

**Teacher Policies
For
Sierra Leone**

Teacher Registration &
Licensing Policy

Teacher Management Policy

Policy on Teacher-
Employer Relations

Teacher Development and
Performance Policy

**Better Teachers
Stronger Nation**



Comprehensive and Harmonized National Teacher Policies

**Policy on Teacher-Employer Relations in
Sierra Leone**

Prepared by the Teaching Service Commission (TSC)

Citation: The Regulations and principles of action outlined in this policy may be cited as "The National Policy on Teacher-Employer Relations – TSC 2020".

(Approved by Cabinet in July 2020)

1. Introduction

The Background, Purpose, and Scope of Teacher Policies

Teacher policies are the regulations and principles of action that shape and constrain who teachers are and what they do at the level of schools and in the education system. The Teaching Service Commission (TSC) shall use teacher policies to shape the teaching force, enhance the quality of teacher performance, and guide what teachers do in the best interest of learners. As such the TSC has prepared a comprehensive set of teacher policies in line with its mandate (under the TSC Act of 2011) to **“consider all matters pertaining to teacher management and the improvement of the professional status and wellbeing of teachers”**. The policies were developed by national and international experts, in full consultation with stakeholders. Teacher policies provide clarity and guidance on matters pertaining to the work and well-being teachers. Policies ensure transparency, equity, and fairness in applying rules and regulations on what teachers do as professionals; how teachers are treated in the school system; the rights, responsibilities and expectations of teachers; and how the teaching force is regulated and governed. So, teachers can also use these policies to advance their careers, pursue professional development, and secure their rights as employees.

How the TSC Intends to Use Teacher Policies	How Teachers can Use Teacher Policies	
<p>To attract qualified young people (especially females) into teaching as a life-long profession.</p> <p>To modernize teaching and increase the percentage of qualified teachers in the system.</p> <p>To retain competent teachers in the service.</p> <p>To build a streamlined, effective and efficient teaching force managed with modern technology</p> <p>To be transparent, consistent, and equitable in the treatment of potential and serving teachers</p> <p>To assign qualified and experienced teachers equitably across all districts and school levels.</p> <p>To enhance teacher management through electronic registration, digitization of records, and inclusion of teachers’ email and phone contacts; NASSIT number; and pin codes; as well as contacts of all signatories</p>	<p>To provide TSC with their personal details as the basis for all communications (mobile phone and email)</p> <p>Teachers with Pin Code and existing appointment should send email for TSC to teachers@tsc.gov.sl with reference “Pin Code + Subject of Query + Date (YYYY-MM-DD)”.</p> <p>Teachers applying for position should send emails for the TSC to applications@tsc.gov.sl with reference “Vacancy Reference + Application Number + Date (YYYY-MM-DD)”.</p> <p>New applicants for registration/licensing should send emails for TSC to registration@tsc.gov.sl with reference “New Registration Application + Date (YYYY-MM-DD)”.</p> <p>All emails to TSC must be copied to the relevant district office head as shown on the right column.</p>	<p>DistrictHead.Bo@tsc.gov.sl</p> <p>DistrictHead.Bombali@tsc.gov.sl</p> <p>DistrictHead.Bonthe@tsc.gov.sl</p> <p>DistrictHead.Falaba@tsc.gov.sl</p> <p>DistrictHead.Kailahun@tsc.gov.sl</p> <p>DistrictHead.Kambia@tsc.gov.sl</p> <p>DistrictHead.Karine@tsc.gov.sl</p> <p>DistrictHead.Kenema@tsc.gov.sl</p> <p>DistrictHead.Koinadugu@tsc.gov.sl</p> <p>DistrictHead.Kono@tsc.gov.sl</p> <p>DistrictHead.Moyamba@tsc.gov.sl</p> <p>DistrictHead.PortLoko@tsc.gov.sl</p> <p>DistrictHead.Pujehun@tsc.gov.sl</p> <p>DistrictHead.Tonkolili@tsc.gov.sl</p> <p>DistrictHead.WesternRural@tsc.gov.sl</p> <p>DistrictHead.WesternUrban@tsc.gov.sl</p>

2. Teacher-Employer Relations**Brief Note on Mandates and Obligations**

The Teaching Service Commission is mandated by Section 9 (2F) of the TSC Act of 2011 to “*recruit, promote, post, transfer and dismiss teachers in Government and Government assisted schools*”. The TSC therefore has an obligation as an employer to manage, supervise, and regulate teachers and the teaching profession. In line with this the **Teacher-Employer Relations Department** within the TSC has the responsibility to develop rules and regulations governing teachers, such as The Code of Conduct for Teachers. It also has a duty to ensure improved conditions of service for teachers; promote healthy work life balance; and advocate for the general well-being of teachers as employees. Furthermore, the Teacher-Employer Relations Department works to ensure that the TSC carries out its duties, responsibilities and obligations to teachers, as an employer. This includes providing favorable working terms and conditions that are in the interest of all parties concerned, and that the entitlements/rights/privileges of teachers are maintained in accordance with agreements reached between representatives of teachers and employers through the **Trade Group Negotiating Council**.

The Teacher-Employer Relations Department is principally about executing the mandates and obligations of the TSC as an employer. The Department therefore deals with how teachers and their institutions relate to the TSC and vice-versa. However, the TSC is not the only agency dealing with teacher-employer relations in Sierra Leone. As such, the teacher-employer relations outlined in this policy document are also applicable to the owners and proprietors of education institutions, as well as the various agencies that facilitate and manage the operations of education institutions on behalf of these owners and proprietors.

