

**PENALTY ORDER**

No. SO(ESTT.)10-626-2014. WHEREAS, Deputy Director (Admin), Directorate General of Special Education, Punjab, Lahore, vide letter dated 06.09.2024, forwarded a probe report conducted by Mr. Abdul Sattar, Probe Officer / Principal, Govt. Deaf & Defective Hearing High School for Boys, Gulberg II, Lahore, regarding the accidental death of a mentally challenged student, Muhammad Bilal (late), aged 13 years, of the Govt. Special Education Centre, Sangla Hill, occurred on 27.08.2024. The report recommended disciplinary action against Ms. Amara Khurshid, Incharge Headmistress, and Mr. Masood Ahmad, Driver. It was found by the probe officer that Ms. Amara Khurshid failed to ensure the proper functioning of the bus's CCTV system and neglected to assign or arrange a conductor for the vehicle, despite prior requests for staff. This negligence contributed to unsafe transportation conditions for students with special needs. Mr. Masood Ahmad operated the bus without a conductor and failed to keep the door closed, which allowed Muhammad Bilal to jump from the moving vehicle, leading to his death. Both individuals were found to have acted negligently, compromising the safety of the students under their care.

2. **AND WHEREAS**, joint disciplinary proceedings were initiated against **Ms. Amara Khurshid**, Senior Special Education Teacher (BS-17 / PD Field), Incharge Headmistress, Govt. Special Education Centre, Sangla Hill ('**accused officer**') and **Mr. Masood Ahmed**, Driver, Govt. Special Education Centre, Sangla Hill ('**accused official**') vide order of inquiry dated 08.11.2024 under Section 3 read with Section 9 of the Punjab Employees, Efficiency, Discipline and Accountability Act, 2006 on the following charges of misconduct & inefficiency by appointing Mr. Abdur Rafay Rao, Headmaster (BS-18), Govt. (Middle) Special Education Centre, Kamoki presently posted as Principal (BS-19), Govt. Special Education Centre, Shalimar Town, Lahore as Inquiry Officer:

CHARGES AGAINST MS. AMARA KHURSHID (ACCUSED OFFICER)

- i. The accused officer remained negligent and inefficient in the operation and maintenance of the CCTV surveillance system installed in the bus. Despite repeated instructions to store recorded data with at least fifteen days' backup, the accused officer failed to ensure that the recordings were being properly saved on the hard disk installed in the DVR. This neglect constitutes a breach of duty, as the accused officer did not take timely and adequate steps to repair the faulty recording system.
- ii. The accused officer failed to secure adequate supervisory staff, including a conductor or attendant, for the vehicle transporting students with special needs. While the accused officer requested the provision of staff from the concerned authority, but she failed to properly pursue the request and did not make self-help arrangements to address the issue. This failure contributed to the occurrence of an incident, amounting to negligence in fulfilling the duty of care toward the safety of the students.

- iii. The accused officer remained inefficient in providing a safe and secure transportation facility for students with special needs. These actions, or lack thereof, demonstrated a failure to meet the standard of care required in ensuring the safety and security of vulnerable students during transport. This negligence also resulted in a breach of the duty to provide a safe educational environment.

CHARGE AGAINST MR. MASOOD AHMED / ACCUSED OFFICIAL

The accused official was negligent and guilty of a breach of duty in the operation of the bus on 27.08.2024, specifically by operating the vehicle without the presence of a conductor. Eyewitness testimony indicates that at the time of the incident, the bus door was open, resulting in the student, Muhammad Bilal (deceased), aged 13 years, jumping from the moving vehicle, which tragically led to his death. The accused official's failure to ensure that the bus door remained closed constitutes a significant dereliction of duty. During the probe proceedings, the accused official admitted that the incident was a direct consequence of the absence of a conductor, thereby acknowledging responsibility for the failure to provide a safe and secure transportation service for the students.

