

PRESS RELEASE
SPECIAL MEETING OF THE HEADS OF AFFILIATED SCHOOLS, WEST
BENGAL CALLED BY THE COUNCIL IN KOLKATA
ON MONDAY 31ST JULY, 2017

It has been brought to the attention of the Council that numerous misleading news reports and distorted facts are being circulated with regard to the various progressive initiatives, being undertaken by the Council. In view of this fact, the Council is convening this special meeting.

The Council has never deviated from its original “ethos” of being child friendly nor will do so as we enter the 60th year of our existence. In fact the focus of all our endeavors is always child centric and child friendly with the children’s interest being of paramount importance.

The conduct of examinations at the Class X and Class XII level is the primary activity of the Council, besides framing of the Regulations and Syllabi for these levels. In order to facilitate a steady progression of learning from the lower level to the examination classes, it was necessary, therefore, to frame a Curriculum at the lower level also.

A strong foundation in the early classes, particularly up to the elementary stage, plays a very crucial and significant role in forging life-long learning. The skills, attitudes and knowledge that children acquire in elementary school lays the groundwork for future success.

It is common knowledge that a vast majority of our schools do not have any in-house curriculum to follow in their primary and upper primary classes and are largely guided only by the textbooks recommend for the transaction in various classes at the elementary stage.

Hence the Council has felt that this problem needed to be addressed and has therefore put in place a curriculum that provides a **basic minimum** standard that will cater not only to the schools that do not have a curriculum but to all schools affiliated to the Council. **However, it may be complemented by additional content / methodologies currently being transacted and practiced by some schools.**

It may be noted that the said curriculum is not in any manner violative of Section 29 of the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009 (RTE Act). Section 29 of the RTE Act does not prohibit any affiliating body, like the Council, to prescribe its own curriculum / syllabus. It must be noted that the Hon’ble Supreme Court of India has held that affiliating authorities are free to prescribe curriculum / syllabi for examinations to maintain educational standards. The Hon’ble Supreme Court of India has also held the RTE Act to be inapplicable to minority schools.

Section 29 of the RTE Act only enables the State Governments to notify an ‘Academic Authority’ to lay down a curriculum. However, presently, the State of West Bengal has not

notified any authority under Section 29 of the RTE Act and thus, no curriculum / syllabus has been laid down in the context of Section 29 of the RTE Act.

As has been the Council's policy with regard to textbooks at the ICSE and ISC level, the same would be followed at this level too. The Council will not prescribe any textbooks for Preschool to Class VIII. The schools are free to select / use appropriate teaching, learning materials and aids of their choice.

The Council has only designed and developed a broad-based Curriculum for Preschool to Class VIII, so as to facilitate an upward mobility in the teaching and learning process and to lead children in a graded and progressive manner to derive full benefit of the ICSE and ISC syllabi.

With the introduction of the curriculum, the Council has also initiated the process of training of subject teachers as Master Trainers.

I fail to understand why **assumptions** and **speculations** are running rife without **facts** and **substance** regarding the proposed assessment.

It has been clearly stated in my letter to all Heads of Schools dated 4th July, 2017, which is available on the Council's website, that the Council is currently discussing the modalities for implementation of the process of assessment, which is **only a future initiative** of the Council, based on the curriculum. **The said assessment is not being implemented presently. All information and material in this regard will be shared with the schools well before implementation of the proposed assessment.**

Finally, let me reiterate that:

1. All affiliated schools are expected to implement the curriculum from Preschool to Class VIII from the academic year 2018-2019.
2. The proposed assessment will be held in the future as and when the modalities are finalized. This assessment is not a Board examination and promotion to the next class is not dependent on the outcome of the assessment. Therefore, the proposed assessment is not violative of Section 30 of the RTE Act. The proposed assessment will be in consonance with the policy of Continuous and Constant Evaluation and will not have the rigours of an examination.
3. Please do not speculate on any aspect related to the assessment, such as question pattern, question types, marks and grades and any other related issues, till informed by the Council. As mentioned above, the assessment is only a future initiative and the modalities are being presently worked out.