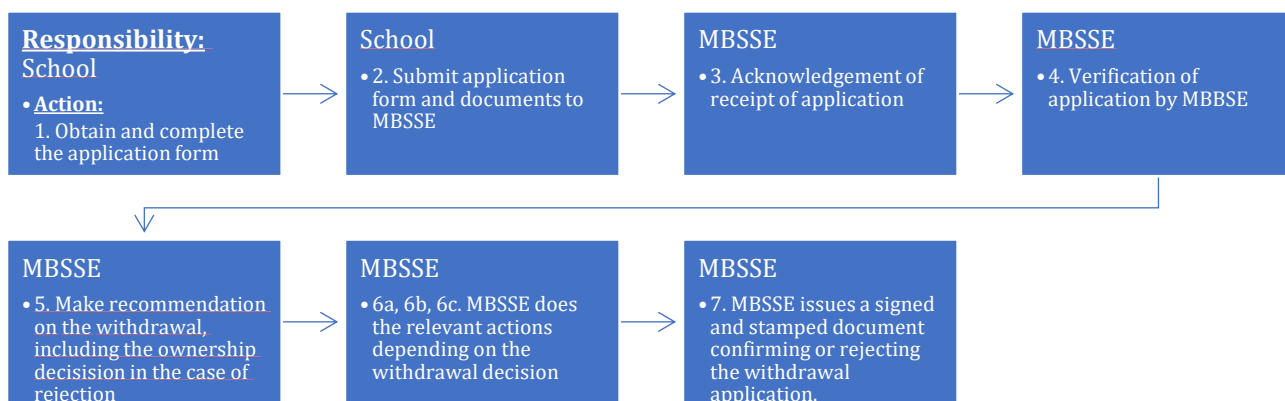
To be eligible to withdraw from Level One Approved Status the school must meet all the following Minimum Criteria:

Minimum Criteria for Level One Approval Withdrawal – School Closure

The School Owner/proprietor must provide a withdrawal Declaration signed by the proprietor, head teacher/principal, and the chairperson of the SMC/BoG detailing that they each understand that withdrawal from Level One Approved status means that the school will either close down or the ownership will be transferred to the Government or another proprietor and that this will be taken into consideration during any applications for Level One Approval the school owner may wish to make in the future.. This must also be accompanied by the Minutes of a SMC/BoG meeting, with a quorum, at which the matter was fully discussed and at which a formal representative of the MBSSE was present.

1.9 LEVEL ONE WITHDRAWAL PROCESS

The process for applying for Withdrawal from Level One Approved Status is described below:



1.9.1 Step 1: Obtain and complete the application form

Application forms for Level One Withdrawal are obtained from the District Education Offices free of cost or can be downloaded from the Ministry of Basic and Senior Secondary Education Website at: www.education.gov.sl. Where online applications are available, these will be the preferred means of applying for withdrawal.

1.9.2 Step 2: Submit application form and documents to MBSSE

All applications shall be submitted by the proprietor through the relevant District Director/Deputy Director (see Annex A) or online through the Ministry Website and must contain documentation to support each criterion, including:

- a) Completed Level One Withdrawal Application Form (See sample in Annex D).
- b) Copy of MBSSE issued letter confirming Level Two Withdrawal (required only if the school has at any time been Level Two Approved).
- c) Withdrawal declaration signed by the proprietor, head teacher/principal, and the chairperson of the SMC/BoG.
- d) The Minutes of a SMC/BoG meeting, with a quorum, at which the matter was fully discussed and at which a formal representative of the MBSSE was present.

The timelines for schools to make a withdrawal application, and the timings at which that application would be able to come into effect are discussed in detail in Section 1.8.

1.9.3 Step 3: Acknowledgement of receipt of application

Acknowledgement of receipt of application shall be made in writing within 5 working days of receipt by the District Director/Deputy Director of Education. In difficult to reach areas acknowledgement may be sent by text message if mobile phone coverage is available. Online applications will be acknowledged within 2 working days of receipt of the application.

1.9.4 Step 4: Verification of application by the MBSSE

The MBSSE will verify the information provided in the application by contacting the nearest approved school details provided in the application and the SMC/BoG members. The MBSSE shall endeavor to undertake this within 45 days of the application being accepted for processing.

A Withdrawal Report will be prepared, finalised and shared (including the applicant submission) to the Chief Education Officer.

1.9.5 Step 5: Make recommendation on whether Withdrawal Application is rejected without proprietor change, rejected with proprietor change, or accepted

The recommendation made on the Level One Withdrawal application form, following verification, shall be subject to the endorsement and verification of the Chief Education Officer and the approval of the Minister or as devolved.

The MBSSE will make a decision to either:

- (a) Reject Level One Withdrawal and require the proprietor to continue running the school
- (b) Reject Level One Withdrawal and transfer the management of the school to a new proprietor, or to the government
- (c) Accept the Level One Withdrawal and allow the school to close down

The decision on which option to take will depend on a number of factors including:

1. Reason for level one withdrawal;
2. Presence of other schools offering education at same level and gender in neighbouring area;
3. Enrolment in the neighbouring schools;
4. Status of school building;
5. Status of teaching staff;
6. Academic track record of the school; and
7. Availability/interest from other proprietors to take over or start schools in the area.

Details on the process in case of each of the option (a) to (c) are provided in steps 6a to 6c.

1.9.6 Step 6a: MBSSE rejects Level One Withdrawal and requires the proprietor to continue running the school

In case of option (a) where the MBSSE decides to reject the Level One Withdrawal application the School Owner/Proprietor will be notified before 30th June of the year in which the application was made. In this case a letter will be issued to the proprietor, relevant District Education Office and schools' SMC/BoG detailing the reasons for application rejection. MBSSE will also include in the proprietor's legal obligation to continue running the school and meet all Level One approval criteria. The MBSSE, depending on proprietor's reason for Level One Withdrawal, will also provide contact information of key offices that could help the proprietor overcome the issues that may have led them to apply for Level One Withdrawal.

