



REPUBLIC OF SINGAPORE  
**GOVERNMENT GAZETTE**  
**BILLS SUPPLEMENT**

*Published by Authority*

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**NO. 23]**

**SATURDAY, AUGUST 26**

**[2000**

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**First published in the Government Gazette, Electronic Edition, on 26th August 2000 at 5:00 pm.**

**Notification No. B 23** — The Compulsory Education Bill is hereby published for general information. It was introduced in Parliament on the 25th day of August 2000.

# **Compulsory Education Bill**

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**Bill No. 23/2000.**

*Read the first time on 25th August 2000.*

## **THE COMPULSORY EDUCATION ACT 2000**

**(No.     of 2000)**

### **ARRANGEMENT OF SECTIONS**

#### **Section**

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A BILL

*intituled*

An Act to provide for compulsory primary education in Singapore  
and for matters connected therewith.

Be it enacted by the President with the advice and consent of the  
Parliament of Singapore, as follows:

**Short title and commencement**

1. This Act may be cited as the Compulsory Education Act 2000  
5 and shall come into operation on such date as the Minister may, by  
notification in the *Gazette*, appoint.

## Interpretation

2. In this Act, unless the context otherwise requires —

“Board” means the Compulsory Education Board established under section 5;

“child of compulsory school age” means a child above the age of 5  
6 years who has not yet attained the age of 15 years and who satisfies such conditions for receiving primary education as the Director-General may determine;

“Director-General” means the Director-General of Education, and includes such officers of the Ministry of Education as 10  
may from time to time be authorised to exercise the functions of the Director-General of Education under section 5 of the Education Act (Cap. 87);

“national primary school” means any institution for the provision of full-time primary education, being — 15

(a) a school organised and conducted directly by the Government;

(b) a school in receipt of grant-in-aid under the Education Act or any regulations made thereunder;

(c) a school specified in any order made under section 3 (1) 20  
of the School Boards (Incorporation) Act (Cap. 284A);  
or

(d) such other school as may be prescribed;

“parent”, in relation to a child to whom section 3 (1) applies, includes a guardian and any person having the actual custody 25  
of the child;

“primary education” means a 6-year course of education normally commencing when a child has attained the age of 6 years.

## Compulsory primary education

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3.—(1) A child of compulsory school age who is —

(a) born after 1st January 1996;

(b) a citizen of Singapore; and

(c) residing in Singapore,

shall attend regularly as a pupil at a national primary school.

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(2) Where a child of compulsory school age fails to attend regularly as a pupil at a national primary school as required under subsection (1), each parent of the child shall be guilty of an offence.

(3) This section shall not apply —

- 5       (a) to a child of compulsory school age for whom a parent presents within a reasonable time a prescribed reason to the satisfaction of the Director-General for the absence of the child at a national primary school; or
- 10       (b) to a child of compulsory school age who is exempted under section 4.

### **Exemption**

4.—(1) The Minister may, by order published in the *Gazette* and subject to such terms or conditions as he may impose, exempt any child of compulsory school age or class of children of compulsory school age from section 3.

(2) An exemption granted under this section may be revoked at any time.

### **Establishment and constitution of Compulsory Education Board**

5.—(1) There shall be established a body to be known as the Compulsory Education Board.

(2) The Board shall consist of such number of members as the Minister may, in his discretion, appoint.

(3) The Minister shall appoint one of the members of the Board as chairman.

25       (4) Subject to subsections (5) and (6), a member of the Board shall hold and vacate his office in accordance with the terms of his appointment and shall, on ceasing to be a member, be eligible for reappointment.

30       (5) A member of the Board may resign his office at any time by giving notice in writing to the Minister.

(6) If the Minister is satisfied that a member of the Board —

- (a) is guilty of neglect of duty or misconduct;
- (b) has become a bankrupt or made an arrangement with his creditors;

- (c) is incapacitated by physical or mental illness; or
- (d) is otherwise unable or unfit to discharge the functions of a member,

the Minister may remove him from such office.

(7) The validity of any proceedings of the Board shall not be affected by any vacancy among its members or by any defect in the appointment of any member. 5

(8) At any meeting of the Board, one-half of the number of members shall constitute a quorum.

(9) The chairman shall preside at all meetings of the Board at which he is present and, in his absence, the members present shall elect one of their number to act as chairman of that meeting. 10

(10) The Board may delegate to any person all or any of its duties or powers under this Act.

