CURRICULUM FRAMEWORK FOR PRIMARY AND BASIC (LOWER SECONDARY) EDUCATION

I. GENERAL PROVISIONS

1. The curriculum framework for primary and basic (lower secondary) education (hereinafter – the Curriculum Framework) consistently develops the curriculum basics formulated in the Curriculum Framework of previous years and responds to new challenges in education—rapid changes in the social and economic life of our country and expanding opportunities for the implementation of innovations in education.

2. The purpose of the Curriculum Framework is to define the curriculum for primary and basic education for the sake of coherence, accessibility, and quality of education throughout the entire educational system of the country. Curriculum in the Curriculum Framework is defined by describing the expected learning outcomes of the pupils, presenting recommended guidelines for the education process, outlining the scope of the content of the subjects, and describing the levels of pupils' achievements. Pupils' achievements are described in the Curriculum Framework by particularly highlighting the basics of general competences and key subject-specific competences acquired by the pupils.

3. The Curriculum Framework defines the curriculum at the national level. Following the Curriculum Framework, schools and teachers develop school-specific and grade-specific curricula by adjusting them to the needs of specific grades and pupils, so that pupils can, according to their abilities, achieve the best results.

4. The Curriculum Framework was renewed on the basis of the Provisions of the National Education Strategy 2003–2012, which was adopted by resolution No. IX-1700 of 4 July 2003 of the Parliament (*Seimas*) of the Republic of Lithuania (*Official Gazette*, 2003, No. 71-3216); the Law on Education of the Republic of Lithuania (*Official Gazette*, 1991, No. 23-593; 2003, No. 63-2853); the aims, principles, and priorities of the Strategy for Developing, Evaluating, Renewing, and Implementing the Curriculum of General Education approved by resolution No. ISAK-970 of 23 May 2007 of the minister of Education and Science of the Republic of Lithuania (*Official Gazette*, 2007, No. 63-2440); the National Education Programme of Sustainable Development

2007–2015, adopted by resolution No. 1062 of 2 October 2007 of the Government of the Republic of Lithuania (*Official Gazette*, 2007, No. 106-4348); and the Conception of Assessment of Pupils' Progress and Achievement adopted by resolution No. ISAK-256 of 25 February 2004 of the minister of Education and Science of the Republic of Lithuania (*Official Gazette*, 2004, No. 35-1150).

II. THE MAIN DIRECTIONS IN RENEWING THE CURRICULUM

5. When preparing and implementing the Curriculum Framework, the following directions of curriculum renewal are observed:

5.1. to orient the curriculum to the development of general competencies and key subject-specific competences with particular focus on learning to learn;

5.2. to strengthen the individualisation of learning by focusing on the different needs of different pupils;

5.3. to strengthen the integration of curriculum so that pupils understand and apply what they have learned creatively;

5.4. to correlate the scope of the subjects by discarding elements of the curriculum that have lost their relevance and including new and relevant elements;

5.5. to arrange the curriculum in such a way that it is easier to classify its elements (when planning, preparing methodological material, evaluating, publishing in the electronic environment, etc.).

6. In order to orient the curriculum to the development of general competencies and key subject-specific abilities, the Curriculum Framework covers the following points:

6.1. it ensures an education process that would involve a pupil in active and conscious learning with particular emphasis on expected learning outcomes;

6.2. pupils' achievements are described as a combination of three inseparable constituent parts of constantly developed competences: attitudes, skills, and knowledge and understanding. This shows that it is not sufficient for a pupil to know facts, rules, and definitions. While absorbing knowledge in a certain area, he must grasp it, be able to apply it in new situations, and display awareness, behaviour, and activity based on certain attitudes, i.e., show competence;

6.3. apart from a description of pupils' achievements, the chapter "Teaching/Learning Guidelines" is provided in order to emphasize that the pupil can develop competence only by learning consciously and actively and the teacher's responsibility is to direct and assist him. These guidelines are not strictly mandatory, but reveal tested methods for achieving the required

schooling results based on the active collaboration of pupils, teachers and pupils and learning by relying on real life practice. Specific teaching/learning and assessment methods and tasks are selected by a teacher after considering the preparation and experience of pupils and the available teaching and learning tools;

6.4. in order to help the teacher make appropriate selection and limitation of the subject, the chapter "The Scope of the Content" specifies the essential knowledge of the subject required to achieve delineated outcomes. The reduction of the scope of the subject provides more time for enhancing understanding, developing skills and attitudes, and individualising instruction.