1.9.7 Step 6b: MBSSE rejects Level One Withdrawal but allows the School Owner/Proprietor to leave and transfer management of the school

In the case of option (b) where the MBSSE decides to reject the closure of the school but instead allow the School Owner/Proprietor to leave school and transfer management to a new school owner or to the government. In either case the MBSSE will provide a detailed letter to the School Owner relieving them of their duties. The MBSSE will also provide detailed information in writing to the local District Education Office and the SMC/BoG about what the change in management means for them and their respective roles in the smooth transition of management.

In case there is a suitable proprietor interested in managing the school, the MBSSE may decide to handover the management of the school to this new owner. The Owner will have to comply with the criteria put in place by MBSSE and detailed in the rest of the School Approval Policy Guidelines. The MBSSE will work with the existing School Owner/Proprietor and the new potential Proprietor to smoothly hand over the management of the school.

The government may also alternatively decide to directly take over the management of the school. Again, the school will have to comply with the criteria put in place by MBSSE and detailed in the rest of the School Approval Policy Guidelines. The MBSSE will work with the existing School Owner/Proprietor to smoothly hand over the management of the school.

1.9.8 Step 6c: MBSSE accepts Level One Withdrawal and allows the school to close down

In the case of option (c) where the MBSSE decides to accept the Level One Withdrawal and the closure of the school. In this case the MBSSE will provide a detailed letter to the School Owner on steps that need to be undertaken before the school can be closed and the timeline for this. MBSSE will also send the letter to local District Education Office to ensure all students enrolled in closing school are supported to transfer to other schools before the school is closed.

The list of schools to be withdrawn from Level One Approval (list of schools to be closed), and the date at which that closure will come into force, shall be sent by the Directorate of Planning and Policy of MBSSE to the Ministry of Finance, the Ministry of Planning and Economic Development and the Teaching Service Commission by 30th June each year. MBSSE will engage with these institutions to ensure that any existing support and/or payroll of teachers is stopped by the time of school closure.

The list of schools to be closed, and the date at which that withdrawal will come into force, shall also be shared by the Directorate of Planning and Policy of MBSSE to the other relevant directorates within MBSSE.

1.9.9 Step 7: MBSSE issues a signed and stamped application decision document

The MBSSE will issue a document to the school confirming the decision that is signed and stamped by the CEO.

Applicants will be notified of their approval or rejection within 60 days. If the decision is to accept the withdrawal, this will be a withdrawal letter. If the decision is to reject withdrawal (and either require the proprietor to continue running the school, or allow the School Owner/Proprietor to leave and transfer management of the school), the reasons for this decision and the next steps will be detailed by MBSSE in a letter.

If the decision is to accept Level One Withdrawal and allow the school to close down:

- The school administration will be required to send the original Level One Approval Certificate back to MBSSE within 2 weeks of the date at which their withdrawal comes into force. Failure to send the certificate back within the allocated time may result in financial penalty.

The MBSSE will ensure that this withdrawal of Level One Approved status is aligned across their data systems. These schools will no longer be included in the published list of Level One Approved schools, as detailed in step 7 of the Approval Processes within Section 1.2.

1.10 LEVEL TWO WITHDRAWAL CRITERIA

In some circumstances, schools with Level Two Approval may wish to withdraw from Level Two Approved status and stop receiving government financial support. Whilst this is allowed, it is important that there are procedures in place to minimize any potential disruption resulting from this change in approval status.

A school that wishes to withdraw from Level Two Approved status will be signalling that it intends to become a private school or ceasing operations and has no intention to apply for Level Two Approval and government financial support in the future. As explained in the introduction, there are types of support which vary depending upon the types of school. A school that withdraws from Level Two Approval would therefore only be eligible for the types of support available for Level One Approved Schools which intend to always remain private schools.

It is not possible to withdraw from Level Two Approval and yet continue receiving the additional types of support, and in particular the school subsidies and teacher salaries that are specifically referred to as 'financial support'. A school that wishes to withdraw from Level Two Approval must continue to meet all Minimum Criteria for Level Two Approval at all times until the withdrawal is completed. All schools must continue to meet all Minimum Criteria for Level One Approval at all times regardless of Level Two Approval status.

It is important that schools consider any decision to withdraw from Level Two Approved status very carefully. A Level Two Approved school may not apply to withdraw from Level Two Approved status until after one full school year of being a Level Two Approved school. Once the withdrawal process is complete and withdrawal from Level 2 Approved status has been granted, the school cannot then re-apply for Level 2 Approval within one full school year following their withdrawal.

If a school's Level Two Approval is temporarily revoked or suspended for any reason, the school is not allowed to apply for withdrawal from Level Two Approval until after this situation has been resolved and the school has had one full school year of uninterrupted Level Two Approved status.

The criteria and process are structured in such a way to ensure that schools withdrawing from Level Two Approved status continue to abide by minimum requirements, and to minimize any potential disruption resulting from this change in their approval status, whilst continuing to ensure the safety, access and quality of education for all students.

Schools can make a withdrawal application at any time during the school year. However, the withdrawal, if approved, will only come into effect from the end of the following school year. In order to be considered for withdrawal at the end of the following school year, the application to withdraw must be submitted and received by the District Director/Deputy Director by the 30th April. In other words, a withdrawal application submitted before 30th April 2023, that was successfully approved before the 2023/24 school year begins but would still not come into effect until the end of that school year, with the school switching to Level One Approval as of the 2024/25 school year.

In the event that there are no suitable alternative schools (i.e., financially supported schools of the same school level and that accept the genders of students currently enrolled at the withdrawing school) within 2km of the school that wishes to withdraw, the withdrawal application must be submitted three years before the school is eligible to withdraw. In other words, a withdrawal application submitted before 30th April 2023, that was successfully approved before the 2023/24 school year begins but would still not come into effect until the end of that school year, with the school switching to Level One Approval as of the 2026/27 school year.