3. **AND WHEREAS**, the Inquiry Officer after conducting thorough inquiry into the charges submitted inquiry report, wherein the Inquiry Officer recommended imposition of following penalties upon the accused officers:

Sr. No.	Name of Accused Officer	Recommendation
1.	Ms. Amara Khurshid, Senior Special Education Teacher (BS-17 / PD Field), Incharge Headmistress, Govt. Special Education Centre, Sangla Hill.	Minor penalty of 'withholding of increments for a period of two years' under section 4(a)(ii) of the PEEDA Act, 2006.
2.	Mr. Masood Ahmed, Driver, Govt. Special Education Centre, Sangla Hill.	Minor penalty of 'withholding of increments for a period of two years' under section 4(a)(ii) of the PEEDA Act, 2006.

4. **AND WHEREAS**, upon receipt of inquiry report, Show Cause-cum-Personal Hearing Notice dated 07.10.2025 under Section 13(4) of Act *ibid* was issued to the accused officer/official directing them to submit additional defence, if any, and also to appear before the undersigned on 16.10.2025 for personal hearing.

5. **AND WHEREAS**, on the date fixed for personal hearing, both the accused officer and the accused official appeared in person along with the Departmental Representative. The accused officer submitted an additional defence reply, whereas the accused official opted not to file any further written defense and relied upon the defence already submitted during the inquiry proceedings. During the course of hearing, the accused officer and official reiterated the stance earlier taken before the Inquiry Officer and contended, *inter alia*, that they had always performed their duties diligently, faithfully, and with utmost integrity; that the unfortunate incident occurred solely due to the non-availability of a conductor; and that the Inquiry Officer had failed to objectively evaluate their defence submissions. The accused officer further explained that she had repeatedly requested the District Education Officer (Special Education) concerned for deputation of a conductor to ensure safe operation of the second bus of the Centre, particularly after an increase in student

enrolment, but no conductor was provided despite her written requests. She added that all cameras installed in the bus were operational; however, the recording could not be retrieved owing to a technical fault caused by voltage fluctuation, which was beyond her control. The accused official, on the other hand, asserted that the door of student, before reaching the designated stop, suddenly opened the door and jumped out of the moving vehicle. He claimed that the incident occurred despite his due diligence and that there was no element of negligence or carelessness on his part. He further stated that eyewitnesses had corroborated his version and that, in view of the circumstances, the parents of the deceased child had also forgiven him. The Departmental Representative, however, maintained that the inquiry had been conducted strictly in accordance with law and procedure; that both accused were afforded full opportunity to defend themselves; and that the evidence on record had conclusively established the charges of inefficiency and negligence beyond any reasonable doubt.

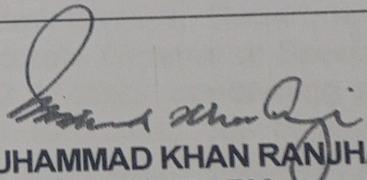
6. **AND WHEREAS**, after careful and judicious examination of the entire case record, including the inquiry report, written defence reply, oral submissions during personal hearing, and the recommendations of the Inquiry Officer, it is observed that although the Inquiry Officer has rightly established the charges of negligence and inefficiency against both the accused, Ms. Amara Khurshid, Incharge Headmistress, and Mr. Masood Ahmad, Driver, the recommendation regarding the quantum of penalty is found to be disproportionate to the degree of negligence proved and, therefore, not sustainable in its present form. The Inquiry Officer's analysis, though procedurally correct, did not adequately differentiate between administrative lapses arising from systemic deficiencies and those resulting from deliberate neglect of duty. This lack of proportional assessment has led to an excessive recommendation relative to the actual culpability established on record. During the personal hearing, the accused officer, Ms. Amara Khurshid, submitted that she had on multiple occasions formally requested the District Education Officer (Special Education) concerned for provision of a conductor for the second bus in view of increased student strength. This indicates that she was conscious of the need for safety measures and made bona fide efforts to secure assistance, though her request remained unfulfilled. The absence of a conductor was thus a systemic shortcoming rather than a willful disregard of her duties. Similarly, regarding the malfunction of the CCTV recording system, her explanation that the fault occurred due to voltage fluctuation appears plausible. Nevertheless, she remained responsible for ensuring timely inspection, reporting, and rectification of the malfunction. Her failure in this regard constitutes inefficiency but does not amount to deliberate misconduct warranting a harsher penalty. as for the accused official, Mr. Masood Ahmad, his defence that the bus door was closed and that the mentally challenged student himself opened the door and jumped out finds partial support in the witness statements and in the fact that the parents of the deceased child did not impute intentional or reckless behaviour to him. However, operating a vehicle carrying vulnerable children without the presence of a conductor reflects a serious lapse in vigilance and adherence to prescribed safety procedures. Even if compelled by circumstances, such omission demonstrates negligence in ensuring the protection of students entrusted to his care.

