



# THE STATUTES OF THE REPUBLIC OF SINGAPORE

## COMPULSORY EDUCATION ACT 2000

### 2020 REVISED EDITION

This revised edition incorporates all amendments up to and including 1 December 2021 and comes into operation on 31 December 2021.

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# Compulsory Education Act 2000

## ARRANGEMENT OF SECTIONS

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

[1 January 2003]

### **Short title**

1. This Act is the Compulsory Education Act 2000.

### **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 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 may from time to time be authorised to exercise the functions of the Director-General of Education under section 5 of the Education Act 1957;

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

- (a) a school organised and conducted directly by the Government;
- (b) a school in receipt of grant-in-aid under the Education Act 1957;
- (c) a school specified in any order made under section 3(1) of the School Boards (Incorporation) Act 1990; 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 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**

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

- (a) born after 1 January 1996;
- (b) a citizen of Singapore; and
- (c) residing in Singapore,

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

(2) If 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 does not apply —
- (a) to a child of compulsory school age for whom a parent presents within a reasonable time a prescribed reason to the Director-General's satisfaction for the child's absence at a national primary school; or
  - (b) to a child of compulsory school age who is exempted under section 4.

### **Exemption**

4.—(1) The Minister may, by order in the *Gazette* and subject to such terms or conditions as the Minister 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) A body called the Compulsory Education Board is established by this section.

(2) The Board consists of such number of members as the Minister may appoint.

(3) The Minister must appoint one of the members of the Board as chairperson.

(4) Subject to subsections (5) and (6), a member of the Board holds and vacates the member's office in accordance with the terms of his or her appointment and is, on ceasing to be a member, eligible for re-appointment.

(5) A member of the Board may resign his or her office at any time by giving written notice 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 the member's 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 the member from such office.

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

(8) The quorum for a meeting of the Board is constituted by one-half of the number of members of the Board.

(9) The chairperson is to preside at every meeting of the Board but, in the chairperson's absence, the members present at a meeting must elect a member to preside at the meeting.

(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 are to be decided by a majority of votes of the members present and, in the case of an equality of votes, the person presiding has a casting vote.

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

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

**6.—**(1) The duties of the Board are as follows:

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

(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 the person's possession;
- (c) generally require any person to provide any information or produce any document or other article in the person's 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 must 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 provide any information or produce any document to the Board;
- (c) provides any information or produces any document which is false in a material particular and which the person 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**

8. No person may be charged with any offence under this Act except on the complaint of the Director-General.

**Composition of offences**

9. The Director-General may compound any offence under this Act 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.

**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,

for anything which is in good faith done or intended to be done in the execution or purported execution of this Act.

**Operation of this Act not to affect Education Act 1957**

11. Except as otherwise expressly provided in this Act, nothing in this Act affects the operation of the Education Act 1957.

**Regulations**

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

## LEGISLATIVE HISTORY

### COMPULSORY EDUCATION ACT 2000

This Legislative History is a service provided by the Law Revision Commission on a best-efforts basis. It is not part of the Act.

#### **1. Act 27 of 2000 — Compulsory Education Act 2000**

Date of First Reading	:	25 August 2000 (Bill No. 23/2000 published on 26 August 2000)
Date of Second and Third Readings	:	9 October 2000
Date of commencement	:	25 October 2000 (Publication date of Act Supplement)

#### **2. 2001 Revised Edition — Compulsory Education Act**

Date of operation	:	31 December 2001
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#### **3. Act 27 of 2000 — Compulsory Education Act**

Date of First Reading	:	25 August 2000 (Bill No. 23/2000 published on 26 August 2000)
Date of Second and Third Readings	:	9 October 2000
Date of commencement	:	1 January 2003

*Note: This Act was brought into force after it was revised in 2001.*

#### **4. 2020 Revised Edition — Compulsory Education Act 2000**

Operation	:	31 December 2021
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Abbreviations

C.P.	Council Paper
G.N. No. S (N.S.)	Government Notification Number Singapore (New Series)
G.N. No.	Government Notification Number
G.N. No. S	Government Notification Number Singapore
G.N. Sp. No. S	Government Notification Special Number Singapore
L.A.	Legislative Assembly
L.N.	Legal Notification (Federal/Malaysian Subsidiary Legislation)
M. Act	Malayan Act/Malaysia Act
M. Ordinance	Malayan Ordinance
Parl.	Parliament
S.S.G.G. (E) No.	Straits Settlements Government Gazette (Extraordinary) Number
S.S.G.G. No.	Straits Settlements Government Gazette Number