

Deputy Director of
School Education (Sec)

16 SEP 2026

Diary No. 6095
Kangra at Dharamshala

Through e-mail.

Directorate of School Education

16 SEP 2026

Himachal Pradesh, Shimla-171001

No. EDN(SE)- H(10)-F(10)-65/2025-Misc
Directorate of School Education
Himachal Pradesh

Dated: - the Shimla-171001

September, 2026

To

✓ All the Deputy Directors of School Education (Sec. Exam/QB-1)
Himachal Pradesh.

Subject: - Issuance of State-wide advisory/guidelines regarding staging of Skits, Dramas and Public Performance on socially sensitive and constitutional issues.

In compliance with the directions issued vide J.O. No. EDN-(SE)-H(12)1/2026-27/SC, dated 24 August 2026, and in view of various complaints received from different quarters on the subject cited above, the advisory/guidelines attached herewith are hereby issued for strict compliance by all Government, Government-aided and Private Educational Institutions.

All Heads of Schools/Institutions under your control shall be made aware about the attached Advisory and Guidelines and shall ensure their **strict compliance in letter and spirit**. The concerned authorities shall exercise due diligence and shall ensure that no programme is permitted to be staged in violation of applicable advisory and guidelines.

Any deviation from the attached advisory and guidelines shall be viewed seriously and dealt with in accordance with the applicable rules and provisions.

This may be treated as **most urgent**.

Director of School Education
Himachal Pradesh
September, 2026

Ends No:- Even dated Shimla-1 the

Copy forward for information and necessary action to:

1. The Secretary (Education) to the Govt. of H.P., Shimla-2
2. The Chairperson, HP State Commission for Schedule Castes, Una at Rampur, H.P.
3. The Superintendent, Planning and Development Branch, Dte Shimla-1
4. Guard File.

Director of School Education
Himachal Pradesh

Endst. No. EDN-KGR (Misc) 2026
Office of the Deputy Director of School Education (Secondary)
Kangra at Dharamshala.
E mail Address ddhekangra3@gmail.com
Dated Dharamshala - 176215

Deputy Director of
School Education (Sec)
28 SEP 2026
Dispatch No. 8493-95
Kangra at Dharamshala
22-09-2026

Copy forwarded to:-

01. All the Principals/Headmasters of Govt. Sr. Sec. Schools/Govt. High Schools and Pvt. Schools of District Kangra for strict compliance.
02. The Director of School Education H.P. Shimla-1 for information please.
03. I.T. incharge (internal) to upload this on website.
04. Guard File.


Dy. Director of School Education (Sec.)
Kangra at Dharamshala

GUIDELINES/ADVISORY REGARDING STAGING OF SKITS, DRAMAS, THEATRICAL PERFORMANCES, CULTURAL PROGRAMMES AND OTHER PUBLIC PERFORMANCES DEALING WITH SOCIALLY SENSITIVE IN EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

In compliance of the directions issued by Hon'ble Chairman, HP State Commission for Scheduled Castes, Aayog Bhawan, Una at Rampur vide Commission's letter No. 1/2024-SC Commission-854 dated 06.08.2026 and in view of complaints/references received from different quarters regarding the staging of skits, dramas, theatrical presentations, cultural programmes and other public performances in educational institutions, the following guidelines are hereby issued for necessary compliance by all Government, Government-aided and Private Educational Institutions in the State of Himachal Pradesh.

1. Objective:

- a) The objective of these guidelines is to ensure that public performances organised by educational institutions provide an appropriate educational and cultural environment and, at the same time, uphold the Constitution of India, equality, dignity, secularism, fraternity, respect for diversity, safety and well-being of students, dignity and privacy of individuals and legitimate artistic, academic and cultural expression.
- b) These guidelines are intended to promote responsible and age-appropriate expression and shall not be construed as imposing a general prohibition on discussion, criticism, debate, satire, academic inquiry or artistic treatment of socially relevant issues.
- c) The objective of these guidelines is not to prevent or discourage students from discussing or staging controversial subjects but to ensure that such subjects are addressed/performed responsibly, lawfully, age-appropriately and in a manner consistent with constitutional values and laws of the land.

