



Patriotic Education Law of China

(Information as at July 2024)

In October 2023, China's National People's Congress passed the Patriotic Education Law¹, which took effect on 1 January 2024. According to the law, patriotic education includes aspects such as ideologies of key Communist Party leaders, history of China and the party, the socialist system, Chinese landscape and culture, national symbols, laws, national security/defence, and heroes and martyrs of China.

While named the “Patriotic Education Law”, the law primarily focuses not on formal education but rather on instilling patriotic ideology into various aspects of people’s daily life, spanning from the classroom to the workplace.

The sections of the law that have the most direct impact on the education system are articles 15 and 16, which stipulate that patriotic education shall be included into all levels and types of schools² throughout the entire national education system, and that institutions shall establish mechanisms for linking education courses to patriotic education in accordance with state provisions.

The law requires education institutions to plan patriotic education related courses and organise extracurricular activities for students, under the guidance of the local “Patriotic Education supervision body”. The supervision body will plan and oversee the work on promoting patriotic education. Violation of the law, such as mishandling patriotic content, may result in lawful penalties under public order management or even criminal liability.

Background

The issuance of the Patriotic Education Law follows several high-level documents issued by the Chinese government in recent years, including the 2016 directive³ issued by the Chinese Ministry of Education (MoE) instructing all provincial level education departments to strengthen implementation of patriotic education across all levels of education; and an implementation document to promote patriotic education⁴ issued by the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China and the Chinese State Council in 2019.

Since the publication of these documents, China has notably heightened its emphasis on patriotic education within the education system, with government bodies including the MoE including aspects of patriotic education in its new publications and amended laws and regulations. This shift has become a common feature of recent developments, with each educational initiative placing increased emphasis on safeguarding national interest, promoting Chinese culture, and reinforcing support for the party system.

The latest Patriotic Education Law is the first time that this activity is enshrined into law, which signals a deeper integration of these principles into the fabric of Chinese society.

Impact on international education

Given that the promotion of patriotic values had already been a longstanding and integral aspect of China's education system, many of the "patriotic elements" of the law concerning foreign curriculums and teachers have already been in place or addressed.

For example, the 2020 draft measure on foreign teachers asks foreign teachers to "*make sure that the teaching activities and content must not undermine China's sovereignty, security, honourable reputation, and public interest*".

However, what is not yet clear is any specific guidance about how patriotic education should be incorporated into education activities.

For foreign providers involved in joint ventures within China, particularly those incorporating Chinese textbooks or contents, it is worth noting the possibility of shifts in the educational climate. There is likelihood that future developments might place greater emphasis on the inclusion of patriotic content within the curriculum.

Going forward

While many of the patriotic activities and elements were already deeply rooted into the Chinese education system, the new law mandates and provides legal basis for further enhancing and expanding these initiatives. Stakeholders are advised to monitor developments in this area.

For further enquiries, please contact the [Education and Research Section](#) of the Australian Embassy in Beijing.

¹ "中华人民共和国爱国主义教育法 (*Patriotic Education Law of People's Republic of China*)."
Central People's Government of the People's Republic of China, State Council of the People's Republic of China, 25 Oct. 2023,
www.gov.cn/yaowen/liebiao/202310/content_6911481.htm.

Unofficial English translation at: <https://www.chinalawtranslate.com/en/patriotic-education-law/>

² "schools" in this context includes all educational institutions from pre-school through to higher education institutions.

³ Department of the Party Committee, Ministry of Education, People's Republic of China. 中共教育部党组关于教育系统深入开展爱国主义教育的实施意见 (*Implementation Opinions of the Party Group of the Ministry of Education of the Communist Party of China on the In-Depth Development of Patriotic Education in the Education System*). Ministry of Education, People's Republic of China, 26 Jan. 2016,
www.moe.gov.cn/srcsite/A13/s7061/201601/t20160129_229131.html.

⁴ Department of the Party Committee, Ministry of Education, People's Republic of China. 中共教育部党组关于教育系统深入开展爱国主义教育的实施意见 (*Implementation Opinions of the Party Group of the Ministry of Education of the Communist Party of China on the In-Depth Development of Patriotic Education in the Education System*). Ministry of Education, People's Republic of China, 26 Jan. 2016,
www.moe.gov.cn/srcsite/A13/s7061/201601/t20160129_229131.html.