7. In order to strengthen individualised instruction, the Curriculum Framework covers the following points:

7.1. describes pupils' achievements (knowledge and understanding, abilities, and attitudes) not in 1-year periods, but in 2-year periods (concentres) (grades 1–2, 3–4, 5–6, 7–8, 9–10), which provides teachers with an opportunity to plan teaching more flexibly;

7.2. the description of the pupils' achievements in each two-year period (concentre) includes a table that summarises a minimum level, a basic level, and a higher level achievable by pupils to help teachers assess their achievements and progress more objectively;

7.3. the chapters "Teaching/Learning Guidelines" and "The Scope of the Content" describe the required minimum of the content and specify what is to be learned by pupils in order to achieve the minimum level and what can be omitted;

7.4. new, optional curricula and subject areas that were absent from previous Curriculum Framework are proposed to help pupils select an area they would like to study and recommendations for teachers about how to adapt subject curricula to the needs of the pupils are provided:

7.4.1. in the area of moral education, for the first time primary and basic education curricula of the traditional Lithuanian religions is introduced: Russian Orthodox, Evangelical Lutheran, Evangelical Reformists, Karaite Judaism, and an introductory curriculum of Judaism;

7.4.2. the Curriculum Framework has been prepared for the deaf and hearing impaired: for primary and basic education—the curriculum for sign language (mother tongue); for primary education—the curricula for Lithuanian and mathematics; for primary education—the curriculum for perception and understanding of the world; and for basic education—the curricula for Lithuanian and a foreign language have been prepared;

7.4.3. the Curriculum Framework for information technologies for grades 9–10 offers optional modules for the basics of programming, website design, and desktop publishing;

7.4.4. pupils in grades 9–10 are also provided with an optional curriculum of psychology;

7.4.5. the PE curriculum foresees possibilities for the teacher to adapt a branch of a sport, physical exercises, and individual tasks to the physical capabilities, inclinations, and needs of pupils.

8. In order to strengthen the integrative aspects of the curriculum, in the Curriculum Framework:

8.1. the cross-curriculum relations of the areas of education, disciplines, concentres, and disciplines and integrated curricula have been reviewed, harmonised, and reflected in the expected achievements of pupils;

8.2. the relationship between the subject curricula and the social and immediate living environment of a pupil has been strengthened;

8.3. in the area of social education, civic education that is implemented across all the disciplines, activities of non-formal education, and school self-government is emphasised. Civic education is systematised in a separate mandatory course for pupils in grades 9 and 10;

8.4. the area of social education includes a cross-curricular entrepreneurship and economics programme implemented across the subjects of mathematics, geography, technologies, etc. Entrepreneurship and economics education is systematised in a separate mandatory course for pupils in grades 9–10;

8.5. the teaching curriculum in the area of information technologies education, apart from a mandatory programme, provides a cross-curricular information technologies programme implemented across other subjects by using information and communication technologies to learn these subjects;

8.6. the new curriculum of General Competencies and Life Skills Education provides the following cross-curricular programmes: learning to learn, communication, sustainable development, health and life skills, and cultural awareness, which are implemented across all subjects, activities of non-formal education, and events of the school community.

9. To coordinate the scope of subject content, in the Curriculum Framework:

9.1. themes were reviewed so that they would not repeat across several subjects, unless the theme is approached from a different aspect in a particular subject;

9.2. a few themes were eliminated or were moved to the curricula of higher grades.

10. In order to structure the curriculum more conveniently, in the Curriculum Framework:

10.1. the structure of different areas of education was reviewed;

10.2. the propositions of the teaching curricula are numbered so that it is more convenient to use a search engine in the virtual environment, to relate general statements of the teaching

curricula with the methodological material available on the net and virtual learning objects, to complete e-Gradebook, etc.