The minimum duration of the notice of intent to withdraw has to be one full school year in order to give students who had entered the school when it was Level Two Approved a chance to find an alternative. Additionally, students in the final and next to final (penultimate) grade of a level of schooling must be allowed to continue and complete the level under the same conditions under which they had entered the school (i.e., without being charged tuition fees, exam fees and other relevant conditions). This is because the Continuous Assessment (CASS) requirements at the end of level WAEC examinations would cause the school to which they transfer some difficulties.

To be eligible to withdraw from Level Two Approved Status the school must meet all the following Minimum Criteria:

Minimum Criteria for Level Two Approval Withdrawal

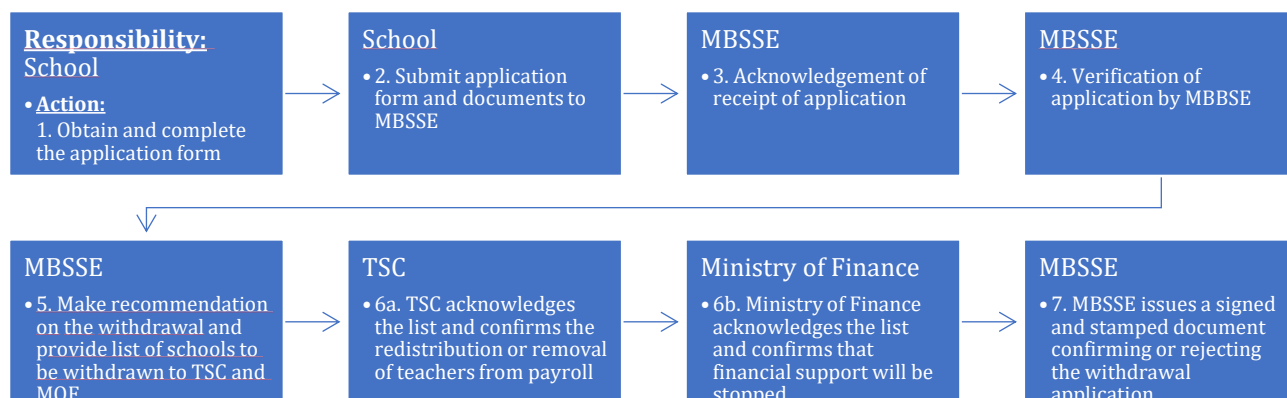
- Evidence of having met (and still meeting) all Level Two Minimum Criteria and have been Level Two Approved, without interruption, for the previous full school year.
- Withdrawal Declaration signed by the proprietor, head teacher/principal, and the chairperson of the SMC/BoG detailing that they each understand that withdrawal from Level Two Approved status means that the school will stop receiving the types of support detailed above, including financial support, and that the school will not be able to re-apply for Level Two Approval within one full school year following their

withdrawal). This must also be accompanied by the Minutes of a SMC/BoG meeting, with a quorum, at which the matter was fully discussed and at which a formal representative of the MBSSE was present.

All the Minimum Criteria for Level Two Withdrawal are required to withdraw from Level Two Approved status.

1.11 LEVEL TWO WITHDRAWAL PROCESS

The process for applying for Withdrawal from Level Two Approved Status is described below:



1.11.1 Step 1: Obtain and complete the application form

Application forms for Level Two Withdrawal are obtained from the District Education Offices free of cost or can be downloaded from the Ministry of Basic and Senior Secondary Education Website at: www.education.gov.sl. Where online applications are available, these will be the preferred means of applying for withdrawal.

1.11.2 Step 2: Submit application form and documents to MBSSE

All applications shall be submitted by the proprietor through the relevant District Director/Deputy Director (see Annex A) or online through the Ministry Website and must contain documentation to support each criterion, including:

- e) Completed Level Two Withdrawal Application Form (See sample in Annex E).
- f) Copy of MBSSE issued letter confirming Level Two Approval.
- g) Original Bank Statements for the latest school year showing details of the financial support received.
- h) Withdrawal declaration signed by the proprietor, head teacher/principal, and the chairperson of the SMC/BoG.
- i) The Minutes of a SMC/BoG meeting, with a quorum, at which the matter was fully discussed and at which a formal representative of the MBSSE was present.

The timelines for schools to make a withdrawal application, and the timings at which that application would be able to come into effect are discussed in detail in Section 1.10.

1.11.3 Step 3: Acknowledgement of receipt of application

Acknowledgement of receipt of application shall be made in writing within 5 working days of receipt by the District Director/Deputy Director of Education. In difficult to reach areas acknowledgement may be sent by text message if mobile phone coverage is available. Online applications will be acknowledged within 2 working days of receipt of the application.

1.11.4 Step 4: Verification of application by the MBSSE

The MBSSE will verify the information provided in the application by contacting the Bank, MOF, nearest approved school details provided in the application and the SMC/BoG members. The MBSSE shall endeavor to undertake this within 45 days of the application being accepted for processing.

A Withdrawal Report will be prepared, finalised and shared (including the applicant submission) to the Chief Education Officer.

1.11.5 Step 5: Make recommendation on the withdrawal and provide list of schools to be withdrawn to the Ministry of Finance

The recommendation made on the Level Two Withdrawal application form, following verification, shall be subject to the endorsement and verification of the Chief Education Officer and the approval of the Minister or as devolved.

The list of schools to be withdrawn from Level Two Approval, and the date at which that withdrawal will come into force, shall be sent by the Directorate of Planning and Policy of MBSSE to the Ministry of Finance, the Ministry of Planning and Economic Development and the Teaching Service Commission by 30th June each year.

The list of schools to be withdrawn from Level Two Approval, and the date at which that withdrawal will come into force, shall also be shared by the Directorate of Planning and Policy of MBSSE to the other relevant directorates within MBSSE, which will take the required actions with regard to the in-kind materials, school feeding, and WASSCE exam fees that the school to be withdrawn from Level Two Approval is no longer eligible for.