2. Scope and applicability:

- a) These guidelines shall apply to all skits, dramas, plays, theatrical performances, role plays, street plays, cultural programmes, mime, dance-dramas, stage presentations, audio-visual performances and other public performances organised, sponsored or facilitated by a Government, Government-aided Private Educational Institution in the State, whether conducted within or outside the school premises.
- b) The guidelines shall particularly apply where the subject matter involves caste, caste discrimination or reservation; religion, religious beliefs or practices; constitutional rights and duties; social, political or constitutional institutions; gender, disability or vulnerable groups; communal, regional or linguistic issues; historical or contemporary social

conflicts; violence, discrimination or exploitation; or any other subject which, in the considered opinion of the Head of Institution, has the potential to cause serious controversy, distress, hostility or disruption.

3. Constitutional and Legal Framework:

- a) All educational institutions, while organising or permitting any performance covered by these guidelines, shall ensure compliance with the Constitution of India, applicable Central and State laws, rules, regulations, judicial directions and departmental instructions.
- b) The following Constitutional provisions shall, in particular, guide the planning, scrutiny and conduct of such performances:
 - i. Article 14- Equality before law: No performance shall promote or justify unequal treatment or arbitrary discrimination against any person or group.
 - ii. Article 15- Prohibition of discrimination: No performance shall encourage discrimination on grounds prohibited by the Constitution, including religion, race, caste, sex or place of birth.
 - iii. Article 17 - Abolition of untouchability: No performance shall endorse, glorify, justify or encourage the practice of untouchability or practices arising therefrom.
 - iv. Article 19(1)(a) read with Article 19(2)- Freedom of speech and expression: The right to freedom of speech and expression shall be respected. At the same time, public performances remain subject to restrictions permitted by law, including those relating to public order, decency or morality, defamation, incitement to an offence and other grounds specified under Article 19(2).
{The mere fact that a performance discusses a controversial, political, social, religious or constitutional issue, or contains legitimate criticism or satire, shall not by itself constitute a ground for prohibition. The complete context, purpose, manner and likely impact of the performance shall be considered}
 - v. Article 21 Life and personal liberty: The dignity, privacy and personal liberty of students, teachers, employees and other persons shall be respected. No performance shall unnecessarily expose, humiliate, stigmatise or publicly target an identifiable individual.
 - vi. Articles 25 to 28- Freedom of conscience and religion: Performances concerning religion, faith or religious practices shall be handled with due sensitivity and shall not be designed to create religious hostility or disturb public order.
 - vii. Article 29- Protection of culture: Due regard shall be given to the protection of cultural identity and interests of different sections of society. Cultural diversity shall be presented respectfully and without stereotyping or humiliation.

- viii. Article 51A- Fundamental Duties: The organisation of student performances shall, as far as practicable, promote harmony and common brotherhood transcending religious, linguistic, regional or sectional diversities; preservation of India's composite culture; scientific temper, humanism and the spirit of inquiry and reform; and excellence in individual and collective activity.

4. Caste, reservation and socially sensitive issues:

- a) Performances dealing with caste, caste discrimination, untouchability, reservation, social justice or related issues shall be handled with extreme sensitivity.
- b) No caste, community or social group shall be stereotyped, ridiculed, humiliated, dehumanised or portrayed as inherently inferior or superior.
- c) Historical or educational depiction of caste discrimination, untouchability or social injustice may be permitted where the purpose is educational, reformative or socially constructive and the manner of presentation does not itself amount to prohibited conduct or unnecessarily humiliate an identifiable person or group, while upholding the constitutional values and provisions.

5. Religion and religious sentiments:

- a) Performances dealing with religion, faith or religious practices shall be presented with due care, sensitivity and respect for India's pluralistic and secular character.
- b) Deliberate and provocative acts, expressions, caricatures or portrayals intended to insult or denigrate religious beliefs, practices, symbols or communities shall not be permitted.
- c) Legitimate academic, historical, artistic or cultural discussion of religion shall not be prohibited merely because the subject is sensitive, provided that the manner of presentation complies with applicable law and these guidelines.