III. PRINCIPLES FOR PREPARING THE CURRICULUM FRAMEWORK

11. The following principles must be observed when preparing the Curriculum Framework:

11.1. relevance to society and pupils. The curriculum must help the pupil to know himself and others, find answers to the essential questions of human life, and absorb the basics of culture and cognition. The curriculum encourages pupils to rethink the diversity of the cultural heritage of their own country and the world; human values and the necessity to preserve and foster them. It also cultivates respect for the culture of the pupils' own country and a tolerant attitude towards the physical, religious, social, and cultural differences of people. The curriculum helps pupils become thinking, active, and creative members of society who are ready to learn all their life, improve themselves, and contribute to improving society;

11.2. value for further learning and work. The curriculum must be valuable and significant to further learning, professional activity, and self-expression. The content of all subjects is selected so that it would be related to the life of pupils, their family, and society and develop the pupils' ability to communicate and collaborate, solve problems, work in a group or team, assume the role of a leader, build relationships with people on the basis of mutual understanding, and constructively solve conflicts. After completing the basic education programme, the pupil should have acquired the basics of general and key subject-specific competences required to continue further learning, acquire a profession, and find suitable work;

11.3. accessibility. The curriculum must help the pupil acquire quality basic education. Possibilities must be foreseen to adapt the curriculum to each pupil according to his social and cultural experience, gender, learning style, and other individual needs to ensure the development of the individual capabilities of each pupil. The curriculum is prepared in such a way that a pupil can consistently expand his knowledge, abilities, and attitudes. The same themes and problems are dealt with, on a higher level, in upper grades; curriculum integration is strengthened, in particular, by highlighting the relationship with real life and the questions of the day;

11.4. sustainable development. The curriculum is based on the provisions of the sustainable development of society. The mutual dependence of the natural environment, culture, and social and economic life of society; future-oriented creative thinking; and active participation of each person in creating quality living for oneself and future generations are emphasised. The main themes of sustainable development are as follows: cultural, biological, and landscape diversity;

responsibility for the preservation of the environment at the local and international level; peace and conflicts; citizenship; reduction of poverty; climate change; democracy; justice; health; gender equality; etc. are integrated into the curriculum. Schools are encouraged to make the ideas of sustainable development a part of the life of the school.

IV. AIMS OF EDUCATION AND EXPECTED RESULTS

12. The aim is to develop the spiritual, intellectual, and physical capabilities of an individual and to educate an active, creative, and responsible citizen who will acquire the competences required for social integration and lifelong learning.

13. Expected results. Learning according to the Curriculum Framework, the pupil becomes:

13.1. self-confident—he assesses himself positively, has initiative, and is motivated, responsible, reliable, and creative;

13.2. communicating and collaborating—he acts constructively, seeking common goals and creating and maintaining good relationships with the people who surround him;

13.3. ready for lifelong learning—he acquires the required abilities, thinks critically, seeks knowledge, and creatively applies knowledge when solving problems;

13.4. active—he participates in community life; and contributes to fostering Lithuanian, European, and global culture and the natural environment and to creating social and economic well-being.

14. After completing the basic education programme, the pupil acquires the following general abilities:

14.1. learning to learn. He feels the need to learn, takes responsibility for his learning, and persistently seeks his goals. He is able to plan and reflect on the learning process and results and set further well-founded objectives. He knows his favourite learning methods, sufficient and improvable abilities, and available learning possibilities;

14.2. communicating. He seeks constructive dialogue and uses language responsibly. He understands and transfers various types of verbal and non-verbal messages and communicates by considering his aim, addressee, and situation. He locates, critically assesses, summarises, and appropriately presents information to others;

14.3. awareness. He seeks to know himself and is interested in the social, cultural, and natural environments and their development. He purposefully selects and applies cognitive methods; safely researches; consistently, logically, and critically thinks; analyses and solves

problems; and makes sound conclusions. He is able to describe the world in words, images, symbols, mathematics, and other means;

14.4. social. He respects and tolerates people of various cultures, sexes, and social and age groups; knows his own rights and obligations and those of others; and perceives himself as a member of a community or society. He constructively collaborates while seeking a common goal, is able to manage conflicts, creates and maintains friendly relationships, is empathetic, and helps others;

14.5. initiative and creativity. He can see the connection among ideas and think originally and is able to apply experience in new situations and foresee alternative methods of solving problems. He is open to changes, is not afraid of uncertainty and risk-taking when warranted, actively participates in the implementation of new ideas, and involves others;

14.6. personal. He positively assesses himself, is self-confident, and can focus all his powers in order to achieve his goals. He is resilient to failures and conflicts, is able to cope with stress, seek assistance, and accept assistance. He acts honestly and responsibly, is able to foresee the results of his behaviour, takes care of his health and the health of others, behaves safely, and protects the environment.