7. **AND WHEREAS**, from the overall evidence, it stands established that both the accused officer and official failed to exercise the degree of care and vigilance expected in the transportation and supervision of students with special needs. Their collective lapses, though not deliberate, contributed to the tragic incident, thereby constituting negligence and inefficiency. However, the record also

reveals mitigating circumstances, including the absence of adequate support staff, technical limitations, and the behavioural challenges inherent in handling mentally challenged students. These factors reduce the degree of culpability and warrant a proportionate rather than severe disciplinary response. In light of these considerations, it is evident that while the charges stand fully proved, the penalty recommended by the Inquiry Officer, "withholding of increments for two years", does not maintain a fair balance between accountability and the mitigating factors present. The undersigned, therefore, finds it appropriate to disagree with the Inquiry Officer's recommendation to that extent.

8. **NOW THEREFORE**, I, **Muhammad Khan Ranjha**, Secretary Special Education / Competent Authority in the instant case, after having considered all the aspects, material relating to the case and *for reasons stated herein above*, in exercise of powers vested in me under Section 13(5) read with Section 4 of the Punjab Employees Efficiency, Discipline and Accountability Act, 2006, impose the following penalties upon the accused officer/official;

Sr. No.	Name of Accused Officer	Penalty imposed
1.	Ms. Amara Khurshid , Senior Special Education Teacher (BS-17 / PD Field), Incharge Headmistress, Govt. Special Education Centre, Sangla Hill.	Minor penalty of ' withholding of increments for a period of one year ' under section 4(a)(ii) of the PEEDA Act, 2006.
2.	Mr. Masood Ahmed , Driver, Govt. Special Education Centre, Sangla Hill.	Minor penalty of ' withholding of increments for a period of one year ' under section 4(a)(ii) of the PEEDA Act, 2006.

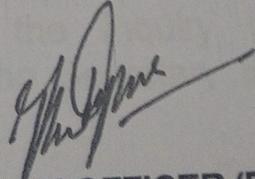

(MUHAMMAD KHAN RANJHA)
SECRETARY
GOVT. OF THE PUNJAB
SPECIAL EDUCATION DEPARTMENT /
COMPETENT AUTHORITY

Dated Lahore, the
October 27 /2025

No. & Date Even:

A copy is forwarded for information and necessary action to the:-

1. **Director General** Special Education, Punjab, Lahore.
2. **District Education Officer (Special Education)**, Lahore to ensure delivery of this order to the accused officer/official and implementation of the penalties.
3. **Ms. Amara Khurshid**, SSET (PD Field), Incharge Headmistress, Govt. Special Education Centre, Sangla Hill.
4. **Mr. Masood Ahmed**, Driver, Govt. Special Education Centre, Sangla Hill. PS to Secretary Special Education Department.
5. **PS** to Secretary Special Education.


SECTION OFFICER (ESTT.-I)
SPECIAL EDUCATION DEPARTMENT