

27 July 2016

Education Bureau Circular No. 6/2016

Appointment / Promotion of School Heads in Aided Primary Schools

[Note : This circular should be read by –

- (a) Supervisors and Heads of all aided primary schools (including primary special schools) – for necessary action
- (b) Heads of government primary schools, Supervisors and Heads of primary schools under the Direct Subsidy Scheme and Heads of Sections – for information]

SUMMARY

This circular announces the fine-tuned arrangement regarding the requirement of working experience for appointment / promotion of school heads in aided primary schools effective from the 2016/17 school year. It also draws the attention of schools to the importance of adopting a prudent approach in appointment and substantive promotion of school heads.

BACKGROUND

2. Professional leadership is a key factor contributing to school effectiveness and it is essential that the headship be taken up by a person who demonstrates the qualities to inspire and lead the staff and students. Apart from putting in place an open, fair and transparent procedure to select the most competent candidate to fill the vacant headship post, School Management Committees (SMCs) / Incorporated Management Committees (IMCs) of schools are reminded to adopt a prudent approach in assessing the ability of a candidate as well as his / her experience of school administration and management prior to appointing / substantively promoting him / her to the headship rank.

3. Under the existing policy, for a candidate to be appointed / substantively promoted to the rank of Headmaster / Headmistress II (HM II) or Headmaster / Headmistress I (HM I) of an aided primary school, apart from possessing the required academic qualifications and specified training, he / she has to fulfill the requirement of working experience for a particular rank of the head as set out below –

- (a) A candidate will be eligible for promotion to HM II if he / she has served successfully in a primary school for at least 5 years either (i) as a Senior Primary School Master / Mistress (SPSM) or as an Assistant Master / Mistress (AM) / Primary School Master / Mistress (PSM) and then as an SPSM; or (ii) as a PSM or as an AM and then as a PSM, of which one year should be in the capacity as head of a primary school with more than 11 classes.
- (b) A candidate will be eligible for promotion to HM I if he / she has served successfully in a primary school for at least 3 years either as an HM II or as a Senior Assistant Master / Mistress (SAM) and then as an HM II, one year of which should be in the capacity as head of a primary school with more than 23 classes.

4. As the appointment / promotion of head of a school is recommended by the SMC / IMC, should the SMC / IMC consider that there is a need to observe the performance of the selected candidate more clearly before substantive promotion, the SMC / IMC has the discretion to recommend the selected candidate as head of the school on an acting basis. In fact, some SMCs / IMCs have exercised their discretion to appoint / promote the selected candidate as head of the school on an acting basis in the past years, despite the fact that the selected candidates have met all requirements and conditions for appointment / promotion of school heads as stipulated in the Codes of Aid and the related guidelines.

DETAILS

Fine-tuned Arrangement

5. We have reviewed the compulsory requirement for a candidate to possess a year's experience as head of a primary school with more than 11 classes or 23 classes for appointment / substantive promotion to the respective headship ranks of HM II and HM I in the light of the latest development of primary schools and school-based management. With effect from the 2016/17 school year, the requirement for working

experience for appointment / promotion to a particular rank of a primary school head is fine-tuned as follows -

- (a) A candidate will be eligible for promotion to HM II if he / she has served successfully in a primary school for at least 5 years either (i) as an SPSM or as an AM / PSM and then as an SPSM; or (ii) as a PSM or as an AM and then as a PSM.
- (b) A candidate will be eligible for promotion to HM I if he / she has served successfully in a primary school for at least 3 years either as an HM II or as an SAM and then as an HM II.

6. Schools should note that except the above fine-tuned requirement for working experience, all other requirements and conditions for appointment / promotion of school heads as stipulated in the Codes of Aid and the related guidelines shall remain unchanged. The existing policy of delegating the authority to the SMCs / IMCs of schools to approve appointment and promotion, including acting appointment of staff paid out of Salaries Grant will not be affected.

7. Provided that a candidate has met the requirement of working experience as mentioned in paragraph 5 above and all other relevant conditions for promotion, the SMC / IMC of a school can recommend to this Bureau for approval of a PSM / SPSM to be appointed / substantively promoted to HM II or an HM II to be appointed / substantively promoted to HM I. Nevertheless, **SMCs / IMCs are specifically reminded that they should prudently consider whether a candidate has the capability and experience to take up the role of a school head effectively. Should they have any doubt on the candidate's capability or experience before appointment / substantive promotion to the headship rank, particularly for the candidate at PSM rank who does not have prior experience as a deputy school head, SMCs /IMCs could exercise the discretion to appoint the candidate on an acting basis.**

8. The SMCs / IMCs of schools are required to note the following appointment situations for implementing the fine-tuned requirement for working experience pertaining to the appointment / promotion of school heads in aided primary schools as set out in paragraph 5 above:

Appointment Situation	Implementation of the Fine-tuned Requirement for Working Experience
(a) School heads newly appointed / promoted with effect from 1 September 2016	Provided that the school heads have met all requirements and conditions for appointment / promotion and <u>subject to the recommendation of the SMCs / IMCs and approval of this Bureau</u> , the school heads will be allowed to be appointed / substantively promoted to HM II / HM I with effect from 1 September 2016.
(b) School heads who have fulfilled all the promotion requirements except one year's experience in the capacity as head of a primary school with more than 11 classes and 23 classes for HM II and HM I respectively, and their acting periods have yet to be completed as at 1 September 2016	<u>Subject to the recommendation of the SMCs / IMCs and approval of this Bureau</u> , the school heads will be allowed to be appointed / substantively promoted to HM II / HM I with effect from 1 September 2016.
(c) School heads who have been / will be confirmed to their respective ranks on or before 1 September 2016	No retrospective approval will be given.

9. The schools concerned should note that all the necessary procedures for appointment / promotion, including the recommendation and submission of applications for the approval of this Bureau in writing should be completed before the effective date (1 September 2016 the earliest). Under normal circumstances, there should be no retrospective effect for the date of promotion.

10. The relevant sections of the Codes of Aid will be updated accordingly in due course.

ENQUIRY

11. For enquiries, please contact your respective Senior School Development Officers.

Ms Y Y SO
for Permanent Secretary for Education