1.11.6 Step 6a: TSC acknowledges the list and confirms the redistribution or removal of teachers from payroll

The Teaching Service Commission will acknowledge receipt of the list of schools to be withdrawn from Level Two Approval, and the date at which that withdrawal will come into force. The TSC will identify if there are any teachers or staff that are currently on government payroll at any of the schools to be withdrawn from Level Two Approval. If this is the case, the TSC will have the authority to, on a case-by-case basis, either redistribute the payroll teacher to another school (in agreement with that teacher and the head teacher/principal at the proposed school), or remove the teacher from the payroll and re-assign the payroll slot. It is not possible for a teacher to remain on government payroll and continue teaching at the school once it is withdrawn from Level Two Approval.

The Teaching Service Commission will engage with the Ministry of Finance to ensure the decided action has been incorporated into payroll systems, and formally confirm this in a letter to the Directorate of Planning and Policy of MBSSE by 15th July each year.

Step 6a is to be carried out at the same time as Step 6b. The process does not need to wait for Step 6a to be completed before Step 6b begins.

1.11.6 Step 6b: Ministry of Finance acknowledges the list and confirms that financial support will be stopped

The Ministry of Finance will acknowledge receipt of the list of schools to be withdrawn from Level Two Approval, and the date at which that withdrawal will come into force. The Ministry of Finance will ensure that financial support will be stopped to those schools at the date at which the withdrawal will come into force, and formally confirm this in a letter to the Directorate of Planning and Policy of MBSSE by 15th July each year.

Step 6a is to be carried out at the same time as Step 6b. The process does not need to wait for Step 6a to be completed before Step 6b begins.

1.11.7 Step 7: MBSSE issues a signed and stamped document

The MBSSE will issue a document to the school confirming the decision that is signed and stamped by the appropriate MBSSE official.

Applicants will be notified of their approval within 60 days. If the decision is to grant withdrawal, this will be a withdrawal letter. If the decision is not to grant withdrawal, the reasons for this decision will be detailed by MBSSE in a letter.

If the decision is to grant Level Two withdrawal:

- The school administration will be required to send the original Level Two Approval Certificate back to MBSSE within 2 weeks of the date at which their withdrawal comes into force. Failure to send the certificate back within the allocated time may result in financial penalty.

The MBSSE will ensure that this withdrawal of Level Two Approved status is aligned across their data systems. These schools will no longer be included in the published list of Level Two Approved schools, as detailed in step 7 of the Approval Processes within Section 1.5.

1.12 APPEAL PROCESS

A school or schools which have been denied approval either initially or at re-assessment, at either Level One or Level Two Approval, or Withdrawal from Level One or Two Approval can lodge an appeal against the decision.

Within 30 days of being informed of the decision of the Minister, a school can lodge an appeal against the decision.

The appeal must indicate the following:

- a) The basis of the appeal.
- b) Any new information which the appellant believes was not taken into consideration at the time.

c) Any other information relevant to the matter.

The appeal committee, membership of which is set out in Section 2, conducts an initial desk review of the appeal. If deemed necessary by the committee, additional inspections and visits may be arranged.

The appeal committee shall endeavour to undertake this within 90 days of the appeal being accepted for processing. In the event of an inspection, a minimum of two days advance notice of inspection will be given.

The recommendation of the appeal committee, and the subsequent processes, will be made in line with steps 5, 6, 7 of the relevant approval level process set out in Sections 1.2, 1.5, 1.9 and 1.11.

SECTION 2: ACCOUNTABILITY, ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Responsibilities

Within the MBSSE processes, including those covered in Step 3 to Step 7 of the Approval Processes within Section 1.3 and 1.6, in Step 1 to Step 6 within Section 1.7, and in Step 3 to Step 7 of the Withdrawal processes within Section 1.9 and 11.1, the following responsibilities are delineated.

MBSSE District Education Office

- Receive and respond to queries on School Approvals.
- Receive and acknowledge applications.
- Contact applicant for more information, if required.
- Verify applicant submission with District Director/Deputy Director of Education who will conduct initial verification and report.
- Apply criteria, determine and coordinate Inspection Team and Visit (acting as Chair of the Inspection Team).
- Arrange and conduct Inspection Visit (IV) in coordination with District Director.
- Prepare School Assessment Report (SAR) including an Inspection Visit, if applicable, (and gain concurrence from Inspection Team, if applicable). Where the school is an existing school, previous reports by the Inspection Directorate of MBSSE should also be taken into account.
- Share School Assessment Report with applicant for comment.
- Submit final School Assessment Report including applicant submission to Chief Education Officer.
- Respond and deal with appeals.
- Initiate the re-assessment process and lead it as above (Step 4 to Step 7 of the Approval Processes within Section 1.3 and 1.6, and Step 1 to Step 6 within Section 1.7).
- Contribute to the process for determining Level Two Approval prioritisation in constrained budgets.

MBSSE Chief Education Officer (or as devolved)

- Reviews Applicant Documentation and Assessment Report.
- Reviews and endorses schools to be approved and not approved for onward submission to the Minister (MBSSE).

MBSSE Minister (or as devolved)

- Approves or otherwise of recommendation.
- Inform applicant school of outcome of application (including any conditions).
- If approved, inform all MBSSE Directorates to add school to respective approved school lists), TSC, MOF and MOPED.

MBSSE Directorate of Planning and Policy

- Regularly review the process for School Approvals for monitoring and evaluation purposes, and for future improvements.
- Maintaining databases of approved schools.
- Lead the process for determining Level Two Approval prioritisation in constrained budgets.
- Will send the list of schools, if any, to be withdrawn from Level Two Approval, and the date at which that withdrawal will come into force, to the Ministry of Finance, Teaching Service Commission and all relevant directorates within MBSSE.