(11) All questions arising at any meeting of the Board shall be decided by a majority of votes of the members present and, in the case of an equality of votes, the chairman or, in his absence, the member presiding shall have a casting vote. 15

(12) Subject to the provisions of this Act and any regulations made thereunder, the Board may regulate its own procedure in such manner as it thinks fit. 20

### **Duties and powers of Board**

**6.—**(1) The duties of the Board shall be —

- (a) to investigate whether the provisions of this Act or any regulations made thereunder have been or are being contravened; 25
- (b) to make recommendations to the Director-General on the enforcement of the provisions of this Act or any regulations made thereunder; and
- (c) generally to do all such acts and things as are necessary to be carried out under the provisions of this Act. 30

(2) For the purpose of performing its duties under this Act, the Board may —

- (a) hear and examine witnesses on oath;

- (b) summon any person to attend any hearing of the Board to give evidence or produce any document or other article in his possession;
- (c) generally require any person to furnish any information or produce any document or other article in his possession;
- (d) require any person to attend any counselling or mediation session as the Board may specify; and
- (e) do anything incidental to any of its powers.

(3) The Minister may give such directions, not inconsistent with the provisions of this Act, as to the performance of the duties and the exercise of the powers of the Board and the Board shall give effect to any such directions.

### **Penalties**

7.—(1) Any person who is guilty of an offence under section 3 (2) shall be liable on conviction to a fine not exceeding \$5,000 or to imprisonment for a term not exceeding 12 months or to both.

(2) Any person who —

- (a) refuses to attend any hearing of the Board;
- (b) refuses to furnish any information or produce any document to the Board;
- (c) furnishes any information or produces any document which is false in a material particular and which he knows to be false or does not believe to be true; or
- (d) obstructs or impedes the Director-General, the Board or any person acting under the direction of the Board,

shall be guilty of an offence and shall be liable on conviction to a fine not exceeding \$5,000 or to imprisonment for a term not exceeding 12 months or to both.

### **No person to be charged for offence except on complaint of Director-General of Education**

8. No person shall be charged with any offence under this Act or any regulations made thereunder except on the complaint of the Director-General.

### **Composition of offences**

**9.** The Director-General may, in his discretion, compound any offence under this Act or any regulations made thereunder which is prescribed as a compoundable offence by collecting from a person reasonably suspected of having committed the offence a sum of money not exceeding \$2,000. 5

### **Protection from personal liability**

**10.** No suit or other legal proceedings shall lie personally against —  
 (a) any member of the Board; or  
 (b) any other person acting under the direction of the Board, 10  
 for anything which is in good faith done or intended to be done in the execution or purported execution of this Act or any regulations made thereunder.

### **Operation of this Act not to affect Education Act**

**11.** Except as otherwise expressly provided in this Act, nothing in 15  
 this Act shall affect the operation of the Education Act (Cap. 87) or any regulations made thereunder.

### **Regulations**

**12.** The Minister may make such regulations as are necessary or expedient for the purpose of carrying out any of the provisions of this 20  
 Act.

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### **EXPLANATORY STATEMENT**

This Bill seeks to make provisions for compulsory primary education in the national primary schools to meet 2 key objectives:

- (a) to give the children of Singapore a common core knowledge which will provide a strong foundation for further education and training to prepare them for a knowledge-based economy; and
- (b) to give the children of Singapore a common educational experience which will help build national identity and cohesion.

Clause 1 relates to the short title and commencement.

Clause 2 defines certain terms used in the Bill.



Clause 3 provides that every child born after 1st January 1996, who is a Singapore citizen of compulsory school age and residing in Singapore, is required to attend regularly at a national primary school. Where such a child fails to so attend, each parent of the child will be guilty of an offence unless he presents a prescribed reason to the satisfaction of the Director-General of Education (Director-General) or unless the child is exempted from clause 3.

Clause 4 empowers the Minister to exempt any child or class of children of compulsory school age from clause 3. The exemption may be revoked at any time.

Clause 5 provides for the establishment of the Compulsory Education Board (the Board) and ancillary matters relating to the appointment of the chairman and other members, and the proceedings and procedure of the Board.

Clause 6 relates to the duties and powers of the Board.

Clause 7 prescribes the penalties for the offences under the Bill.

Clause 8 provides that no person shall be charged with any offence under the Bill or any regulations made thereunder except on the complaint of the Director-General.

Clause 9 empowers the Director-General to compound any offence under the Bill or any regulations made thereunder which is prescribed as a compoundable offence.

Clause 10 protects the members of the Board and any person acting under its direction from personal liability for anything done in good faith in the execution or purported execution of the Bill or any regulations made thereunder.

Clause 11 provides that the Bill does not affect the operation of the Education Act (Cap. 87) or any regulations made thereunder except as otherwise expressly provided in the Bill.

Clause 12 empowers the Minister to make regulations for the purposes of the Bill.

#### EXPENDITURE OF PUBLIC MONEY

This Bill will involve the Government in extra financial expenditure, the exact amount of which cannot at present be ascertained.

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