3. Institutions, Teachers, and Employers**Overview of Roles, Rights, Duties, Obligations, and Responsibilities****3.1. Education Institutions as Organizations:**

Education institutions are centers of learning. They bring together learners, teachers, managers and ancillary staff in settings designed for achievement of prescribed learning set out in the national curriculum. They are also obliged to provide environments that are safe for learners/teachers, and conducive to learning. The main categories of education institutions affected by this policy include:

- (a) Early Childhood Care & Development Centers (Nurseries, Pre-Schools, and ECD Centers)
- (b) The main Basic Education Institutions (Primary Schools and Junior Secondary Schools - JSS)
- (c) Senior Secondary Schools (SSS)
- (d) Technical/Vocational Education and Training Institutions (TVET)

3.2. Teachers as Key Operatives in Education Institutions:

Teachers are the key operatives in education institutions. They facilitate learning and contributing to the well-being of students in their charge as well as the overall functioning of the education institution as a learning center. This role is a complex one that entails a wide range of duties, obligations and responsibilities, which might include the following:

Examples of Duties, Obligations, and Responsibilities of Teachers as Key Operatives		
DUTIES	OBLIGATIONS	RESPONSIBILITIES
<p>Facilitate learning by interpreting and implementing the subject/class syllabus based on a prescribed curriculum. Be present and punctual in school during working hours. Maintain proper records of class attendance, lesson plans and marks scored in various tests and examinations. Manage classes and use classroom time for teaching and learning activities.</p>	<p>Support the general ethos of the institution. Treat students equitably regardless of their background or circumstances. Behave with honesty and integrity and set example of proper behaviour for students. Protect and safeguard the well-being of all children in their charge. Show respect for the parents/communities who entrust children to the school's care.</p>	<p>Actively pursue professional self-development by making use of the available opportunities for continuing education and training. Keep abreast of changing norms, practices and standards in subject area and pedagogy. Respect all collective bargaining agreements reached between the employers and teachers' unions.</p>

In parallel with these duties, obligations and responsibilities, teachers also have rights, entitlements, and privileges, that should be exercised, protected, and acknowledged in the course of their work in the school system. These include: a fair process of recruitment and deployment; transparent criteria for promotion and career advancement; reasonable workload and job demands; remuneration that is fair and commensurate with qualifications and experience; standing in society that reflects the status of the profession; trust and respect from students, parents and communities; working conditions that cater for the well-being of teachers; recourse to appeals processes over unfair treatment; governance rules and regulations that are fair, transparent and applied equitably in practice; etc.

In the course of their work and throughout their career, teachers must deal diligently with their duties, obligations and responsibilities; as well as being consistently mindful of their professional rights, entitlements, and privileges. To this end, teachers usually belong to key groups that act on their behalf in dealing with employers. In Sierra Leone, the main agency that negotiates on behalf of teachers and their working terms and conditions is the Sierra Leone Teachers Union (SLTU). In addition, there are agencies through which teachers reinforce their group identity and safeguard their professional assets. These include the Sierra Leone Association of Retired Teachers (SLART) and various subject associations such as the Sierra Leone Association for the Teaching of English (SLATE). The right of teachers to belong to or associate with these agencies is an important part of relations with employers.

3.3. Employers and Governance in Education Institutions:

Teachers are the key operatives in education institutions, but they are normally employed by those who own and manage education institutions. These employers play a part in setting out the governance rules and regulations for education institutions, as well as in determining the conditions under which teachers work as professionals in education institutions. In Sierra Leone the main bodies that own and manage education institutions are: Central and Local Government; Religious Bodies; Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs); Civil Society Organisations (CSOs); Local Communities and Individuals; and Independent Private Sector Proprietors. However, all matters concerning the well-being of teachers now come under the purview of the Sierra Leone Teaching Service Commission (TSC), which has been fully mandated by the TSC Act of 2011 to cultivate and regulate a national teaching service by dealing with governance rules and regulations as well as terms and conditions of service for teachers. So, the TSC has been established as the premier employer of teachers in the Sierra Leone public service. This means that all teachers paid from public service resources are recruited, deployed, and managed by the Teaching Service Commission. This policy on teacher-employer relations is therefore mainly about how teachers and their agencies relate to the TSC and vice-versa. Nevertheless, these relations also concern owners and proprietors of education institutions, and those officials/entities that facilitate and manage the operations of education institutions on behalf of proprietors.

3.4. Leaders, Administrators, and Managers in Education Institutions:

Owners of education institutions rely on school leaders, administrators, and managers for the smooth operation of these institutions and to achieve expected results consistently. Leaders, administrators, and managers are usually teachers who have been appointed to management positions, with responsibility to administer prescribed rules and regulations for good practice and for efficient use of available resources. The well-being of leaders, administrators, and managers falls under the purview of the TSC, and they can be regarded as teachers with managerial responsibilities. At the same time, they exercise their managerial functions on behalf of those who own the education institutions. This means that school leaders, managers, and administrators act on behalf of owners of education institutions as they oversee the professional work of teachers within the prevailing rules and regulations. But they also have a duty to administer and manage education institutions in ways that facilitate effective and efficient execution of the functions of teachers, whilst respecting the rights and entitlements of teachers. This dual responsibility to proprietors and teachers means that school leaders, administrators, and managers have special bodies that address their role and interests as part of the education system. In Sierra Leone, these bodies include: Conference of Principals of Secondary Schools (CPSS); National Council of Head Teachers (NACOHT); and Council of Heads of Technical and Vocational Institutions (CHTVI).

3.5. Overview of Teacher-Employer Relations:

This policy on teacher-employer relations requires a proper understanding of both employers and teachers in the Sierra Leone context. Who are the employers of teachers; what is their mandate/status; what are their interests and objectives; how do they pursue these objectives; who acts on their behalf; and what influence do they have on teachers regarding: duties/responsibilities, working terms/conditions, entitlements/rights/privileges, and general well-being? On the other hand, who are the teachers; what are their defining characteristics; what makes them professionals; what are the forces that shape their profession; who acts on their behalf; how do they see themselves and their work; and how do others perceive them and the work that they do? The answers to these types of questions will continuously provide us with the key determinants of teacher-employer relations in Sierra Leone.