Local Council

- A representative of the Local Council is included within the inspection team set out below.
- Local Councils support the DEO in verification activities throughout the processes set out in Section 1.2, 1.3, 1.5, 1.6, 1.7, 1.9 and 1.11.

Schools

- Schools are responsible for ensuring their successful application for Level One Approval within the required timeframes.
- Maintaining schools at the Minimum Criteria required for their Approval Level at all times, and working to meet the Additional Criteria to maximise learning, access and inclusion for all children within appropriate timeframes.
- Initiating the approvals process in obtaining, completing and submitting the necessary documents required for Level One Approval and Level Two Approval (Step 1 and Step 2 of the Approval Processes within Section 1.3 and 1.6) or for Level One Withdrawal and Level Two Withdrawal (Step 1 and Step 2 of the Withdrawal Processes within Section 1.9 and 1.11).

Ministry of Finance

- Liaise with MBSSE regarding the total allocated budget for government financial support for schools for the upcoming period.
- Acknowledge receipt of the list of schools to be withdrawn from Level One and Level Two Approval, and the date at which that withdrawal will come into force,

and ensure that financial support will be stopped to those schools at the date at which the withdrawal will come into force, and formally confirm this in a letter to the Directorate of Planning and Policy of MBSSE.

- Cooperate with the Teaching Service Commission to ensure the decided action for any teachers on government payroll that are in schools to be withdrawn has been incorporated into payroll systems.

Ministry of Planning and Economic Development

- Liaise with MBSSE regarding the total allocated budget for government financial support for schools for the upcoming period.
- Acknowledge receipt of the list of schools to be withdrawn from Level One and Level Two Approval and the date at which that withdrawal will come into force.

Teaching Service Commission

- Acknowledge receipt of the list of schools to be withdrawn from Level Two Approval, and the date at which that withdrawal will come into force and identify if there are any teachers or staff that are currently on government payroll at any of those schools. If this is the case, the TSC will, on a case-by-case basis, either redistribute the payroll teacher to another school (in agreement with that teacher and the head teacher/principal at the proposed school) or remove the teacher from the payroll and re-assign the payroll slot.
- Engage with the Ministry of Finance to ensure the decided action for any teachers on government payroll that are in schools to be withdrawn has been incorporated into payroll systems, and formally confirm this in a letter to the Directorate of Planning and Policy of MBSSE.
- The Teaching Service Commission will acknowledge receipt of the list and identify if there are any teachers or staff that are currently on government payroll at any of the schools to be withdrawn from Level Two Approval. If this is the case, the TSC will have the authority to, on a case-by-case basis, either redistribute the payroll teacher to another school (in agreement with that teacher and the head teacher/ principal at the proposed school) or remove the teacher from the payroll and re-assign the payroll slot. It is not possible for a teacher to remain on payroll and continue teaching at the school that is to be withdrawn from Level Two Approval.

Inspection team

The inspection team for both Level One and Level Two Approval and Level One and Level Two Re-Assessment will comprise the following officers:

1. The District Director/Deputy Director of Education or official representative of the MBSSE District Education Office, as devolved. (Chairperson of the inspection team).
2. The District Deputy Director - TSC.
3. An Engineer from the Ministry of Works.
4. An official from the Ministry of Health.

5. An Inspector of Schools.
6. An officer from the Local Council.
7. A community leader representing civil society.

In the case of private schools, this may also include officers from:

8. The National Union of Private Schools .
9. The Association of Independent Schools.

The Chairperson of the inspection team will be responsible for inviting the relevant officers before confirming the date of inspection with the school. However, it is not required that every officer is present in order to conduct an inspection.

Appeal Committee

An ad hoc appeal Committee of five members is established by the Minister in response to individual appeals.

- The five-member committee must include no more than two members of the original panel involved in the original decision and the Committee should be chaired by one of the members not involved in the original decision.
- The Minister should establish the ad hoc Committee within seven days of receipt of the appeal and the Appeal Committee should take no longer than 30 days (from receipt of appeal) to make a determination on the appeal.

Accountability - Failure to adhere to the terms of the School Approvals Policy Guidelines

Any person that establishes a school unauthorized or operates a school which has not been registered at the Ministry of Basic and Senior Secondary Education commits an offence and shall be liable on summary conviction to a fine not exceeding the equivalent of Le500,000 and to a further fine not exceeding the equivalent of Le50,000 for every day during which the school is operated. (Education Act (2004) Section 17). Note that these fines are subject to review before the start of the next school year and are likely to be increased.

SECTION 3: MONITORING POLICY IMPLEMENTATION

3.1 MONITORING AND EVALUATION FRAMEWORK

	INDICATOR	DEFINITION How is it calculated?	BASELINE What is the current value?	TARGET What is the target value?	DATA SOURCE How will it be measured?	FREQUENCY How often will it be measured?	RESPONSIBLE Who will measure it?	REPORTING Where will it be reported?
Goal	Children attending schools providing at least a minimum level	Share of students in Level One Approved	79%	90% by 31 Dec 2023	MBSSE Data	Annually	MBSSE	Annual School Census (ASC)

	of safety and service to pupils – National Level	Schools (or above)		100% by 31 Dec 2024				
Outcomes	Inspection teams able to visit and carry out inspections within timeframes – Local Level	Share of schools that have applied (for both Level One and Level Two) that were inspected within 90 days	n/a	80% by 31 Dec 2023 90% by 31 Dec 2024	Inspection Reports	Annually	MBSSE	Inspection Reports
Outputs	Schools have committed to the policy and have submitted applications – School Level	Share of schools that have applied for Level One Approval under the terms of these guidelines (or that already have Level One or Two Approval)	63%	80% by 31 Dec 2023 100% by 31 Dec 2024	District Education Office Data	Annually	MBSSE	District Education Office Data

3.2 POLICY REVIEW

The School Approvals Policy Guidelines will be reviewed by the MBSSE and relevant stakeholders every three years to ensure its continued scope, relevance to context and regulations and alignment with updated scientific research evidence. The policy may be reviewed sooner than three years if needed. The policy review process will follow the standard review procedures established within the MBSSE.

