1.0

1.1 Background

The Mission of the Ministry of Education, Science and Sports (MOESS) is to provide relevant education to all Ghanaians at all levels to enable them to acquire skills that will assist them to develop their potential to be productive so as to facilitate poverty reduction and promote socio-economic growth and national development.

In fulfillment of this mission, the MOESS provides the following:

- Facilities to ensure that all citizens, irrespective of age, gender, tribe, religion and political affiliation are functionally literate and self-reliant;
- Basic education for all;
- Opportunities for open education for all;
- Education and training for skills development with emphasis on Science, Technology and Creativity;
- Higher education for the development of middle and top-level manpower requirements;
- Support sports participation and youth empowerment.

The emergence of HIV/AIDS poses a threat to the Ministry's ability to achieve its mission. Globally, it is well documented that HIV/AIDS affects the demand and supply for education. This is because HIV/AIDS has the ability to decimate the numbers of actors on both sides of the demand and supply components of education system by virtue of its attendant high mortality rates.

The consequences of HIV/AIDS can be far-reaching in the education sector and society in general. It has been estimated that half of all global HIV infections have occurred among people aged under 25 years. In developing countries, up to 60 percent of all new HIV infections occur among the school going ages, 15-24 years.

In Ghana, teachers and education office personnel constitute the largest public sector employee category. If teachers, education office personnel who form the largest public who are the providers of education should be infected with HIV/AIDS, the provision of education will be compromised. The full scope of the impact of the epidemic on education becomes all the more apparent when viewed in the perspectives of the formidable challenges already confronting the sector. A few of these include the following:-

- Inadequately supply of teachers,
- Low but improving girls participation,
- Low overall achievements rates.
- Lack of commitment on the part of teachers,
- Inadequate teaching and learning materials, etc.

In the light of this, education has a key role to play both in preventing HIV/AIDS and in mitigating its effects on individuals, families, communities and the society. Since education is strongly predictive of better knowledge, safer behaviours and reduced infection rates, it has been described as the 'social vaccine'. There is therefore the need to evolve sound policies to guide the Education and Sports sector and its stakeholders in their response to the epidemic in order to create the necessary enabling environment for the effective implementation of the HIV/AIDS strategic plan.

The MOESS HIV/AIDS Policy therefore seeks to address the major issues related to HIV/AIDS intervention activities, information and education delivery, Voluntary Counseling and Testing (VCT), gender issues, ethical and human rights issues, care and support as well as collaboration with civil society organizations and development partners.

1.2 The Policy Framework

1.2.1 Guiding Principles

The Policy derives its sources from the following national and international documents:

National:

- Constitution of the Republic of Ghana, 1992
- The National HIV/AIDS/STI Policy, 2004
- The Ghana Poverty Reduction Strategy
- The Education Strategic Plan, 2003-2015,
- The Free Compulsory Universal Basic Education Policy (FCUBE), 1996
- The Draft Strategic Plan for HIV/AIDS Interventions in the Education Sector, 2000
- The Revised National Population Policy, 1992
- The National Youth Policy
- The Adolescent Reproductive Health Policy, 2000

International:

- Education for All (EFA), 2000
- UNGASS Declaration of Commitment on HIV/AIDS, 2000

The Policy takes into consideration the principles of social justice, gender issues, learners with special needs and also recognises the universality of human rights in addition to the following:

Access to Education

Every person has the right to education. No learner shall be denied access to education on the basis of his or her actual or perceived HIV status. In particular, access to education shall be facilitated for orphans and vulnerable learners.

Access to information

Every person has the right to relevant and factual HIV and AIDS information, knowledge and skills that is appropriate to their age, gender, language and context.

Equality

Every person has the same rights, opportunities and responsibilities and shall be protected from all forms of discrimination, including discrimination based on actual, known or perceived HIV status.

Privacy and Confidentiality

Every person has the right to privacy and confidentiality regarding their health, including information related to their HIV status.

No institution or workplace is permitted to require a learner or employee to undergo an HIV test in order to gain admission into an educational institution or as a basis for obtaining employment in the Sector.

No person may disclose information relating to the HIV status of another person, without his or her consent. In the case of a minor, the best interest of the child shall guide decisions concerning disclosure.