4. Teachers in Sierra Leone

Categories of Teachers and their Agencies

4.1. Categories of Professional Teachers:

In relation to determinants of their remuneration, status, and conditions of service, teachers in Sierra Leone can be categorized in at least three main ways as outlined in the chart below. First, categories can be based on the level of the education institution in which teachers work. The teacher competencies required will vary from early learning in ECD through primary school acquisition of literacy, numeracy, and other tools for learning; to the initiation into prescribed subject disciplines in JSS, and the career preparation at SSS and TVET institutions. Second, teachers can be categorized according to designated roles and formal posts in the institution in which they work. These roles and posts depend on the size of the institution, but they include: Principal or Head Teacher; Deputy Principal or Deputy Head Teacher; Head of Subject Department; Head of Curriculum; Head of Student Welfare; Senior Teacher; and Teacher. Third, the TSC has now proposed four new categories of teachers based purely on job progress or professional advancement. These categories (to be approved) are: **New Teacher; Proficient Teacher; Highly Accomplished Teacher; and Distinguished Teacher.**

Summary of the Major Ways of Categorizing Teachers in Sierra Leone		
1. By Level of Institution	2. By Designated Role & Formal Post	3. By Professional Advancement
<p>Nurseries/Pre-Schools: Teacher competencies are in early learning, child care, and school readiness.</p> <p>Primary Schools: Competencies in learning tools (literacy/numeracy), personal development, and introduction to school subjects in the curriculum.</p> <p>Junior Secondary Schools: Teacher competencies include full initiation into subjects/disciplines and personal development or character building.</p> <p>Senior Secondary Schools: Teacher competencies to facilitate in-depth studies of subject areas, and character building, plus orientation to careers.</p> <p>TVET Institutions: Teacher competencies concern job-related knowledge and skills as well as career pathways orientation.</p>	<p>Principal/Headteacher: Manage institution and help establish/cultivate institutional ethos.</p> <p>Deputy Principal/Deputy Headteacher: Support the functions of the school head.</p> <p>Head of Curriculum: Lead the interpretation and implementation of official/prescribed curriculum.</p> <p>Head of Subject Department: Provide expertise to guide others in a specific subject area.</p> <p>Guidance Counselor: In charge of addressing concerns and needs of all students in the school</p> <p>Senior Teacher: Provide technical/professional expertise and mentor new teachers in the school.</p> <p>Teacher: perform standard functions to facilitate learning achievements for all students.</p>	<p>New Teacher: for a minimum of two years, whilst benefiting from ongoing support and mentoring;</p> <p>Proficient Teacher: on compliance with criteria set out in Professional Standards for minimum of 3 years;</p> <p>Highly Accomplished Teacher: if able to meet the criteria laid down in the professional Standards;</p> <p>Distinguished Teacher: ultimate status, if able to meet criteria set out in the professional Standards;</p>

To focus minds on strengthening professionalism in teaching, the TSC has proposed the latest four-stage categorization of teachers viz: **New Teacher; Proficient Teacher; Highly Accomplished Teacher; and Distinguished Teacher**. These categories are based on the technical competencies, pedagogical progress, and professional advancement of teachers. Once Government approves these new proposed categories every teacher will be registered in a category that reflects his/her qualifications, expertise, and experience. The categories will enable capable teachers to advance in their career with enhanced status and increased remuneration that do not depend on the level of institution in which a teacher works, and do not require promotion/appointment to administrative post. The TSC hopes that this will encourage some of the most competent teachers to stay in the classroom and advance their careers by providing quality teaching services to facilitate high levels of learning achievement for all students in every level of institution.

4.2. Agencies that Represent and Support Teachers:

The Sierra Leone Teachers' Union (SLTU) is the main agency that **represents** teachers in matters of bargaining with employers over remuneration, terms and conditions of service, and general well-being of teachers. As such the TSC recognizes and respects all current and future gazetted Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA) between representatives of employers and teachers negotiated through the **Trade Group Negotiating Council**.

In general, the TSC shall enhance the role of teacher unions as the voice of teachers. To this end the TSC shall:

- Respect agreements reached by representatives of employers and teachers through the Trade Group Negotiating Council
- Recognise teacher unions as the voice of teachers for their professional, social, and economic well-being.
- Make provisions for union dues collection by such methods as provided for by the labour laws of Sierra Leone.
- Create an environment for teacher unions to exercise their trade union rights as provided for in law.
- Allow reasonable time for meetings and trade union activities without discrimination or interference in union matters
- Recognise the rights of legitimate teacher trade unions to industrial actions as provided for in the labour laws
- Establish a grievance and dispute resolution mechanism with teacher unions on behalf of their members
- Recognise the right of teacher unions to represent their members on educational bodies at national and international levels

In addition to the SLTU there are various bodies, agencies, and communities of practice that support the work of teachers in diverse ways. These include subject associations like the Sierra Leone Association for the Teaching of English (SLATE) and its equivalent in the areas of mathematics, science, etc. Some of these bodies have been in decline in recent years and teachers have not been obliged to be part of such subject associations. But the TSC will advocate for and support the revival of these bodies to enhance competencies and continuous professional development of teachers. It will also be regarded as a right and duty of teachers to participate actively in these bodies. As such, the TSC will advocate for their activities and events to be treated as official items on the school calendar.