6. Application of criminal and other statutory laws:

- a) Institutional approval shall not be construed as authorization to commit any offence under any law.
- b) The relevant provisions contained in Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, 2023, shall be kept in view wherever content or manner of performance involves promotion of enmity or disharmony between groups, acts prejudicial to maintenance of harmony, assertions prejudicial to national integration, offences relating to religion, defamation or any other offence under the said Sanhita.
- c) Section 196 of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, 2023, shall be kept in view in cases involving promotion or attempted promotion of disharmony,

enmity, hatred or ill-will between religious, racial, linguistic or regional groups, castes or communities, or other conduct prejudicial to maintenance of harmony and public tranquility.

- d) Section 197 of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, 2023, shall be kept in view wherever a performance involves imputations or assertions prejudicial to national integration.
- e) Sections 298 and 299 of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, 2023, shall be kept in view where content or conduct concerns places of worship, religious objects or deliberate and malicious acts intended to outrage religious feelings, as applicable to the facts of the case.
- f) Where an identifiable individual is portrayed or allegations/imputations are made concerning such individual, Section 356 of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, 2023, relating to defamation, and other applicable laws shall be kept in view. Legitimate good-faith criticism or opinion concerning public questions shall not be treated as prohibited merely because it is critical or satirical.

7. Protection against caste-based humiliation or discrimination:

Where a performance involves caste-based insults, humiliation or other conduct potentially covered by the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989, the provisions of the said Act and the Rules made thereunder shall be strictly complied with.

8. Protection of children:

- a) The Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act, 2012, and other applicable child-protection laws and guidelines shall be strictly complied with.
- b) No child shall be required or permitted to participate in any performance involving sexual exploitation, sexually explicit or pornographic material, sexual harassment or any other conduct prohibited by law.
- c) Extreme care shall be taken in the use of costumes, gestures, dialogues, choreography, props, audio-visual material and portrayal of intimate or abusive situations.
- d) Where a performance deals with abuse, sexual violence, exploitation or other traumatic subjects for legitimate educational purposes, the content shall be age-appropriate and presented in a manner that protects the dignity, privacy and well-being of participating students.

9. Non-discrimination and child-friendly educational environment:

- a) The principles contained in the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009, and applicable State Rules shall be observed in all school activities.

- b) No child belonging to a weaker section or disadvantaged group shall be subjected to discrimination, humiliation or exclusion on account of social or economic background.
- c) The school environment, including cultural and co-curricular activities, shall promote equality, inclusion and dignity of every child.

10. Public order and local laws:

- a) Where a performance is proposed to be held at a public place or in circumstances where public order, traffic, crowd management, use of public space, sound amplification or other local regulatory requirements are involved, all permissions required from the competent authority shall be obtained before such performance.
- b) Institutional approval shall not substitute any permission, licence, consent or authorisation required under any law, police regulation or other applicable legal requirement.

11. Distinction between artistic expression and unlawful conduct:

- a) The scrutiny mechanism shall be exercised with restraint and shall not result in a blanket prohibition on discussion of social, constitutional, historical, political, religious or other sensitive issues.
- b) Criticism of a social practice, discussion of caste discrimination or reservation, discussion of constitutional rights, historical analysis, legitimate satire or parody, academic criticism of a burning social issues/social awareness related issues, and expression of a lawful viewpoint with which the approving authority may personally disagree shall not, by themselves, constitute sufficient grounds for prohibition.
- c) The context, purpose, language, manner of presentation, intended audience and likely impact of the performance shall be considered collectively rather than in isolation.
- d) Before refusing permission, the authority shall, wherever practicable, consider whether the concern can be addressed through deletion or modification of a dialogue or scene, contextual explanation, restriction of audience, age-appropriate presentation, supervision or another proportionate measure consistent with law.

12. Constitution of Institutional Scrutiny Committee:

- a) Each Government and Government-aided school shall, wherever considered necessary constitute an Institutional Scrutiny Committee comprising the Head of Institution as Chairperson, one senior teacher nominated by the Head of Institution, one senior-most female teacher preferably a Chairperson of ICC (under POSH Act), an active NGO working in area or any registered organization working in the field of Social issues, atleast two members of SMCs including Chairperson, the

teacher-in-charge of the proposed programme (as Member Secretary) and one such member as may be considered appropriate by Head of Institution.

- b) Private educational institutions shall establish an equivalent mechanism in accordance with these guidelines.

13. Prior scrutiny of sensitive performances:

- a) No performance falling within the scope of these guidelines shall be staged without prior scrutiny/approval by the Head of the Institution.
- b) Where the subject matter is particularly sensitive, controversial or likely to have wider public repercussions, the Head of Institution shall refer the proposed script/content to Institutional Scrutiny Committee, wherever such reference is required.
- c) The complete script, synopsis or content of the proposed performance, along with the names of participants, proposed venue, occasion and intended audience, shall be made available for scrutiny sufficiently in advance of the programme.
- d) No performance shall be staged merely on the basis of its title or synopsis where the actual script, dialogue, audio-visual material or presentation contains sensitive content requiring scrutiny. .

14. Criteria for scrutiny and approval:

While scrutinizing a proposed performance, the Institutional Scrutiny Committee shall consider whether the content is educationally relevant and appropriate; age-appropriate; respectful of individuals and groups; consistent with constitutional values; free from unlawful promotion of hatred, hostility, discrimination or violence; protective of dignity, privacy and reputation; and compliant with applicable laws, rules and directions and after detailed scrutiny, may approve, modify or reject, as the case may be.

15. Responsibilities of Head of Institution and organizers:

- a) The Head of Institution shall ensure that all performances are planned and conducted in accordance with these guidelines, necessary permissions are obtained, responsible teachers exercise supervision, significant changes are subjected to fresh scrutiny, and records of scrutiny/approval are maintained.
- b) The teacher(s)/official(s) entrusted with organising the programme shall ensure that the performance substantially conforms to the content scrutinized and approved. Any part found during rehearsal or presentation to be inconsistent with these guidelines or applicable law shall be suitably modified or stopped.

16. Documentation and record:

For every sensitive performance falling in the preview of these guidelines, the institution shall, wherever applicable, maintain the title and objective, complete script/synopsis and relevant audio-visual material, names of responsible teachers, intended audience and age group, scrutiny/approval, modifications suggested, venue and occasion of the performance.

17. Complaints and grievances:

Any complaint concerning a performance shall be examined objectively by the Head of Institution and Committee duly constituted by him, for said purpose. The mere fact that a performance has attracted criticism or disagreement shall not, by itself, establish a violation. The complete context, purpose, content and manner of presentation shall be considered. If required, Head of Institution may refer the matter to the Director of School Education for final decision after recording detailed recommendations of the Committee.

18. Non-compliance:

- a) Any violation of these guidelines, deliberate suppression of material facts, staging of an unapproved sensitive performance where prior approval was required, or material deviation from approved content shall be viewed seriously.
- b) The concerned Head of Institution, teacher-in-charge, organiser or other responsible person may be proceeded against under applicable service rules, departmental instructions or other provisions of law, as may be applicable.

19. General saving clause:

These guidelines shall not be interpreted as imposing a general prohibition on literary and cultural activities, academic discussion and debate, constitutional education, social-awareness programmes, legitimate satire or artistic expression, or discussion of historical, social and contemporary issues, provided such activities are responsible, age-appropriate and compliant with applicable laws and these guidelines.

20. Reference to applicable laws:

These guidelines shall be read harmoniously with and shall not be construed as limiting the provisions of the Constitution of India; the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, 2023; the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita, 2023; the Bharatiya Sakshya Adhiniyam, 2023, wherever applicable; the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989 and Rules; the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009 and applicable Rules; the Protection of Children

from Sexual Offences Act, 2012 and Rules; the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2015, wherever applicable; applicable laws relating to public order and local authorities; applicable service and disciplinary rules; and directions, guidelines and regulations issued by competent educational authorities from time to time. In case of any conflict between these guidelines and a statutory provision, the statutory provision shall prevail.
