



HON. JAMES MARAPE, MP  
PRIME MINISTER

# INDEPENDENT STATE OF PAPUA NEW GUINEA

## MINISTRY OF EDUCATION

### MINISTERIAL POLICY STATEMENT 01/2025



HON. LUCAS DEKENA, MP  
MINISTER FOR EDUCATION

# 2025 GOVERNMENT FREE EDUCATION POLICY FOR SCHOOLS IN THE GENERAL EDUCATION SECTOR

## TO: ALL PARENTS, HEADS OF SCHOOLS, SCHOOL BOARDS AND EDUCATION AUTHORITIES.

### 1. INTRODUCTION

This Ministerial Policy Statement (MPS) announces the Government Free Education Policy (GFEP) for 2025. The Government Free Education Policy remains in 2025 with the government paying the full in tuition fees for all students in the general education sector. The Government has been committed to providing grants to all schools since 2012 to ensure every child receives 13 years of quality education.

The Marape Rosso government has since 2022, expanded the budget with the inclusion of a project fee grant component to further relieve families from the burden of economic hardships. This special intervention will continue in 2025.

This MPS highlights the critical policy directions that will be clarified in a subsequent Secretary's Circular.

### 2. EDUCATION REMAINS THE GOVERNMENT'S PRIORITY.

2.1. The Marape/Rosso Government has education as one of its top priorities, because education is foundational for economic prosperity, social justice, and the overall well-being of a society. Hence, this policy translates the government's desire to share our collective resources with every citizen and without prejudice of tribal connections, religion, gender and geographical or political associations.

2.2. Through the government's commitment every child in Early Childhood Centres, Primary Schools, High Schools, Secondary Schools, National Schools of Excellence, Vocational Training Centres, Inclusive Education Resource Centres, and Flexible Open and Distance Education centers will receive free education. Meaning students enrolling in these schools will enroll and remain in school without parents struggling to pay any form of school fees.

2.3. Every child has the right to education. Therefore, this government outlaws and bans any head of schools and school board from refusing, restricting and removing any child from school due to non-payment school fees and project fees.

### 3. THE GOVERNMENT FREE EDUCATION POLICY

3.1. New Policy Title "Government Free Education Policy".  
The policy title "Government Tuition Fee Subsidy (GTFS) Policy" that was used from 2020 to 2024 is renamed as "Government Free Education Policy (GFEP)." from 2025. The former title has not been applicable since 2022 when the government paid the full fees and did not require any parental contribution.

### 3.2. Schools Covered by the GFEP

The GFEP covers schools in the National Education System that are registered with the National Department of Education. GFEP grants are payable to: (a) Early Childhood Centers, (b) Primary Schools (c) Secondary Schools (d) National Schools of Excellence (e) Vocational Schools (f) Inclusive Education Resource Centers, (g) Flexible Open and Distance Education services and (h) Permitted Schools.

### 4. SCHOOL FEES LIMIT FOR 2025

4.1. Since 2012, the Governments tuition Fee grants Under TFFE, and GTFS has used enrolments and a standard rate to pay students grants, irrespective of geographical locality. In 2025, this policy will change to pay students based on locality.

4.2. The National Education Board (NEB) has set out the school fee limit for 2025 based on the Unit Cost study carried out in 2024 and different levels of fees according to the National Economic and Fiscal Commission (NEFC) PNG Access Remote Index (PARI) categories. Namely: (1) Highly Accessible (HA) (2) Accessible (A) (3) Moderately Accessible (MA) (4) Remote (5) Very Remote (VRE) (6) Extremely Remote (ER).

4.3. The maximum grants per child that are payable inline with the NEFC model will be the Fee Limits for this year as shown in the table below:

PARI	Elementary		Secondary		NSOE		Vocational	
	Primary	DAY	BOARDING	DAY	BOARDING	DAY	BOARDING	
HA	100.24	186.62	634.51	1,234.51	882.98	1,482.98	699.56	1,099.56
A	132.23	244.21	826.46	1,426.46	1,148.51	1,748.51	923.50	1,323.50
MA	159.96	296.46	1,004.55	1,604.55	1,395.92	1,995.92	1,121.85	1,521.85
R	221.81	412.70	1,398.05	1,998.05	1,942.98	2,542.98	1,562.28	1,962.28
VRE	299.66	556.66	1,886.46	2,486.46	2,622.28	3,222.28	2,108.27	2,508.27
ER	472.42	878.71	2,978.46	3,578.46	4,139.76	4,739.76	1,408.71	1,808.71

4.4. In 2025, the actual calculation of payments for each sector may vary and adjusted based on three factors, namely (a) Enrolment (b) PARI Location and (c) Total budget appropriation.

### 5. GFE POLICY COMPONENTS

The Government's Free Education Policy will consist of two components in 2025. These will be:

#### I. SCHOOL OPERATION AND FUNCTIONAL GRANT (SOFG) (80%);

The SOFG grants will be disbursed directly to schools. Schools in decentralized provinces will continue to have their grants paid by the province through respective GFEP Trust Accounts.

#### II. COMMODITY COMPONENT (20%) WHICH SUPPORTS SCIENCE MATHEMATICS AND BASIC SCHOOL MATERIALS.

The commodity component is quality and equity intervention programme. The funding under this intervention program is implemented by the Department of Education and with the support of local SMEs and businesses. The quality and equity intervention in education program in 2025 will include:

- a) Basic Teaching and Learning materials for all schools including VTC and CCVE – 15%  
Under this revised policy of 2025, ECE Centres and Vocational Centers will be given vouchers or grants to procure tools and equipment kits based on their relevant needs.
- b) Interventions in English, Science and Mathematics – 4%
- c) ICT - Quality Assurance and Interventions- 1%

### 6. PROJECT FEES

The government will continue to fund project fees in 2025. An allocation of K160 million is under the Governments Family Assistance Package and it will be paid directly as a grant into school accounts. Allocation to schools will be based on each school's enrolment, the National Education Board fee limit and total funds available. Every school must have a School Learning and Improvement Plan (SLIP) to plan and spend the project fees grants. Schools that need additional funds for special capital projects MUST follow the process prescribed by a Secretary Circular.

### 7. PARENTAL CONTRIBUTION TO SCHOOL DEVELOPMENT PLANS

Schools may also collect a Parental Contribution for a specific school project per its SLIP. This project fee is an optional fee and is not compulsory fee. The step to follow to collect Parental Contributions will be specified in a Secretary's Circular. No school is to collect parental contributions for a project without PEB's or NEB's approval. Parents should not contribute to projects not approved by PEBS or NEB.

### 8. CHURCH AGENCY FEES

Church agency fees are to be paid by each student attending a church agency school as per the Education Act, 1983. Schools will determine and pay the respective agency based on enrolment and NEB set Agency fee limit to be prescribed by a Secretary's Circular.

### 9. PERMITTED/PRIVATE SCHOOLS FEES

The National Government will pay a grant of K100 per child for PNG citizens enrolled in an approved and registered Permitted School that is registered with the National Department of Education. (Refer to Secretary's Circular No.15/2024). A NEC submission will be made for a determination to reintroduce the Rebate Policy.

### 10. PHASING OUT OF ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS

Consistent with the 1-6 – 6 School Restructure Policy (see also MPS 03/2024 elementary schools will be phased out and amalgamated with primary schools this year. Hence, elementary schools will no longer receive GFEP grants, but respective GFEP grants will be paid to the central primary school.

### 11. EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION CENTRES

GFEP will include only registered ECE Centres. ECE centres must meet the conditions of payment.

### 12. ACCOUNTABILITY AND TRANSPARENCY

A new accounting system called **School Based Financial Management System** was introduced in NCD in 2024. This will be rolled out in 2025. This new initiative is a standardized **School Based Financial Management System** that will improve transparency and accountability.

This initiative will be rolled out in all Secondary/PHS/NSoE, then to Vocational Centres and then the Primary Sectors. (Refer to Secretary's circular for maximum limits set.). All schools must adapt and comply with the standardized School Based Financial Management System.

### 13. SCHOOL ACQUITTALS

All school heads must be held accountable in the management and expenditure of GFEP funds. Compulsory financial audits must be carried out by auditors, inspectors and provincial GFEP officers.

### 14. PARTNERSHIP WITH PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENTS AND DISTRICT DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITIES

Provincial Governments and Local Level Governments and District Development Authorities are the immediate authorities responsible for the education of students in the general education sector. In the spirit of partnership, we urge every Provincial Government and District Development Authority to help their schools' development and SLIP.

ECE and Primary Schools come under the LLGs/DDAs and High Schools, secondary schools and vocational centres come under the Provincial Governments. One area that would need support by high/secondary schools will be the cost of boarding, and I request respective subnational governments to support their boarding schools.

### 15. MANDATORY SELF RELIANCE FOR SCHOOLS TO RAISE 10% OF ITS REVENUE

Self-reliance is a standing policy of the Department. Schools should take-up self-reliance projects and support development initiatives. Schools should not become too dependent on the Government grants, but to consider raising cash and kind to sustain their SLIP.

I direct every school to generate 10% of its annual school budget through lawful self-reliance projects in 2025.

### 16. CONCLUSION

The Government is committed to seeing every student receiving quality education under a standard based education system cover the 1-6-6 school structure with a robust standards assurance system that caters for both exceptionally gifted students and other students' according to their needs and aspirations.

The GFEP supports the policy to eliminate the drop out of students and enhance the goal to have every student complete 13 years of universal education.

I call for all parents and stakeholders for your continuous support in other ways than the GFEP to ensure schools remain operational throughout 2025.

Any further explanation of the policy can be obtained from the Department of Education Website: www.education.gov.pg or by sending an email to: gtfsinfo@education.gov.pg or calling phones: 3288800/72668181/71460383

Authorized by:

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17th January 2025