SECTION 4: CONCLUSION

These policy guidelines summarise the criteria and processes by which new schools and existing schools apply for Level One Approval, and subsequently apply for Level Two Approval to be eligible to receive financial support from government, subject to the availability of funds.

These policy guidelines also set out the consequences for schools and their proprietors, head teachers and principals, School Management Committees and Boards of Governors, when they are unable to meet the criteria. As previously noted, it is the policy of the Government of Sierra Leone, through the MBSSE, that all schools in Sierra Leone must meet certain minimum standards and attain Level One Approval as indicated in this policy document.

ANNEX A – MAIN OFFICE AND DISTRICT EDUCATION OFFICES: LISTING AND CONTACT DETAILS

ANNEX A – MAIN OFFICE AND DISTRICT EDUCATION OFFICES: LISTING AND CONTACT DETAILS

No.	Name	District	Location	Phone Number	Email
1	Nana Bockarie	Western Rural	Waterloo	076672924	nanabock16@gmail.com
2	Alie H.B. Kargbo	MBSSE HQ	Freetown	076676185	aliekargbo185@gmail.com
3	Lahai Feika	Bonthe	Matru Jong	078808562	feikalahai4@gmail.com
4	Prince P. Ngebeh	Pujehun	Pujehun	076803134	ngebehprince6@gmail.com
5	Alimamy Kamara	Kona	Koidu	076443762	hamzamasaray@grnail.com
6	Joseph M.B. Sesay	Bo	Bo	076673212	jombsesay@gmail.com
7	Agnes N. Kamara	MBSSE HQ	Freetown	076665910	ankamara2013@gmail.com
8	Abu Bakarr Kuyateh	Bombali	Makeni	076959599	kuyatehabk@gmail.com
9	Gibrilla Sesay	Karene	Karene/Makeni	076673284	sesaygibrillaa@gmail.com
10	Alpha Sesay	Falaba	Mongor/Kabala	076513896	Sesayalphal52@gmail.com
11	Yusuf Abdulai Kamara	Koinadugu	Kabala	076862825	yusufabdulaikamara@gmail.com
12	John A. Swarray	Kenema	Kenema	076664560	johnswaray352@gmail.com
13	Mohamed Kamara	Tonkolili	Magburaka	076944946	mokamara003@gmail.com
14	Sahr Rueben Soloku	Kailahun	Kailahun	076425662	rubensuluku@gmail.com
15	Ibrahim Yahaya Fofana	Kambia	Kambia	076902888	kissyrokel@gmail.com
16	Kai Wuseni	Moyamba	Moyamba	076647950	Wusenikai001@grnail.com
17	Frances Nana Kamara	Western Urban	MBSSE HQ	078203413	franceskamara@yahoo.co.uk ; fkarnara@education.gov.sl
18	Foday Konteh	Port Loko	Port Loko	076379944	PortlokoP@education.gov.sl ; fodaykakoya@gmail.com

ANNEX B – LEVEL ONE APPROVAL APPLICATION FORM

SECTION 1: DETAILS OF APPLICANTS

NAME of APPLICANT: _____

DESIGNATION: _____

CONTACT NUMBER: _____

E-MAIL ADDRESS: _____

SECTION 2: DETAILS OF SCHOOL

NAME of SCHOOL: _____

LEVEL: Pre Primary/Primary/Junior Secondary/Senior Secondary _____

TYPE of SCHOOL: Male Only/Female Only/Mixed _____

SCHOOL FULL ADDRESS: _____

Is this LEVEL ONE APPROVAL application for
(select only one)

NEW SCHOOL

EXISTING SCHOOL

If you selected EXISTING SCHOOL, did your school participate in previous Annual School Census

YES

NO

If you selected YES then SKIP SECTION 2A and go directly to SECTION 2B

SECTION 2A: SCHOOL INFORMATION (Only for NEW SCHOOL or EXISTING SCHOOL that did not take part in previous Annual School Census (ASC), EXISTING SCHOOLS who did take part in previous ASC can also fill in the form if school details have changed since last ASC)

2A.1 School Location

SCHOOL REGION: _____

SCHOOL DISTRICT: _____

SCHOOL CHIEFDOM: _____

SCHOOL WARD: _____

2A.2 Neighbouring Schools (all schools within 3 mile radius)

NAME OF SCHOOL	OWNER	TOWN/VILLAGE	DISTANCE FROM PROPOSED SCHOOL	LEVEL

2A.3 School Infrastructure (Existing or Proposed)

TYPE	NUMBER	AREA (m ²)	BUILDING MATERIAL	DATE OF COMPLETION (if proposed)
Classrooms				
Staff Toilet (Male)				
Staff Toilet (Female)				
Student Toilet (Boys)				
Student Toilet (Girls)				
Special Needs Toilet				
Playground				

ANNEX B – LEVEL ONE APPROVAL APPLICATION FORM

Ramp for Special Needs Students		
Source of Clean Drinking Water	X	Enter Source Here (Well, Filtration Plan, etc.)
Hand Washing Facility	X	X
Reading Room		

NOTE: Please submit with your application, architectural designs for the infrastructure listed above including the site map.

2A.4 School Enrolment (Existing or Expected)

Grade	Male	Female	SNE-Male	SNE-Female
Grade 1				
Grade 2				
Grade 3				
Grade 4				
Grade 5				
Grade 6				
JSS 1				
JSS 2				
JSS 3				
SSH 1				

SSH 2

SSH 3

2A.5 School Staff (Existing or Expected)

Teacher Name	Gender	Qualification	Subject	Years of Experience

SECTION 2B: SCHOOL MANAGEMENT (To be completed by all Existing and New Schools)

2B.1 SMC or BOG Members (Existing or Expected)

Member's Name	Gender	Qualification/Occupation	Designation	Date of Appointment

Note: Please submit a written consent for each member of the SMC and BOG stating their consent to be part of the oversight committee

2B.2 Financial and Criminal History

Does the proprietor and the head teacher/principal have any criminal records, or records of tax evasion or bankruptcy in the past ten years?

