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## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE PRESS STATEMENT

### GNACOPS CLARIFIES THE SCOPE OF THE GHANA EDUCATION SERVICE DIRECTIVES ON PRE-TERTIARY GRADUATION CEREMONIES

The Ghana National Council of Private Schools (GNACOPS) has taken note of the recent administrative directives issued by the Ghana Education Service (GES) concerning the suspension of graduation ceremonies and the prohibition of flamboyant post-examination celebrations within pre-tertiary schools. We have equally noted the subsequent communication issued by the Greater Accra Regional Education Directorate directing schools under its administrative jurisdiction to suspend all planned graduation ceremonies.

Since the publication of these directives, GNACOPS has received numerous enquiries from proprietors, school leaders, parents and stakeholders within the private education sector regarding whether these directives extend to privately owned pre-tertiary educational institutions.

Having carefully examined the legal and administrative character of the directives, the applicable statutory framework governing pre-tertiary education, and the well-established principles of administrative law and public governance, GNACOPS considers it appropriate to provide the following clarification.

#### **Respect for Government Policy**

GNACOPS wishes to state unequivocally that it fully appreciates and supports the efforts of the Ministry of Education to preserve discipline, modesty, responsible conduct and the moral values underpinning Ghana's educational system.

The objective of discouraging excessive displays of wealth, unhealthy social competition and practices that undermine the dignity of education is a legitimate public policy objective deserving the support of every responsible educational institution.

Accordingly, this statement should not be construed as opposition to the policy direction of Government. Rather, it seeks only to clarify the legal and administrative scope of the directives as they presently stand.

#### **The Administrative Character of the Directives**

Administrative directives derive their authority from the statutory powers vested in the issuing authority and are generally intended to regulate institutions, officers and agencies subject to that authority.

As a fundamental principle of administrative law, every administrative decision or directive operates within the limits of the jurisdiction conferred by statute. Administrative instructions cannot ordinarily be presumed to bind institutions that are not expressly or impliedly brought within their scope unless the enabling legislation so provides.

Having examined the communications issued thus far, GNACOPS observes that the directives are addressed principally to institutions operating under the direct administrative management and supervisory authority of the Ghana Education Service.

The directives do not expressly extend their application to privately owned pre-tertiary educational institutions, nor do they expressly prohibit private schools from organising graduation or transition ceremonies conducted in accordance with applicable regulatory standards.

The settled principle of legality requires that regulatory obligations imposed upon citizens or institutions must be clear, certain and lawfully authorised. Where doubt exists regarding the scope of an administrative directive, such ambiguity ought not to be interpreted so as to impose obligations beyond those expressly contemplated by the issuing authority.

## **Principles of Good Administrative Governance**

Modern administrative governance is founded upon the principles of legality, reasonableness, proportionality, fairness, transparency and accountability.

Public administration seeks to regulate conduct that threatens public order, institutional discipline or the effective management of public institutions. It does not ordinarily seek to abolish legitimate educational practices that continue to serve valid pedagogical and developmental purposes.

Accordingly, Government's intervention should properly be understood as addressing identified excesses associated with certain graduation-related activities rather than as a prohibition of graduation ceremonies themselves.

Indeed, the principle of proportionality requires that regulatory responses be directed at the specific mischief sought to be prevented without unnecessarily restricting legitimate educational activities that have long contributed to learner development.

Similarly, the doctrine of legitimate expectation recognises that educational institutions which have, over many years, responsibly organised graduation and transition ceremonies consistent with regulatory standards are entitled to expect continuity of such practices unless lawfully restricted through clear and express administrative or legislative action.

## **The Position of Private Educational Institutions**

Private schools constitute an essential partner in Ghana's pre-tertiary education system and continue to contribute significantly to national educational development.

Graduation and transition ceremonies within the private education sector have traditionally served educational purposes extending beyond academic recognition. They celebrate character formation, leadership, discipline, creativity, innovation, community service and the successful progression of learners into the next stage of their education.

These ceremonies equally strengthen collaboration between schools and parents while reinforcing learner motivation, institutional identity and community participation.

GNACOPS therefore considers that such educational traditions remain both legitimate and valuable when conducted responsibly and in accordance with established regulatory expectations.

## **Guidance to Private Schools**

While GNACOPS is of the considered opinion that the present administrative directives do not expressly prohibit private schools from organising graduation ceremonies, member institutions are strongly advised to exercise the highest standards of institutional responsibility.

**Accordingly, every graduation or transition ceremony should be guided by:**

- Strict adherence to child protection principles;
- Respect for learner welfare and safeguarding;
- Parental engagement and informed participation;
- Modesty, dignity and inclusiveness;
- Sound corporate governance and accountability;

- Academic integrity and educational purpose;
- Effective supervision by school authorities;
- Compliance with all applicable regulatory requirements; and
- Zero tolerance for extravagance, excessive displays of wealth, commercial exploitation, partisan political activity or any conduct capable of diminishing the dignity of education.

Graduation ceremonies must remain educational events that celebrate achievement rather than occasions for social competition or material exhibition.

### **Commitment to Collaborative Governance**

GNACOPS remains firmly committed to constructive engagement with the Ghana Education Service, the National Schools Inspectorate Authority (NaSIA), the National Teaching Council (NTC) and all other education sector stakeholders.

We respectfully reaffirm our readiness to support the development of coherent national policies that preserve discipline while recognising the diversity of Ghana’s education system and respecting the distinct legal and governance frameworks applicable to public and private educational institutions.

Collaborative governance, mutual consultation and regulatory clarity remain indispensable to promoting educational excellence, institutional accountability and the best interests of every Ghanaian learner.

### **Conclusion**

Having regard to the present wording of the administrative directives and the applicable principles governing public administration, GNACOPS is of the considered view that privately owned pre-tertiary educational institutions are not expressly brought within the scope of the directives issued by the Ghana Education Service concerning the suspension of graduation ceremonies.

Private schools may therefore continue to organise graduation and transition ceremonies in accordance with their institutional policies and educational traditions, provided such ceremonies are conducted responsibly, modestly and in full compliance with all applicable regulatory requirements and the overarching objectives of child development, academic integrity and good governance.

GNACOPS reiterates its unwavering support for every lawful initiative aimed at strengthening discipline, preserving educational values and advancing quality education within the Republic of Ghana.



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**Pre-Tertiary Private Education Representative**  
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