4.3. Overview of Duties and Responsibilities of Teachers:

Teachers have a general obligation to discharge, to the best of their abilities, all the stipulated duties and functions of a teacher. In support of this, teachers need a conducive working environment to carry out the following responsibilities:

- Plan for and attend to the learning needs of all pupils/students in their charge (in line with the national curriculum).
- Cooperate with the authorities and local communities to facilitate the holistic development of pupils/students
- Adhere to the established Code of Conduct for Teachers (COC) in order to enhance the image of the profession.
- Make full use of Continuous Professional Development (CPD) opportunities and participate in Subject Associations
- Participate in extra curricula activities relating to the culture of the school and strengthening of the institutional ethos
- Recognise, respect, and facilitate the rights of pupils/students to access fair, just and equal treatment in school
- Exercise their professional expertise and autonomy to promote teaching and learning for all learners in their charge.
- Engage in social dialogue with the Teaching Service Commission on all matters pertaining to the well-being of teachers

5. Teacher Employers in Sierra Leone**Categories of Teacher Employers and their Agencies****5.1. Categories of Teacher Employers:**

The focus of teacher-employer relations is rightly on the Teaching Service Commission (TSC) as the premier employer of all teachers in the public service. However, owners and proprietors of education institutions do play a role in the employment and governance of teachers and their professional work. In Sierra Leone these owners and proprietors include:

- The Ministry of Basic and Senior Secondary Education (MBSSE)
- The Ministry of Technical and Higher Education (MTHE)
- Local Councils (District Proprietors)
- Religious Bodies and Organizations in Education (Religious Proprietors)
- Other School Proprietors (NGOs/CSOs/Local Communities/Individuals)
- Association of Independent Schools (AIS) – Private Sector (for profit) Proprietors

5.2. Agencies that Represent and Support Teacher Employers:

Employers rely on a range of officials, entities, and agencies to manage and administer education institutions and the education system in general. The TSC is the main agency established by law to represent all employers of teachers in the public sector, as the de-facto employer of these teachers. In addition, the Central Government makes use of school supervisors and inspectors in all districts to facilitate and support work in line with its mandate to oversee quality assurance of all education institutions in the country. Similarly, district proprietors, religious proprietors, NGOs, CSOs, communities, private sector, and other proprietors make use of supervisory cadres to oversee the operations of their education institutions. Then it is also the case that all education institutions rely on school leaders, administrators and managers for smooth operation and delivery of expected outcomes/results.

5.3. Overview of Duties and Responsibilities of Teacher Employers:

As the premier employer of all public sector teachers in Sierra Leone the Teaching Service Commission has the responsibility to:

- Provide a framework for direct operations for teacher management including hiring, promoting, transferring, and scheduling and assigning teachers in positions within the school system.
- Establish mechanisms for the observance of reasonable work rules and schedules of work for effective management of teachers

- Institute investigations, suspension and discharge disciplinary actions against teachers accused of misconduct
- Provide an enabling environment for effective teaching and learning.
- Establish mechanisms for social dialogue with teachers and their representative organizations to determine terms and conditions of employment and professional development.
- Recognise the existing gazetted Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA) between Employers of Teachers of Sierra Leone and the Sierra Leone Teachers Union.
- Advocate for teacher’s salary and working conditions
- Advance the course of education by providing continuous professional development programmes
- Enhance and enforce teachers’ professional standards

6. Employment, Deployment, and Job Security

Rights, Responsibilities, Duties, and Obligations

The recruitment of teachers shall be a continuous process driven by the growing needs of the education system. As such the TSC has established a continuous process for systematic employment of qualified/motivated teachers. The aim is to cultivate a professional teaching force by ensuring that all who teach in the schools of Sierra Leone are qualified, registered, and licensed, as professional teachers. As such the TSC will only recruit registered and licensed candidates for all available and approved vacancies in the teaching service. Those who wish to be employed as teachers must therefore ensure that they are registered and licensed to be eligible for recruitment into the national teaching service. The procedures, rules, and regulations, for teacher recruitment by the TSC are outlined in detail in the 2019 National Policy on Teacher Management, which is widely available to teachers, including on the TSC website. In summary, the teacher-employer relations aspects of the procedures for teacher recruitment are as follows:

- (a) The TSC has a duty to conduct annual recruitment exercises in a timely manner, to fill vacancies for the new academic year. To this end the TSC has a responsibility to notify schools and school heads in good time to prepare for the annual exercise.
- (b) The TSC has an obligation to widely advertise available vacancies that have been approved in the media and on their website.
- (c) An important obligation of the TSC is to assign a unique reference number to each vacancy, as a basis for all communications relating to that vacancy.
- (d) The TSC District Offices are responsible for receiving all applications for advertised vacancies and preparing a shortlist of candidates to be interviewed by the School Board concerned.

- (e) It is the duty of the TSC District Office to forward shortlists of candidates to the School Board/Management Committee.
- (f) School Boards or School Management Committees are responsible for carrying out the interview process, based on the recruitment guidelines issued by TSC and in line with assessment criteria recommended by the TSC.
- (g) It is the duty of the TSC to appoint each recruited teacher to a grade that is consistent with the qualifications and experience of the teacher.

Summary of Teacher-Employer Relations on Employment, Deployment, and Job Security	
TEACHERS & AGENCIES	EMPLOYERS & AGENCIES
Right to apply for advertised vacancies for which the candidate is qualified.	Duty (TSC) to advertise available & approved vacancies widely for attention of prospective applicants.
Responsibility to use the prescribed TSC Application Form for any vacancy.	TSC shall offer employment to successful applicants either on permanent terms or on contract terms. In both cases the TSC shall issue a full Offer of Employment Letter, indicating the terms of engagement including status of employment, probationary terms, pension rights, salary scale, etc.
Obligation to register with TSC to be eligible for recruitment as a teacher.	
Responsibility to provide all required information for as part of application.	The TSC shall issue a Posting Letter to all teachers appointed, whether on permanent terms or on contract terms.
Obligation to attend scheduled interview if short-listed for a vacancy.	
Duty to complete and submit TSC Acceptance Form if offered appointment.	The TSC shall also issue an Acceptance Form to be completed and signed by all appointed teachers.

In terms of specific issues concerning teacher-employer relations, the TSC shall be committed to the following:

- Attracting and retaining qualified teachers in the profession shall be a key priority policy for the TSC.
- Set up criteria and procedures for registration and licensing of teachers in all public schools.
- All teachers must be licensed and registered with TSC as a requirement for teaching in any school in Sierra Leone.
- Teachers will be required to pay a licensing and renewal fee, determined by the TSC and approved by MBSSE.
- The TSC shall recruit teachers into the school system after they have attained the requisite teaching qualifications
- Selection process of teachers shall be transparent and non-discriminatory based on minimum requirements.
- Teachers shall be physically and mentally fit for employment at the time of recruitment.

- No teacher shall be allowed to teach without a licence except in exceptional circumstance as determined by the TSC.
- Coordinated efforts by TSC and other agencies shall be directed towards improving working conditions, rewards and incentives, recognition, opportunities for CPD, conditions of employment and effective management.
- The TSC retention policy shall be based on knowledge of actual staffing needs and shall involve monitoring attrition rates to be able to set teacher retention targets.
- TSC shall develop strategies and incentives to recognize and reward exemplary performance in the teaching career.
- Deregistration and Removal of a teacher from the register shall follow the due process of law.
- The TSC shall establish an appeals tribunal and develop procedures of appealing with an offer for hearing and justification for dismissal.
- Teachers shall have the right to appeal against a decision to be removed from the register within the stipulated time frame.
- The TSC is committed to a policy that encourages Equal Employment Opportunity with respect to all applicants for employment.
- TSC shall prohibit discrimination against qualified teachers and applicants in all aspects of employment including, but not limited to: Recruitment, Hiring, Compensation, Promotion, Job assignments, Transfers, Demotions, Discipline, Training, Leaves of absence, Benefits, Termination, Employer-sponsored activities, Social and recreational programmes.
- TSC shall prohibit discrimination based on ethnicity, gender, age, disability, religion, marital status, and any other status or category protected by the laws of Sierra Leone.

In terms of teacher deployment, the problem is that distribution of teachers across the country varies considerably with notable geographical disparity and most teachers preferring to teach in the urban settings. In certain instances, deployment to hardship areas has allegedly been used as a punitive tool. To ensure positive and equitable distribution of teachers across all regions and districts of the country, the TSC shall be committed to the following:

- Identify specific staffing needs in the schools considering subject combinations, regional balances and geographical location of schools.
- Deployment procedures shall be fair, transparent, equitable, and just.
- Teachers who teach in areas designated as remote/hardship areas shall be rewarded/compensated.
- Advertise vacancies and conduct interviews with the best performers selected on merit. Specified procedures will be followed to fill up the posts requiring special leadership.
- Employer-initiated deployment will attract relocation expenses.
- Deployment procedures shall take into consideration family circumstance, safety and possible housing facilities.

- Newly recruited teachers will only be considered for transfer after serving the school for a minimum period of three years, except in very special circumstance as will be determined by the TSC.
- Teachers shall be required to use transfer forms which are available on the TSC website or in schools to make for easy access. These shall be the only official documents that will be recognised by the TSC.
- Upon request, health conditions of teachers requiring special attention will be assessed, considered and given priority in the deployment process.

In terms of continuity in the teaching profession and job security, the TSC is committed to the following:

- Provide orientation, induction and mentorship programmes to new entrants to the profession
- Provide mechanism for study leave with pay and time off for any other CPD.
- Provide guidelines for in- service, further and higher education
- Encourage teacher exchange programmes internally and externally
- Encourage teachers to undertake school-based research and use findings to improve on the quality of teaching methods and learning outcomes.
- Encourage peer evaluation
- Provide resources for pre-service, in-service education and Continuous Professional Development (CPD)
- Teachers will achieve professional advancement through successful participation in CPD programmes.

7. Career Advancement, Exit, and Re-Entry

Rights, Responsibilities, Duties, and Obligations

One of the goals of the TSC as an employer is to ensure that teaching in Sierra Leone is transformed into a vibrant and dynamic profession with varied opportunities for advancement as well as mechanisms for exiting and re-entering the profession if necessary. The TSC is committed to motivating teachers by creating opportunities for career progression and development in the teaching service through the following measures:

- Promotion shall be transparent, equitable, standardized and tailored to the type of posts
- Provide promotion criteria for the different cadre of teachers, taking into consideration qualification, experience, responsibility and effectiveness.

- Ensure timely performance appraisal and evaluation to determine the advancement from one level of the career ladder to the other within the service.
- Teachers' career path shall provide meaningful rewards and incentives (financial/non-financial) to motivate teachers.
- Guarantee and ensure security of tenure stressing on stability in the profession and security against arbitrary actions.
- Provide for diversified vertical and horizontal career progression that cuts across the Education and Public service.
- Apply equality of opportunity for all, including women, teachers with disabilities, special needs and teachers living with HIV and AIDS. Such teachers shall not be discriminated against in the movement of teachers between different levels of education (pre-primary, primary, secondary, vocational/technical)

An important aspect of teacher-employer relations concerns the ways in which a professional teacher can exit the teaching service. Details of the circumstances as well as the terms and conditions under which a teacher may exit the teaching service are outlined in the 2019 National Policy on Teacher Management. Exit from the service could be through: resignation by the teacher; or termination by the TSC; or retirement of the teacher; or through redundancy.

In the case of resignation, the teacher must give thirty days' notice and address the letter of resignation to the TSC Secretary through the School Head and the District Head (TSC – DO). A teacher has the right to withdraw a notice of resignation at any time up to the effective date of the original resignation notice. After this date resignation withdrawals shall not be valid, and the TSC will proceed with action on the resignation notice. In the case of termination or dismissal by the TSC the employment of a teacher serving on permanent or contract terms shall be terminated by:

- (a) Giving one month's notice in writing; or (b) paying one month's salary in lieu of notice.

Termination usually follows the conclusion and determination of disciplinary proceedings by the TSC. The of a teacher may be terminated on appropriate grounds, as provided for under the Code of Conduct and Ethics for Teachers.

Exit from the teaching service by retirement may be on grounds of age, public interest, or medical grounds. A teacher on permanent terms of service who retires on grounds of age, public interest or medical grounds shall be eligible for pension or gratuity in accordance with these regulations and the NASSIT pension scheme. On retirement and as provided for in the Collective Agreement, a teacher's salary must continue to be paid until and unless terminal and pension benefits have been paid by the employer and NASSIT. Where a teacher is considered for retirement by the TSC on grounds of ill health, the Commission shall establish a Medical Board to consider the teacher's health circumstances.

If a teacher is being retired in the public interest, the TSC shall consider every available report regarding a complaint against the teacher, after which it may conclude that it is undesirable to retain the teacher in the teaching service. In such cases, the TSC shall:

- (a) set out the circumstances of its preliminary decision to retire the teacher and request that the teacher responds within thirty (30) days; and
- (b) upon receipt of the teacher's response, the Commission may decide to carry out further inquiry into the complaints; or may decide to retire the teacher on grounds of serving the public interest.

A teacher who retires on grounds of public interest under this regulation shall not lose any pension entitlements.

A teacher who voluntarily retires from the teaching service shall give the TSC a three (3) months' notice of his or her intention to retire. On the other hand, if the TSC requires a teacher to retire, it shall give the teacher notice of at least three (3) months. Where no notice is issued by either of the parties, the party initiating the retirement shall pay to the other the equivalent of one (1) month's severance pay in lieu of notice.

A teacher can be declared redundant by the TSC, where the teacher's position is made redundant because of changes in government policy, national curriculum, school organization, or restructuring of the Commission. In the case of such redundancy, the TSC shall:

- (a) Notify the teacher, the teacher's trade union (where applicable), and the Commissioner for Labour, of the reasons for the redundancy; not less than three (3) months to the date of termination.
- (b) Have regard to the seniority in the teaching service as well as the skills and competency of a teacher affected by the redundancy to determine how this redundancy affects the policy of retaining competent and experienced teachers in the teaching force.
- (c) Issue the teacher with one month's notice in writing or pay an equivalent of one month's salary in lieu of notice.

A teacher who exits the service, through resignation, retirement, age limit, redundancy and transfer may be re-employed by the Commission subject to:

- (a) Existing terms and conditions of service; (b) Recruitment guidelines; and (c) Approval by the Commission.

A teacher re-employed under this section must be required to comply with the current terms and conditions, as opposed to conditions which may have existed under the teacher’s previous employment in the teaching service.

8. Conducive Working Environment

Requirements, Commitments and Recommendations

A conducive working environment is critical for effective teaching and learning. It is important to note that conducive conditions under which teachers teach are the same conditions under which children learn best. Sierra Leone still suffers from post-war infrastructure damages that have resulted in inadequate classrooms, laboratories and libraries in learning institutions. Classrooms tend to be overcrowded and of poor condition despite continuing investments in education infrastructure. To address this situation in view of the policy on free quality education the Government is committed to working with partners, proprietors, and managers to implement the following measures for conducive and enabling learning environments that are safe and violence-free for teachers and learners.

- Provide school buildings that are safe, secure, gender and disability sensitive, attractive in overall design and function, and constructed in accordance with established WASH standards and with emphasis on durability, adaptability, and maintenance.
- Ensure standards for class size that facilitate effective teaching and learning.
- Provide adequate quality teaching and learning materials (TLMs) for effective and efficient service delivery by teachers
- Establish an eight-hour working day as the standard for teachers.
- Address Ebola, Cholera, and HIV/AIDS as work place issues requiring prevention, treatment, confidentiality, non-discrimination, care and support for teachers and pupils/students living with or affected by these conditions.
- Teachers with disabilities shall be encouraged to work on an equitable basis with others.
- Ensure that school infrastructure is adequate and user-friendly for teachers and pupils/students with disabilities.
- Provide reasonable facilities/opportunities to teachers with disabilities; e.g. adapted TLMs, schedules, and assistive devices.
- Affirmative action measures, such as special entry employment, promotion and leave terms of teachers with disabilities.
- Encourage the responsible use of modern technology in schools to supplement teaching and learning.
- Use ICT as a tool to improve teacher training, personal, and professional development.
- Responsible use of social media for the exchange of information and innovative ideas by teachers.
- Disciplinary action shall be taken for the misuse of social media.

In addition to these types of measures, proprietors and managers can do much more to improve the physical, social, and psychological working environment in which teachers operate. The following are some of the ways of creating a conducive working environment:

- Create an institutional ethos in education institutions based on traditions and culture of the school and its’ community of past and present students. This can be used to build a sense of identity and belonging amongst teachers and students alike.
- Encourage team-building by school leaders, managers, and administrators so teachers can feel they are part of achievements.
- Provide for psycho-social support and care of teachers and pupils as required.
- Cultivate a movement of mutual respect amongst teachers as a peer group of professionals within and across schools.
- Make every school a rights-respecting institution.
- Ensure zero tolerance for bullying, threats, intimidation, and arbitrary punitive measures.
- Ensure zero tolerance for gender bias, sexual harassment/assault, and gender-based violence.
- Ensure zero tolerance for bribery, corruption and all forms of dishonesty and malpractice in education institutions
- Create a working environment that is free of all forms of discrimination, including gender, ethnicity, religion, and geography.
- Create a working environment that is welcoming for teachers, with space for non-teaching work as well as rest/relaxation.
- Ensure that teachers do not misuse or misappropriate resources made available to support a conducive working environment.

Summary of Teacher-Employer Relations on Working Environment	
TEACHERS & AGENCIES	EMPLOYERS & AGENCIES
Obligation to support conducive working environment through interaction between teachers and approach to learners and school management.	Obligation to invest resources towards creating and maintaining a working environment that is conducive to teaching and the well-being of teachers.
Duty to refrain from misuse and misappropriation of institutional resources.	Obligation to eliminate forms of bias and discrimination in the environment of the education institution.
Responsibility to protect institution facilities and use equipment responsibly	Duty to eliminate bribery, corruption, impersonation and fraud in the school working environment.
Participate in or help organize routine maintenance of physical facilities and the school environment as may be appropriate	Promote an institutional ethos that generates a sense of identity/belonging for all who work at the education institution.

9. Terms and Conditions of Service	Rights, Responsibilities, Duties, and Obligations
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The teacher recruitment process outlined in the 2019 National Policy on Teacher Management stipulates that the TSC may employ teachers on a permanent basis or on a contract basis. In both cases it is the duty of the TSC to provide recruited teachers with:

- A full “Offer of Employment Letter” that indicates comprehensive terms regarding status of employment (permanent or contract), probationary terms if applicable, salary scale, pension rights, etc.
- A “Posting Letter” (indicating deployment location) to all teachers appointed, whether on permanent terms or on contract terms.
- An “Acceptance Form” that must be completed, signed, and returned to the TSC by all appointed teachers.

As regards the terms and conditions of service, salary is an important determinant in recruiting, retaining and motivating competent and dedicated professional teachers. To address this issue the TSC is committed to providing a competitive remuneration package that is in line with national policies and favourably comparable to remuneration in other attractive professions. This commitment is reflected in teacher-employer relations as follows:

- Teachers’ salaries shall be negotiated with their union representatives through the Trade Group Negotiating Council.
- Advocate for salaries and overall remuneration for teachers that reflect the importance attached to education in Sierra Leone.
- Payment of teachers’ salaries shall be prompt and regular with special attention to teachers in remote areas.
- Fix remuneration to afford a decent standard of living for teachers and their families
- Invest in Continuous Professional Development (CPD) to enhance competencies, so teachers can provide value for money.
- Set remuneration at levels equivalent to other public sector workers with similar qualifications and competency requirements
- Provide remuneration levels that reflect the responsibilities of teachers as set out in objectively defined job descriptions.
- Teachers shall be entitled to receive annual increments.
- Offer equal remuneration for men and women teachers for work of equal value
- Fair and equitable leave is key to effective teacher motivation and a right of all teachers.
- Various types of leave shall be provided for including annual leave, study leave, compassionate leave, and Maternity leave.
- Teachers shall remain employed and keep their employment terms while on any period of agreed leave;
- Seniority, pay grade, continuity of service, pensions purposes and other normal conditions of service shall not be discontinued during leave periods;

- Eligibility for promotion and pension shall also be safeguarded during the leave period
- Study leave with or without pay shall be granted subject to prevailing criteria for such award, with such leave counted for seniority and pension purposes.
- The TSC shall determine priority areas for the award of study leave with pay and the duration of such leave.
- Science and Technology teachers should have taught for at least three years to qualify for study leave, while others will only qualify if they have taught for at least five years.

To ensure that teachers everywhere and at all levels enjoy social security protection, the TSC shall enrol all recruited teachers with the National Social Security Investment Trust (NASSIT). Further measures to be taken by TSC for the benefit of teachers include:

- The mandatory retirement age for the teaching profession shall be 60 years, subject to future changes.
- The TSC shall give one-year notice of retirement which shall be communicated to NASSIT and the teacher
- Teachers who retire upon attainment of the mandatory age of 60, shall receive full pension if they have contributed to the NASSIT scheme for fifteen years and above.
- A retirement grant will be paid to teachers who retire but have not contributed for the minimum period of fifteen years
- NASSIT shall pay retirement benefits immediately after the last date of service and not later than 90 working days.
- Teachers can also benefit from early retirement at the age of 55 years and receive a reduced pension.
- Teachers can be retired on medical grounds as certified by the NASSIT medical board and with all benefits paid.

10. Health and Safety at Work

Rights, Responsibilities, Duties, and Obligations

A specific aspect of the school environment in Sierra Leone concerns health and safety at work. Employers have a duty to invest in a healthy and safe working environment. The Government can establish and enforce health and safety standards as pre-requisites for approving schools in Sierra Leone. These standards could include construction of facilities that are structurally safe and free of health hazards such as leaking roofs, damp walls, dangerous toilets, and pest infestation. Health and safety at work also involves prevention of accidents through first aid, road safety drills, etc.; as well as maintaining a healthy environment with adequate WASH facilities and safe health practices such as hand-washing. In Sierra Leone attention also needs to be given to the prevention of disease such as Ebola, Cholera, Malaria, HIV/AIDS and routine water-borne illnesses. Proprietors can also invest in measures like school fencing, gates, and landscaping as a contribution to health and safety at work in education institutions. In addition, proprietors can invest in some form

of “Teacher Care Zones” (staff rooms) within which teachers can do their lesson preparation work, or have meal breaks, or take periods of rest, or do some leisure reading, and interact informally with their peers.

Teachers have a right to expect that employers and proprietors will provide for health and safety at work. However, expectations need to be tempered with the reality of what is affordable for different education institutions. In TVET institutions for instance teachers do work with a wide range of tools and equipment which may lead to accidents. It would be reasonable not only to invest in prevention measures but also to provide some form of insurance cover for teachers who use such machinery. On the other hand, expecting proprietors to provide this type of insurance in a primary school may be inappropriate and unreasonable.

Summary of Teacher-Employer Relations on Health and Safety at Work	
TEACHERS & AGENCIES	EMPLOYERS & AGENCIES
Exercise right to health and safety at work and request reasonable levels of provision by proprietors and management.	Invest in reasonable provisions to promote health and safety at work for all teachers, students, and managers.
Contribute to health and safety at work through responsible behaviors and adherence to appropriate rules and regulations on health and safety.	Invest in periodic staff training (through MoH and similar bodies) for health and safety in the work place.
Take appropriate measures to safeguard personal health and safety at work.	Regularly review and upgrade health and safety measures in the institution.

11. Legal Protection and Assistance

Rights, Responsibilities, Duties, and Obligations

Teachers may incur liabilities or be subject to legal proceedings in the course of carrying out their official duties. In such cases, teachers have rights and employers have obligations relating to legal assistance and other forms of support. In particular, the TSC is committed to offering support for teachers to deal with legal issues and problems, in line with its mandate to address the well-being of teachers. The TSC also has an obligation to put in place appropriate insurance arrangements that would facilitate this type of assistance to teachers. The extent, limitations, and conditions under which such proposed support can be provided by the TSC are outlined in detail in the 2019 National Policy on Teacher Management and are **subject to interpretation by the TSC Legal Practitioner**. In summary the key points to note on teacher-employer relations are as follows:

- (a) As an employer the TSC shall not be involved in any way in legal proceedings where a teacher is charged with a criminal offence.
- (b) As an employer the TSC shall not be involved in any way in civil proceedings regarding private litigation that is unconnected with the official position or official duty of a teacher.
- (c) The TSC may decline to provide legal assistance or meet the costs of any award against a teacher, if it judges that the actions of the teacher breach established policy and regulations.
- (d) A teacher may apply to the TSC for legal assistance if a civil suit is instituted against him/her for an action or omission arising out of the discharge of his/her official duty. Official duty in this regard does not include trade union or similar activities.
- (e) The TSC requires that such an application shall be submitted together with a report prepared by the Head of its District Office (TSC-DO), with details of the particulars of the case against the teacher.
- (f) The TSC shall first assess whether the subject of litigation falls within its mandate and then assess the associated risks involved.
- (g) Where it is judged appropriate the TSC may take steps to settle a matter out of court, rather than provide legal assistance.
- (h) The TSC shall seek (free) legal assistance from the Attorney-General; and consult with the Attorney-General and the Ministry of Finance on use of public funds to settle any damages or costs awarded against a teacher in civil proceedings.

Summary of Teacher-Employer Relations on Legal Protection and Assistance	
TEACHERS & AGENCIES	EMPLOYERS & AGENCIES
<p>A teacher has the right to seek legal assistance from his/her employer if s/he faces a civil suit arising from the discharge of official functions and duties.</p> <p>A teacher has an obligation to apply for TSC legal support immediately upon receiving the summons; provided s/he has not engaged the services of a private legal practitioner.</p> <p>A teacher must obtain the written consent of the TSC before instituting civil proceedings relating to the teacher’s official position or official duties.</p>	<p>The TSC shall arrange with the Office of the Attorney-General to undertake the defense of a teacher and to provide free legal representation.</p> <p>In dealing with a summons against a teacher the TSC will consult the office of the Attorney-General regardless of whether the teacher requires legal assistance or not.</p> <p>In consultation with the Attorney-General and the Ministry of Finance, the TSC shall use public funds to settle damages or costs awarded against a teacher in civil proceedings.</p>

12. Professional Status & Standards	Rights, Responsibilities, Duties, and Obligations
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A major goal of the Teaching Service Commission is to establish and cultivate a fully professional teaching service in Sierra Leone, whereby all who teach in education institutions will have the requisite initial education and training, as well as engaging in continuous professional development throughout their career in the teaching field. In line with this, one of the key responsibilities of the TSC as an employer is to facilitate, support, and enforce professionalism in the teaching service. For their part teachers are expected to pursue and uphold standards of professionalism in the execution of their duties as well as in their general demeanor and comportment, and in their relations with the public. In practice professional status is not only to be achieved through the efforts of teachers; but also needs to be ascribed on teachers by others, such as employers, students, parents, communities, and the general public.

Teachers in Sierra Leone have a major deficit gap to overcome in relation to how others perceive teachers and their work. Over the years, persistent allegations of corrupt practices and negative behaviors have sullied the reputation of teachers and detracted from the many positive results which they achieved in the face of national problems and disasters. The establishment of the TSC presents an opportunity to transform the perception of teachers and their work.

Summary of Teacher-Employer Relations on Professional Status and Standards	
TEACHERS & AGENCIES	EMPLOYERS & AGENCIES
Demonstrate and uphold professional standards in all aspects of their work.	Recognize and respect the professionalism of teachers in all transactions.
Aspire to earn the trust, respect, and confidence of employers, learners, parents, communities, and the general public in all aspects of their services.	Promote teaching as a noble profession in all public advocacy statements and publicity materials.
Focus on delivering results in terms of learning achievement that would serve as value for money invested in teachers	Champion teaching as a profession and issue awards/prizes in recognition of the best performing teachers in the national teaching service.

13. Ethical Standards and Practices**Rights, Responsibilities, Duties, and Obligations**

The teaching profession involves dealing with children and young people, respecting their rights and safeguarding their well-being. As such teachers are supposed to be role models and self-discipline is crucial in the performance of their job. Adherence to accepted standards of behaviour is imperative to the stability of work relations. Progressive discipline keeps workers on the check and enhances confidence. Negative behaviour defames the individual teachers and degrades the profession. Teachers are the first public contact of learners after their parents. A code of discipline that binds the teachers to work as a team and display high moral standards is now in operation. It is pertinent to note that both the teachers' Code of Conduct and the Collective Agreement have provided for disciplinary procedures. In recent times, there have been incidences of unwarranted behaviour including school related gender-based violence which has eroded the confidence reposed in teachers by education authorities, parents, and pupils/students.

The TSC shall take steps to ensure improved performance and adherence to the accepted norms and to safeguard teaching as a noble and respectable profession. Some of the measures to be taken will include:

- Outline all the expected behaviour of professional teachers in a comprehensive national code of conduct.
- Teachers have a right to be provided with information on their duties including unacceptable professional behaviour.
- Organise and create opportunities for teachers to improve on their conduct and demonstrate behavioural changes.
- Set up disciplinary committees that include school authorities, union representatives, and other education stakeholders.
- Carry out investigations consistent with the policy and practice.
- Disciplinary actions shall be determined by the degree of severity and frequency of the behaviour. Less severe breaches will attract verbal warning whose proceedings must be documented.
- Disciplinary offenses may include but not limited to absconding from duty, recurrent lateness, sexual harassment, physical violence, child labour, drug abuse in schools.

- Sale of food and non-food items to pupils/students in school, child labour, assignment for money, favouritism, sex for grades, examination malpractices, teaching without lesson notes, and any other malpractices shall also be considered as crimes.

The TSC has now published a comprehensive Code of Ethics for teachers, which is available on the TSC website www.tsc.gov.sl This outlines in detail what is expected of teachers and the consequences of breaching guidelines on professional conduct. It also spells out the rights of teachers to appeal against decisions that are perceived as unfair or unjust.