YES

NO

ANNEX B – LEVEL ONE APPROVAL APPLICATION FORM

If YES, please provide details of the record including photocopies of the official letters.

If NO, please provide a Police Character Certificate from your Local Police Station or a Police Clearance Certificate from the Criminal Investigation Headquarters in Freetown.

SECTION 2C: SCHOOL BUILDING/LAND (To be completed by all Existing and New Schools)

How was this land acquired

Purchased Endowment

If the School Building(s) is/are already available, how was the acquisition done?

Purchased Rented Leased Gift

Please provide evidence of entitlement to use the land for educational purposes – such as ownership/rent/lease of the land occupied by the school

SECTION 2D: OTHER SCHOOLS (To be completed by all Existing and New Schools)

Do you currently operate or ever operated any other school in Sierra Leone

YES NO

If YES, please provide details of all schools you operate or operated in the past

NAME OF SCHOOL	TOWN/VILLAGE	LEVEL	DATE STARTED	DATE CLOSED (if applicable)	REASON FOR CLOSURE (if applicable)
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SECTION 3: DOCUMENTS TO BE PROVIDED ALONG WITH THE APPLICATION

- Architectural designs for the infrastructure listed in the application including the site map.
- evidence of entitlement to use the land for educational purposes – such as ownership/rent/lease of the land occupied by the school
- Police Character Certificate from your Local Police Station and a letter from your Local Bank for both the Proprietor and Head Teacher clearly stating the duration of individual’s relationship with the bank and that during that time the individual did not undergone bankruptcy or insolvency
- Written and signed consent for each member of the SMC and BOG stating their consent to be part of the oversight committee
- Copy of Schools comprehensive child safeguarding policy including publicizing a safeguarding reporting process

SECTION 4: DECLARATION

I/We hereby confirm that the information provided herein is accurate, correct and complete and that the documents submitted along with this application form are genuine. I undertake to inform MBBSE (‘Ministry’) in writing of any changes to the information already provided and to update the information on this form whenever requested to do so by the Ministry.

I also understand that any wilful dishonesty may render for refusal of this application or immediate closure of the school.

NAME: _____ DATE _____ SIGNATURE: _____

ANNEX C – LEVEL TWO APPROVAL APPLICATION FORM

SECTION 1: DETAILS OF APPLICANTS

NAME of APPLICANT: _____

DESIGNATION: _____

CONTACT NUMBER: _____

E-MAIL ADDRESS: _____

SECTION 2: DETAILS OF SCHOOL

NAME of SCHOOL: _____

LEVEL: Pre Primary/Primary/Junior Secondary/Senior Secondary _____

TYPE of SCHOOL: Male Only/Female Only/Mixed _____

SCHOOL FULL ADDRESS: _____

Is this school LEVEL ONE APPROVED

YES

NO

If NO, please apply for LEVEL ONE APPROVAL before applying for LEVEL 2 APPROVAL

Is this your first LEVEL TWO APPROVAL application for this school

YES

NO

If NO, please provide details of your previous LEVEL TWO APPROVAL application for this school below

Date of Application	LEVEL of School	Status of Application	Reason for Rejections
Approved/Rejected			
Approved/Rejected			

Have you ever applied for LEVEL TWO WITHDRAWAL for this school

YES

NO

If YES, Please provide details of the application below

ANNEX C – LEVEL TWO APPROVAL APPLICATION FORM

Date of Application	LEVEL of School	Status of Application	Reasons for Withdrawal	Reasons for Rejection
		Approved/Rejected		
		Approved/Rejected		

NOTE: If an Application for WITHDRAWAL from LEVEL TWO has been made within last two Academic Years then this school is not eligible to apply for LEVEL TWO Approval yet

SECTION 3: DURATION OF SCHOOL OPERATION AND COMPLIANCE WITH APPROVAL CRITERIA

Year School Was Established _____	Year School was LEVEL ONE Approved _____
Head Teacher Qualification _____	Head Teacher Years of Experience _____
Number of SMC/BOG Meetings Held in Last School Year _____	Does School has an Agreed School Improvement Plan <u>YES/NO</u>
Does School has a Bank Account in Name of School <u>YES/NO</u>	Does School has a Designated Finance Officer <u>YES/NO</u>

Please provide the following documents in support of your application:

- Evidence of having met (and still meeting) all Level One Minimum Criteria and have been operating for at least one full school year.
 - Evidence may include letter of inspection from MBBSE
 - Details of school infrastructure, building, enrolment, staff and facilities from latest Annual School Census
- Meeting minutes from at least one School Management Committee or Board of Governors meeting at least once per term in the past full school year.
- Copy of school improvement plan with a covering letter stating it has been agreed by the proprietor, head teacher/principal and SMC/Board of Governors with signature of all the individuals.
- Details of the School Bank Account on the Bank Letter Head clearing stating the date bank account was opened in the said bank and branch.
- Employment letter of designated Finance Officer along with a cover letter stating his employment has been approved by the School Management Committee or Board of Governors along with signatures of all members of SMC/BoG.

SECTION 4: DECLARATION

I/We hereby confirm that the information provided herein is accurate, correct and complete and that the documents submitted along with this application form are genuine. I undertake to inform MBBSE ('Ministry') in writing of any changes to the information already provided and to update the information on this form whenever requested to do so by the Ministry.

I also understand that any wilful dishonesty may render for refusal of this application or immediate closure of the school.