15. After completing the basic education programme, the pupil acquires the basics of key subject-specific competences required for living, further learning, and working. Subject-specific competences are reflected in detail in the curriculum of a particular area of education (Annexes 1-11)*.

V. KEY PECULIARITIES OF THE EDUCATION PROCESS

16. In order to move towards an education process that would engage the pupil in active and conscious learning, the following active teaching and learning methods are applied in the education process:

16.1. the teacher encourages the independent thinking of pupils, their active interpretative relationship with the teaching material, and learning from experience. Pupils learn actively while collaborating with the peers, teachers, and other people and get acquainted with various ideas, items, environments, and technologies;

16.2. the teacher selects teaching methods and organises learning activities so that teaching complies with the pupils' accumulated experience, abilities, inclinations, learning style, and readiness for learning; the available resources and means; and the emotional climate of the class;

16.3. learning material and methods must promote the varied active participation of pupils: they should ask, research, search, try, apply, analyse, solve problems, and create. Pupils should learn in contexts of various complexity. They should be given space to select the activity that is suitable to them and the opportunity to experience success in learning;

17. By setting planning principles and a time framework for the curriculum, the school establishes that the educational process should be planned flexibly and, if necessary, plans can be easily corrected and adjusted depending on the progress made by pupils, new emerging opportunities, and arising difficulties:

17.1. a long-term (usually one-year) plan is prepared pursuant to the procedure established by the school. The plan particularly emphasizes the expected learning progress of pupils at the end of the period related to the requirements of the Curriculum Framework and current achievement, learning abilities, and needs of pupils. The plan also briefly reviews the key phases, methods, and means to achieve goals;

17.2. a short-term (a phase) plan sets a sequence of the forthcoming lessons oriented to the specific achievements of pupils. The plan may also review other activities related to the implementation of the aims of the short-term plan (projects, excursions, meetings, etc.).

17.3. teachers cooperate in planning the educational process. They discuss the adaptation of the curriculum to the needs of the pupils, cross-curriculum issues, project work, the use of opportunities offered by the timetable, etc. It is recommended that teachers should discuss with pupils when planning learning objectives for the lessons, learning activities, and assessment criteria. It is recommended that the plans be introduced to parents (foster-parents, guardians).

17.4. if necessary, the plans may be reviewed and amended depending on the pupils' learning outcomes, learning speed, and other needs.

18. Assessment for learning dominates the educational process:

18.1. the teacher constantly monitors pupils' learning and in a timely manner provides specific, individualised feedback about their progress and achievements, shows them their success and problems, and helps them achieve more.

18.2. on the basis of the assessment information, the teacher provides assistance to the pupils who need it and adapts the curriculum to the pupils with special needs (gifted pupils, pupils with special needs, etc.).

18.3 pupils are taught how to assess and self-assess and, depending on outcomes, set aims for further learning.

18.4. on the basis of the assessment information, the teacher informs the pupils' parents (foster-parents, guardians), and other teachers about the student's achievements, learning, and specific assistance required.

18.5. using the assessment information, the teacher prepares and/or corrects the further education plan and discusses it with colleagues and with the pupils' parents (foster parents, guardians).

VI. EDUCATING PUPILS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

19. The curriculum for special needs pupils, as for all other pupils, is developed on the basis of the Curriculum Framework by adapting the curriculum to the abilities, learning needs, and achievements of individual pupils. The curriculum must be developed to encourage pupils' self-esteem and motivation to learn.

20. If, despite the provision of the assistance that was required, the student fails to achieve what has been expected, the Curriculum Framework is individually adopted to the pupil. The adaptation of the curriculum to the pupil's abilities and learning needs is aimed at making his progress as sizeable as possible.

21. Assessment of pupils' achievements and progress is based on the achievements set out in the Curriculum Framework or the achievements set out in the curriculum adapted to a particular pupil.

22. If it is established that the pupil has very high learning needs, instruction may be organised for separate areas of activities. These are selected from the Curriculum Framework and adapted to the pupil's abilities. It is important to develop the movement, language and communication and the social, functional, and cognitive skills of each pupil with special needs:

22.1. development of movement aims at making pupils better understand their body, to make their movements more precise and free. By teaching movements, pupils are encouraged to plan how they will improve the movements, balance, coordination, rhythm, and the strength of muscles;

22.2. teaching of language and communication skills aims at developing responses and, on their basis, producing and understanding various expressions. This area may include language literacy, expression, vocabulary, concepts, thinking and recognition, and use of symbols, letters, words, signs, and sign language;

22.3. teaching of social skills aims at developing pupils' self-control and abilities to interact and collaborate with others;

22.4. teaching of functional abilities includes pupils' learning to act efficiently in real life and develop independence and initiative. This area includes the skills required for a healthy lifestyle and safety in domestic life and away from home, while moving in the immediate environment, and during leisure activities;

22.5. developing cognitive abilities aims at making pupils active, helping them learn to use their senses, and giving them the experience required to understand the surrounding reality. This area includes practical activities and exercises that teach pupils how to select, classify, and solve problems and identify the relationship between causes and consequences.

VII. THE STRUCTURE OF THE CURRICULUM FRAMEWORK

23. Subject curricula within the Curriculum Framework are divided according to areas of education into similar subjects linked with strong cross-curricular ties.

23.1. In the curriculum for primary education (Annex 1)* subjects are divided into the following seven areas of education:

23.1.1. Moral education (ethics, Catholicism, Russian Orthodoxy, Evangelical Lutheranism, Evangelical Reformism, Karaite Judaism, and an introductory curriculum to Judaism);

23.1.2. Languages (the Lithuanian language (mother tongue), other native languages, the Lithuanian national language, a first foreign language);

23.1.3. Mathematics;

23.1.4. Social and natural sciences (perception and understanding of the world);

23.1.5. Art education (art and technologies, music, dance, theatre);

23.1.6. Physical education;

23.1.7. Education of the deaf and hearing impaired (the Lithuanian sign language, the Lithuanian language, mathematics, perception and understanding of the world).

23.2. In the curriculum for basic education (Annexes 2–11)*, subjects are divided into 10 areas of education:

23.2.1. Moral education: ethics, Catholicism, Russian Orthodoxy, Evangelical Lutheranism, Evangelical Reformism, Karaite Judaism, and an introductory curriculum to Judaism (Annex 2)*;

23.2.2. Languages: the Lithuanian language (mother tongue), other native languages, Lithuanian sign language, the Lithuanian national language, the Lithuanian language for the deaf and hearing impaired, a first foreign language, a second foreign language, and a foreign language (English) for the deaf and the hard-of-hearing (Annex 3)*.

23.2.3. Mathematics (Annex 4)*;

23.2.4. Natural science education (Annex 5)*;

23.2.5. Social education: history, geography, Citizenship, economics and entrepreneurship, and psychology (Annex 6)*;

23.2.6. Art education: art, music, dance, theatre, and contemporary art (Annex 7)*;

23.2.7. Information technologies (Annex 8)*;

23.2.8. Technologies (Annex 9)*;

23.2.9. Physical education (Annex 10)*;

23.2.10. Education of general competences and life skills (Annex 11)*.

24. The general part of each area of education includes aims and objectives for this particular area, an explanation of the structure of competences developed, and a description of didactic provisions, possibilities for integration, and the learning environment.

25. The subject curriculum includes specifications of the aims and objectives of the subject, an explanation of the structure, and a table showing the development of the pupils' abilities from one 2-year period (concentre) to another. A separate table provides pupils' achievements (attitudes, abilities, knowledge, and understanding) for each 2-year period (concentre) and next to it the guidelines for educational process are provided. This is followed by a description of the scope of the content and the assessment for a minimum level, a basic level, and a higher level achieved by pupils.

26. Subject teachers are recommended to get acquainted with the subject curriculum of other areas of education and seek possibilities to integrate their curriculum with the subjects of other areas of education. The appropriate cross-curricular approach provides more possibilities to bring learning closer to life, develop the general competences of pupils, adopt tasks according to pupils' needs and abilities, and avoid repetition and learning overload.

VIII. FINAL PROVISIONS

27. On the basis of the Curriculum Framework, programmes and tasks for the study and inspection of pupils' achievements, textbooks and other teaching/learning tools, programmes for teacher education and qualification training, and other legal acts regulating curricula are prepared.

Note: * Annexes 1–11 to the curriculum for primary and basic education are published on the website of the *Official Gazette* at: www.Valstybes –zinios.lt, the website of the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Lithuania at: www.smm.lt, and the website of the Education Development Centre (Švietimo plėtotės centras) at www.pedagogika.lt