Every person has the right to know their HIV status and openness and disclosure are encouraged within a safe, supportive and accepting environment.

Access to Care, Treatment and Support

All infected and affected learners, educators and other personnel in the education and sport sector have the right to access holistic care, treatment and support in line with available resources. The Ministry will work in partnership with agencies offering support and care including institutions, communities and private and public health care systems.

Safety in Workplace and Learning Institutions

All workplace and learning institutions have a responsibility to minimize the risk of HIV transmission by taking the appropriate first aid/universal infection prevention precautions.

Partnership

While the education, youth and sports sector will be responsible and accountable for the implementation of this policy, it will at all times seek to develop effective partnership to enhance the success of its implementation.

2.0 RATIONALE, GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

2.1 Rationale of the Policy

An HIV/AIDS policy is of critical importance to the success of any programme geared towards controlling and mitigating the impact of the epidemic. Such a policy should respond to the unique concerns raised by the HIV/AIDS epidemic and its implications for the sector. The Ministry of Education, Science and Sports envisages challenging situations such as the increasing numbers of orphans and vulnerable children, inadequate supply of teachers, non-disclosure of HIV status and confidentiality, stigma reduction, discrimination, treatment, care and support.

From the aforementioned challenges, the need for a comprehensive sectoral policy on HIV/AIDS has become apparent. The education, youth and sports sector thus represents a 'window of hope' in the fight against the HIV epidemic. Education is strategically positioned to protect school going children aged 5-14 years to stay un-infected as they enter late adolescence.

Furthermore, it is on record that about 90 percent of the reported AIDS cases are within the age group of 15-49 years, and this is the core of the education sector target population as well. As such, the over riding rationale of the policy is to protect young people from getting infected, preventing them from passing the infection to others if and when they do get infected, and providing care and support to those already infected and affected. This is based on the belief that a good general education enables people to understand, evaluate, and apply facts, including facts about AIDS.

Education then is probably the single most effective weapon for halting the spread of HIV.

2.2 Goals of the Policy

The goals of the policy are to:

- Create the necessary conducive environment through advocacy for sustained political commitment and support of effective actions against HIV/AIDS
- Provide clear guidance to all stakeholders that operate within the sector
- Promote awareness and consensus among stakeholders to ensure that laws, policies, programmes or activities being pursued at the national, regional, district, and community levels, and by civil society groups are consistent with national aspirations, objectives and targets
- Foster and nurture close co-ordination and collaboration between the education sector, the Ghana AIDS Commission, and other MDAs at all times in order to ensure wider access and optimal service to a greater number of learners, educators, homes and communities in combating the spread and in mitigating the impact of HIV/AIDS on the sector.

In this direction the Policy shall ensure that HIV/AIDS is addressed across the entire education, youth and sports sector and also foster cross-sectoral and inter-agency collaboration to assess the needs and to plan, manage and monitor programme implementation.

2.3 Objectives of the Policy

The objectives of this Policy are to:

- Promote HIV/AIDS responsive behaviour among the learners, out-of-school youth, the workforce and the community
- Ensure active participation of the learners, out-of-school youth, the workforce and communities in prevention activities
- Ensure the Basic Human Rights of learners and the workforce infected and affected by HIV/AIDS
- Contribute to the national effort of reducing new HIV infections among learners, the workforce and communities

- Reduce the impact of HIV/AIDS on the sector as well as the socio-economic and psychosocial consequences of HIV infection on the infected and affected
- Promote healthy behaviours among sports men and women in order to serve as role models for young people.

3.0 SITUATIONAL ANALYSIS

- 3.1 The National Situation:
- 3.1.1 The Demographic Context

Even though Ghana's fertility has declined from 6.4 children per woman in 1988 to 4.4 children per woman in 2003, in comparison with the global trend, it is still high. Between 1984 and 2004, the total population increased by almost half (50.0%) from 12.3 million to 20.3m, implying an average annual rate of growth of about 2.7 percent. With the decline in fertility, the proportion of the population under 15 also declined slightly from 45.0% in 1984 to 41.3% in 2000.

Nevertheless the number of young people aged 15-24 years increased from 1.4 million in 1970 to 2.1 million in 1984, 3.5 million in the year 2000 and is put at 3.93 million in 2004. Adolescents and young females aged 15-24 constitute almost 40 per cent of women of reproductive age.

In 2002 the sentinel surveillance results indicate that HIV prevalence among antenatal clinic attendance aged 15-19 years was 2.3 percent and those aged 20-24 years was 3.5 percent. For all the 30 sites covered in 2003, the Median HIV prevalence was 3.6 percent. Although the recent 2003 Ghana Demographic and Health Survey (GDHS) findings acknowledged that HIV/AIDS awareness is high in Ghana there is a low risk perception among young people generally. Higher risk sexual behaviour is even more common among young people aged 15-24 years, with half of the women and more than four-fifths of the men in this age cohort engaged in risky sexual behaviour. This coupled with a disintegrating extended family system, the need for urgent action to address the threat to their reproductive health posed by STIs and HIV/AIDS have become all the more evident.

3.2 Impacts of HIV/AIDS on the Education Sector

As noted above, the HIV/AIDS epidemic in Ghana has been steadily increasing over the past 15 years. Based on the 2004 sentinel surveillance report, the Median HIV prevalence for Ghana was 3.1 percent, with some urban areas registering rates up to 8.5 percent. There are two main causes why HIV/AIDS is of particular concern for the Education sector.

The first cause of concern arises from the nature of transmission. This is predominantly (80 percent) sexually transmitted (with additional subsidiary channels via mother to child, blood transfusion and sharing of infected tools). This means that the most likely to be infected are the most sexually active, generally defined as the 15-49 year olds (learners and most education personnel can be found in this age bracket). This is confirmed by the national data that reveal that the peak age group of reported AIDS cases is 25-29 years for females and 30-34 years for males. Nearly 90 percent of all reported cases in Ghana are actually among the 15-49 year old. The Education system reaches approximately 7 million people (equal to 30 percent) of the entire population mostly within these age groups. It would therefore be appropriate to use this channel to create awareness of the epidemic, and introduce positive behaviour and attitudinal change.

In Ghana there are no statistics documenting the prevalence, epidemiology or determinants of HIV/AIDS among the education sector personnel (teachers, pupils, students and education workers). However, the number of deaths amongst pre-tertiary teachers has alarmingly increased from around 50 in 1990 to around 200 in 1998. The data does not indicate the cause of the increase, but the impact of the HIV/AIDS epidemic cannot be ruled out.

3.3 The Structure of the Education Sector

The Ministry of Education, Science and Sports (MOESS) is responsible for the supervision, co-ordination and funding of all pre-professional educational activities and

youth programmes. These include the formulation and review of policies, establishment of a regulatory framework for the various Agencies and Units and creation of an enabling environment to ensure an efficient and effective delivery of education, youth and sports services.

The following Implementing Agencies fall within the purview of the Education, Youth and Sports Sector:

- Ghana Education Service
- National Council for Tertiary Education
- National Service Secretariat
- Non-Formal Education Division
- West African Examinations Council
- Ghana National Commission on UNESCO
- Ghana Book Development Council
- Ghana Library Board
- Ghana Institute of Languages
- Nugouchi Memorial Institute
- Encyclopaedia Africana
- National Accreditation Board
- National Board for Professional and Technician Examinations
- National Coordinating Committee for Technical and Vocational Education and Training
- Institute of Chartered Accountancy, Ghana
- Ghana Academy of Arts and Sciences
- Ghana Science Association
- National Youth Council

The Ministry has oversight responsibility for over 240,000 staff and about 7 million learners. This represents almost a third of the total population. This proportion would rise significantly if the targets of providing Education For All (EFA) set by Jomtien (1990) and Dakar (2000) Conferences are to be met.

3.4 The Sector Response

Before the year 2000, the main programmes and interventions put in place to address the HIV/AIDS epidemic in the education sector are:

- School Health Education Programme (SHEP)
- Population and Family Life Education (PopFLE) of the Curriculum Research and Development Division (CRDD) of the GES
- Distribution of condoms to students of Tertiary Institutions particularly the Universities.

In response to the HIV/AIDS threat, the MOESS was the first MDA to develop a sectoral HIV/AIDS Strategic Framework in 2000 through a process of consultation with stakeholders, including CSOs and the private sector.

In 2001, in compliance with the Ghana HIV/AIDS Strategic Framework 2001-2005, MOEYS developed the Education Sector HIV/AIDS work plan setting the sector specific strategies, activities and targets for each of the five main intervention areas listed in the national framework.

Specifically, MOESS:

- Established an HIV/AIDS Secretariat in 2002 to coordinate activities set out in its HIV/AIDS Strategic work plan
- Initiated AYA activities in the education and youth wings of the Ministry
- Heightened civil society participation in the sector's response

4.0 INTERVENTIONS, POLICIES AND STRATEGIES

INTERVENTIONS	POLICY STATEMENT STRATEGIES	
4.1 Policy, Advocacy and Enabling Environment	■ The Ministry of Education, Science and Sports shall create an enabling environment for HIV/AIDS programmes through support for policy development, review of guidelines and various advocacy initiatives.	 Develop/revise guidelines/codes etc that will ensure that all workers and learners living with HIV/AIDS shall not be discriminated against in relation to access to education, employment, promotion, training, and employee benefits on the basis of their HIV status. Create and sustain relationships with the Media for advocacy in support of MOESS HIV/AIDS initiatives. Establish programmes to protect learners and the workforce against stigmatization and discrimination. Review exiting Sector policies, codes of conduct and recruitment and deployment practices to make them supportive and responsive to the HIV/AIDS prevention, care and mitigation interventions Develop and implement MOESS workplace policy guidelines on HIV/AIDS Create supportive environment that ensures that all employees with HIV/AIDS continue with work as long as they are medically fit to perform their duties. Support tertiary institutions, including Teacher Training Colleges to develop relevant institutional HIV/AIDS policies and other guidelines Develop programmes that protect learners and the workforce and ensure their right to

		confidentiality about their HIV status in all aspects of their employment and to access education.
4.2 Prevention of New Infections, Behaviour Change Communication and Information Education and Communication	■ The Ministry of Education, Science and Sports shall promote prevention and behaviour change communication programmes targeted at learners and the workforce.	 Intensify IEC and BCC efforts to promote positive behaviours among learners and the workforce in all education institutions. Develop life skills-based HIV/AIDS curriculum which is appropriate to age, gender, culture, language and special needs for learners at the pre-tertiary level Mainstream life skills-based HIV/AIDS education into the existing curriculum and co- curricula activities since co-curricula activities, such sports, drama etc provide important opportunities for HIV/AIDS education Mobilise local communities, parents, care givers and guardians to support and ensure success of the HIV/AIDS prevention programmes within learning institutions and in the homes Develop/revise school curriculum (pre and in-service) to prepare educators to respond to HIV/AIDS within their own lives and as professionals, and to build positive attitudes and skills for HIV/AIDS prevention amongst all their learners Develop relevant teaching and learning materials (TLM) and appropriate, current and factual IEC materials and make them available to all institutions and workplaces Create awareness about rape and sexual

		enhance safety, protection and prompt action and provide post-exposure prophylaxis when applicable in all learning institution Give due recognition and encourage peer education programmes for workers, educators, and support the development of peer-education skills in collaboration with MDAs and CSO
4.3 Coordination and Management of the Ministry's Decentralised Response	■ The Ministry of Education, Science and Sports shall establish a strong and functional institutional mechanism at all levels for the effective management and coordination of HIV/AIDS programmes in the sector.	 Promote the establishment of a strong and functional Education and Sport sector institutional arrangement to develop, implement and coordinate HIV/AIDS interventions at national, regional, district and community levels. Create linkages with civil society, the Media, Ghana AIDS Commission and other implementing agencies in order to strengthen support for the development of broad, holistic approaches and to influence public option and policies with regard to HIV/AIDS.
4.4 Mobilization of Resources	■ The Ministry of Education, Science and Sports in collaboration with its stakeholders shall ensure that enough resources are made available for effective implementation of HIV/AIDS programme and activities in the sector.	 MOESS will support the creation of budget line for HIV/AIDS activities MOESS will also organize a donors forum to mobilize funds to achieve objective outlined in this policy document All educational institutions will identify orphans and vulnerable children, assess their needs and identify resources to address the needs.

4.5 Treatment, Care and Support	The Ministry of Education, Science and Sports shall support efforts to link learners and the workforce in the sector to available treatment and support services being provided by the MOH/GHS, GAC and their partners.	 Ensure the creation of linkages with other MDAs, CSOs and referral agencies for the care, treatment and support of learners and workers Support the establishment of socio-support services to address the physical, emotional and educational needs of infected and affected individuals in all educational institutions Create information sharing mediums in all educational institutions and workplaces to facilitate access to information on health, and when and where necessary, staff and learners should seek prompt treatment for STIs, and opportunistic infections Promote the role of nutrition and food security for positive living in all schools, training colleges and other workplaces. Similarly such institutions shall be encouraged to facilitate access to nutrition and feeding programmes Support the provision of first aid kits in all educational institutions. And provide training for their effective use. Train education workers and learners to safely manage bleeding and/or injury at the
		training for their effective use. Train education workers and learners to safely manage bleeding and/or injury at the work place and apply universal
		precautions methods. Non-formal and youth programmes within the MOESS including those for out-of-school youth shall address the educational needs of OVCs, including life skills and HIV/AIDS education MOESS shall sensitise learners at all levels

		of education on the benefits Voluntary Counselling and Testing (VCT) to liaise with appropriate agencies to provide VCT services where necessary Identify PLWHAs in all workplaces and establish inter-sectoral linkages for their care and support. Strengthen the provision of guidance and counseling services to provide psycho- social support services for PLWHAs, other care-givers, OVC etc.
4.6 Research, Monitoring and Evaluation	The Ministry of Education, Science and Sports shall ensure the provision of accurate and timely data on HIV/AIDS to enable proper planning and decision-making in the education sector.	 Support and encourage the conduct of timely research and the collection of HIV/AIDS specific data to inform the formulation, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of interventions. Undertake baseline surveys on a wide range of HIV/AIDS related issues and impacts on the sector. Undertake operations research that aims at improving the efficiency and effectiveness of education sector interventions, curriculum and material development and evaluation of content and outcomes of curriculum. Strengthen the EMIS Unit of the Sector to collect accurate HIV/AIDS related data to inform programme planning, monitoring and evaluation.

5.0 Promoting Partnership

The Ministry of Education, Science and Sports shall work consistently to form, manage and sustain partnership among various stakeholders (CSOs, private sector, development partners, philantropic organizations etc.,) to ensure the successful implementation of this policy.

To facilitate joint planning and other programme development in support of this policy, the MOESS shall strengthen its partnership by ensuring that existing committees (the National Steering and Planning Committees) shall meet on a regular basis to monitor implementation of partnership agreements, strengthen coordination and share information on best practices. Relevant MDAs, the Ghana AIDS Commission (GAC), Civil Society groups, the private sector and development partners will be expected to participate actively. MOESS will therefore work actively towards creating an environment and working procedures that are transparent, accountable and efficient in the conduct of the partnership arrangements.

5.2 HIV/AIDS Secretariat, MOESS

The HIV/AIDS Secretariat at the Ministry shall be responsible for the management, oversight and coordination, monitoring and evaluation of all HIV/AIDS activities within the Sector. The Secretariat shall promote partnership with stakeholders mentioned above. It will also be responsible for disseminating progress report to MOESS and its partners and receive feedback from them.

Due to the magnitude of the implementation of the training programmes and the need for close supervision and monitoring, the Secretariat and its Oversight Committees (Steering and Planning) will ensure that the various management arrangements are strengthened. Divisions, Units and Agencies within the Sector shall undertake the implementation of various programmes/workplans within the purview of the Ministry in collaboration/consultation with the Secretariat.

5.3 Roles and Responsibilities of Divisions, Units and Agencies of MOESS

In the context of this policy, the expected indicative roles of Divisions, Units and Agencies of the MOESS are identified in line with their mandates and other linkages for the formulation, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of HIV/AIDS prevention education programmes.

The following institutions will therefore be key players and/or collaborators in the implementation of the Policy.

Ghana Education Service (GES) shall:

Collaborate with all other implementers of the programme at the pre-tertiary level through its Divisions and Units and in the management of funds disbursed.

Non-formal and Youth Sector shall:

Assist with the implementation of the programme to integrate HIV/AIDS education in youth empowerment and other out-of-school and community- based initiatives.

National Council for Tertiary Education (NCTE) shall:

Facilitate implementation of the programme in the tertiary sub-sector.

National Service Secretariat (NSS) and National Volunteer Service shall:

Mobilise national Service Personnel and members of the Volunteer Service to reach out of school children and community groups with anti-AIDS messages and reduce the vulnerability of Service Personnel through orientation programmes.

Ghana Library Board (GLB) shall:

Assist with the dissemination of anti-HIV/AIDS messages by stocking IEC and BCC materials in all public libraries and organizing out-of-reach services to learners, out-of-school youth and communities through its mobile library service.

Ghana Book Development Council (GBDC) shall:

Assist with the development and publication of IEC and BCC materials on HIV/AIDS.

NACVET shall:

Collaborate with other partners and Units in the implementation of programmes in private and public technical and vocational institutions.

West African Examinations Council (WAEC) shall:

Facilitate the annual external examination of learners in behavioural and attitudinal issues on reproductive health including STIs/HIV/AIDS.

Ghana Academy of Arts and Sciences (GAAS) shall:

Conduct and collate research findings on HIV/AIDS related knowledge, beliefs, attitudes and 'best practices' of learners, households and communities in support of programme intervention.

Ghana National Association of Teachers (GNAT)/National Association of Graduate Teachers (NAGRAT) shall:

Sensitise teachers and make provision for the care and support of its members who are/will be infected and affected by HIV/AIDS. Such PLWHAs will continue to enjoy benefits under existing schemes GNAT/NAGRAT is committed to providing for teachers.

Teachers and Educational Workers Union (TEWU) shall:

Sensitise all education workers and make provision for the care and support of its members infected as well as affected by HIV/AIDS.

<u>University Teachers Association of Ghana (UTAG) shall:</u>

Integrate HIV/AIDS prevention, care and support activities into their routine programmes. UTAG shall also form support groups among lecturers and students to provide psychosocial support to infected and affected lecturers and students.

Polytechnic Teachers Association of Ghana (POTAG) shall:

Sensitise lecturers in the polytechnics and provide care and support for infected and affected lecturers. POTAG shall also form support groups among lecturers and students to provide psychosocial support to infected and affected lecturers and students.

National Union of Ghana Students (NUGS)/national National Union of Polytechnic Students (GNUPS) shall:

Mobilise students to reach the larger student body with HIV/AIDS prevention messages, information on condom use, support and increase the accessibility to condoms within universities and polytechnic campuses.

All Educational Institutions shall:

Collaborate with the HIV/AIDS Secretariat and other Units in the Sector, PTAs and other community groups by ensuring the implementation of in-school HIV/AIDS programmes.

6.0 CONCLUSION

The Ministry of Education, Science and Sports has identified HIV/AIDS as a threat to sustaining the gains made in increasing school enrolment and the achievement of the overall educational goals as stated in the Education Sector Policy Document, the Education Sector Strategic Plan for 2003 – 2015 and other international commitments (EFA, MDGs). This is especially the case since most of the Ministry target population groups are students who fall within the age group 15-24 years, and also the educational workforce (Administrative staff, teachers and other categories) who fall within the vulnerable group.

This sector policy document is an effort to provide direction to addressing HIV/AIDS issues within the context of the Draft National HIV/AIDS/STIs Policy and other sectoral policy documents. The achievement of the goals and objectives of this policy will contribute to that of the national effort. To combat HIV/AIDS demands continued and sustained efforts, time and monitoring to ensure that the original intentions are followed and departures corrected.

It is envisaged that the objectives of this policy will be achieved through the maximum cooperation and collaboration of all the agencies of the Ministry, other MDAs, private sector, civil society organization, religious bodies and our development partners. All stakeholders have a role to play to guarantee the survival of the education sector in the world of AIDS.