NAME:

DATE

SIGNATURE:

ANNEX D – LEVEL ONE WITHDRAWAL APPLICATION FORM

SECTION 1: DETAILS OF APPLICANTS

NAME of APPLICANT: _____

DESIGNATION: _____

CONTACT NUMBER: _____

E-MAIL ADDRESS: _____

SECTION 2: DETAILS OF SCHOOL

NAME of SCHOOL: _____

LEVEL: Pre Primary/Primary/Junior Secondary/Senior Secondary

TYPE of SCHOOL: Male Only/Female Only/Mixed

SCHOOL FULL ADDRESS: _____

Is this school LEVEL TWO APPROVED at the moment

YES

NO

If YES, please apply for LEVEL TWO WITHDRAWAL before proceeding for LEVEL ONE WITHDRAWAL

Have you ever applied for LEVEL ONE WITHDRAWAL for this school before

YES

NO

If YES, Please provide details of the application below

Date of Application	LEVEL of School	Status of Application	Reasons for Withdrawal	Reasons for Rejection
_____	_____	Approved/Rejected	_____	_____
_____	_____	Approved/Rejected	_____	_____
_____	_____	Approved/Rejected	_____	_____

SECTION 3: WITHDRAWAL SPECIFIC INFORMATION

Provide Details of Neighbouring Schools (all schools within 3 mile radius)

NAME OF SCHOOL	OWNER NAME/CONTACT NUMBER	TOWN/VILLAGE	DISTANCE FROM YOUR SCHOOL	LEVEL

Provide Details of Your Reason to Withdraw from Level One Approved Status (School Closure)

APPENDIX D – LEVEL ONE WITHDRAWAL APPLICATION

Do you currently operate or ever operated any other school in Sierra Leone

YES

NO

If YES, please provide details of all schools (other than this one) you operate or operated in the past

NAME OF SCHOOL	TOWN/VILLAGE	LEVEL	DATE STARTED	DATE CLOSED (if applicable)	REASON FOR CLOSURE (if applicable)

Please provide the following documents in support of your application:

- Copy of MBSSE issued letter confirming Level Two Withdrawal (required only if the school has at any time been Level Two Approved).
- Withdrawal declaration signed by the proprietor, head teacher/principal, and the chairperson of the SMC/BoG.
- The Minutes of a SMC/BoG meeting, with a quorum, at which the matter was fully discussed and at which a formal representative of the MBSSE was present.

SECTION 4: DECLARATION

I/We hereby confirm that the information provided herein is accurate, correct and complete and that the documents submitted along with this application form are genuine. I undertake to inform MBBSE (‘Ministry’) in writing of any changes to the information already provided and to update the information on this form whenever requested to do so by the Ministry.

I understand that if this application is accepted, the school will be closed and this may affect my ability to open another school in Sierra Leone in the future.

I also understand that any wilful dishonesty may render for refusal of this application or immediate closure of the school.

NAME: _____ DATE _____ SIGNATURE: _____

ANNEX E – LEVEL TWO WITHDRAWAL APPLICATION FORM

SECTION 1: DETAILS OF APPLICANTS

NAME of APPLICANT: _____

DESIGNATION: _____

CONTACT NUMBER: _____

E-MAIL ADDRESS: _____

SECTION 2: DETAILS OF SCHOOL

NAME of SCHOOL: _____

LEVEL: Pre Primary/Primary/Junior Secondary/Senior Secondary _____

TYPE of SCHOOL: Male Only/Female Only/Mixed _____

SCHOOL FULL ADDRESS: _____

Is this school LEVEL TWO APPROVED

YES

NO

If YES, please provide details of your LEVEL TWO APPROVAL date

Date of Application	LEVEL of School	Date of Approval	Any Additional Notes
---------------------	-----------------	------------------	----------------------

Have you ever applied for LEVEL TWO WITHDRAWAL for this school before

YES

NO

If YES, Please provide details of the application below

Date of Application	LEVEL of School	Status of Application	Reasons for Withdrawal	Reasons for Rejection
		Approved/Rejected		
		Approved/Rejected		

APPENDIX E – LEVEL TWO WITHDRAWAL APPLICATION

Has the school's Level Two Approval been temporarily revoked or suspended for any reason in last academic year

YES

NO

If YES, please provide details of removal/suspension

Type of Penalty	Date of Penalty	Date Penalty Removed	Reason for Penalty
Revoked/Suspended			
Revoked/Suspended			

SECTION 3: WITHDRAWAL SPECIFIC INFORMATION

Neighbouring Schools (all schools within 3 mile radius)

NAME OF SCHOOL	OWNER NAME/CONTACT NUMBER	TOWN/VILLAGE	DISTANCE FROM YOUR SCHOOL	LEVEL

Provide Details of Your Reason to Withdraw from Level Two Approved Status

Please provide the following documents in support of your application:

- Evidence of having met (and still meeting) all Level Two Minimum Criteria and have been operating for at least one full school year as Level Two Approved School.
 - Copy of MBBSE issued letter confirming Level Two Approval
 - Evidence may include letter of inspection from MBBSE
 - Details of school infrastructure, building, enrolment, staff and facilities from latest Annual School Census
 - Continuous Bank Statement for last full academic year on bank letter head with bank stamp on every page
- Withdrawal declaration signed by the proprietor, head teacher/principal, and the chairperson of the SMC/BoG.
- The Minutes of a SMC/BoG meeting, with a quorum, at which the matter was fully discussed and at which a formal representative of the MBSSE was present.

APPENDIX E – LEVEL TWO WITHDRAWAL APPLICATION

SECTION 4: DECLARATION

I/We hereby confirm that the information provided herein is accurate, correct and complete and that the documents submitted along with this application form are genuine. I undertake to inform MBBSE ('Ministry') in writing of any changes to the information already provided and to update the information on this form whenever requested to do so by the Ministry.

I also understand that if this application is Approved, I will not be able to apply for financial support for my school for at least one whole academic year.

I also understand that any wilful dishonesty may render for refusal of this application or immediate closure of the school.

NAME:

DATE

SIGNATURE:
