



Department of Education

National Guidelines on:
How to Manage School Records
Volume 1 – School Governing Bodies

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Education Management and Governance Development

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1. INTRODUCTION

This manual has been compiled by the Department of Education with the aim of assisting School Governing Bodies (SGB's) to manage their schools effectively. It aims to provide the reader with an understanding of the use, purpose, management and maintenance of all SGB records, with the exception of financial records. The financial records have been omitted here. They are available from the National Department of Education in seven volumes:

- National Norms and Standards For School Funding, Financial Management For Schools, Training Manual 1 to 5
- National Norms and Standards For School Funding, School Fee Exemption
- National Norms and Standards For School Funding, Self-Managing Schools Section 21 Functions.

This booklet is further limited to the General Education and Training (GET) band. All teaching and learning from Grade R to 9 contributes to the type of learner envisaged by the National Curriculum Statement. Assessment of this learning takes place on a continuous basis throughout the ten years of schooling. The assessment and certification of this cumulative learning takes place at the end of Grade 9, when learners who meet the specified requirements are awarded a General Education and Training Certificate. This ends a learner's period of compulsory schooling.

This booklet forms one of four volumes in the series *Guidelines on How to Manage School Records* :

- National Guidelines on How to Manage School Records – Volume 1, School Governing Body Records (this booklet)
- National Guidelines on How to Manage School Records – Volume 2, School Management Records
- National Guidelines on How to Manage School Records – Volume 3, Administration Records
- National Guidelines on How to Manage School Records – Volume 4, Learner Records

Diversity of schools reflects and necessitates diversity in management and procedures. The records that schools keep will range in a similar vein. The records provided in this guide are generic sample documents and as such do not make provision for all provincial variations. **They are guidelines only.** Schools may feel the need to adapt these forms to meet their own particular requirements (for example, schools catering for learners with special educational needs).

1.1. Outcomes of these guidelines

The manual aims to provide the reader with the following:

1. An overview of how to manage SGB records;
2. An indication of the types of records to be kept at schools; and
3. An understanding of the use, purpose and maintenance of each record.

1.1.1 Who should read these guidelines?

This manual is addressed primarily to school management teams (SMTs) and school governing bodies (SGBs). However, district, regional and provincial education officers would also find it a useful guide to managing the information at their respective levels.

1.1.2 What is records management?

Records management involves the storage, retrieval and use of information. In records management, the guiding principle is that information must be readily available at the prerequisite time and in the form it is required. In order to effectively utilise the information in the system, the data must be **accurate, reliable and informative**.

1.1.3 What is a school record?

A record is documented proof of a transaction or activity that is routinely done by a school. These activities range from the purchasing of learning resources to accounting for the number of learners and teachers present, absent or ill at school. Records are therefore an important means of accountability because they provide proof of actions taken and decisions made by either the school management team or the school governing body.

1.1.4 What is the role of records?

Records play a dual role in that they provide schools with a clear indication of what is available and what is required, as well as providing schools with the ability to pass on information for planning and policy decisions. Parents can have access to school records. Records must be archived and kept for three years after a child has left the school. The records may only be disposed of according to provincial regulations.

1.1.5 Types of School Records

There are essentially two categories of records kept at schools.

- The first can be termed **governance** records, as they are a separate category of records both developed and administered by the SGB. The information required by the governing body of the school is intended to ensure the effective and efficient running of the school. The functions of the SGB are described in detail in sections 5, 6, 7, 8 and 20 of the South African Schools Act and centre around six essential policies (see page **Error! Bookmark not defined.**). This booklet covers these records.

- The second category may be termed **management** records, as they are the instructional leadership and administrative records utilised by the SMT for the effective functioning of the school's core activities and comprises records on the learners, staff and resources of the school. The SMT requires information to ensure that learning and teaching occur.

These records may be classified under three categories:

- Management Records
- Administrative Records
- Learner Records

Each of the above is dealt with in a separate booklet:

- National Guidelines on How to Manage School Records – Volume 2, School Management Records
- National Guidelines on How to Manage School Records – Volume 3, Administration Records
- National Guidelines on How to Manage School Records – Volume 4, Learner Records

2. SCHOOL GOVERNING BODY RECORDS

2.1 Introduction

The School Act stipulates that the School Governing Body (SGB) is responsible for governing the school. This does not mean that the governing body must run the school on a day-to-day basis, but it must:

- Perform all the specific functions given to governing bodies by the Schools Act and by provincial legislation and regulations
- Set, improve and develop the rules, direction and policy by which the school must function within the framework of the Schools Act
- Oversee and keep overall control over the development and maintenance of the infra-structure and property of the school, and
- Bring about and develop a partnership based on trust and respect between all stakeholders, namely parents, learners, educators, and other staff at the school, the local community and the education authorities

2.2 Agenda's

Agenda's are used to help define what will take place at a meeting. They fulfill three important functions:

- They serve as a notice of the date, time and venue of the meeting. They should be sent out to all SGB members in good time so that members can diarise the date and time of the meeting (and attend the meeting).
- They serve to remind everyone who attends the meeting what will be discussed. This is important as some members may be required to prepare for the meeting.
- They keep track of the discussions that have taken place at previous meetings (as reflected in the previous minutes).

In order to serve their purpose, and remembering that these are guidelines only, an agenda could include the following headings:

- Date of meeting
- Venue of meeting
- Time of meeting
- Welcome (to those attending) and apologies (from those who could not attend)

- Acceptance of the previous minutes. This must be proposed and seconded by SGB members. (Always remember that the Chairperson must sign the minutes as a true reflection of what decisions were taken).
- Matters arising from the previous minutes (and not included in the agenda).
- Various items on the agenda for discussion. This varies from meeting to meeting depending upon the issues under discussion.
- Date, time and venue of next meeting
- Closure

An example of an agenda is as follows:

<p>XYZ SECONDARY SCHOOL</p> <p>AGENDA</p> <p>School Governing Body Meeting</p> <p>To be held on 13 July 2005 at 16:30pm, in the school staff room.</p> <p>1. Welcome and apologies.</p> <p>2. Acceptance of the minutes of the previous meeting.</p> <p>3. Matters arising.</p> <p>4. Reports:</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">4.1. Financial report (Mrs. D)</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">4.2. Extra-curricular timetable (Mr. S)</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">4.3. The Principal's report (Mrs. M)</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">4.4. Enrolment and curriculum matters (Mr. S)</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">4.5. Marketing the school (Ms Z)</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">4.6. Exams (Mrs. K)</p> <p>5. Any other business (All members)</p> <p>6. Date and time of next meeting</p>
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2.3 Minutes

In order for the SGB to do its work, it holds meetings (at least once a term). The outcomes of each meeting must be recorded in the minutes. The minutes should include the following:

- Date, place and time of the meeting
- Who attended (and who submitted apologies)
- Acceptance of the previous minutes as a true reflection of what was agreed to at the last meeting. This should be proposed and seconded, and the proposer and seconder should be noted in the minutes. The Chair (or the Deputy) should then sign the previous minutes to show that all agree to them. The previous minutes should be filed and stored in a safe place in the administration centre of the school.
- Matters arising from the previous minutes (and not on the present meeting's agenda)
- Various other items for discussion. This will vary from meeting to meeting and may include some regular reports. Some items that may appear for discussion are as follows:
 - Financial report, possibly including income and expenditure (budget, year to date and variances) balance sheet, bank statement, outstanding fees and planned capital expenditure
 - Principal's report, possibly including performance in line with vision and mission, staff matters and the school's activities and achievements (maybe under headings such as sport, cultural, academic etc.) In addition, it may include other *ad hoc* items like misconduct (issue, method of resolving the issue and status of where the process is) and relevant new departmental policies and procedures.
 - Maintenance. This could include what has been done and what still needs to be done.
 - Enrolment, including total number of learners per grade.
 - Marketing and what is being done to promote the school in the local community, amongst parents and amongst learners.
- Any other business. This item allows the members at the meeting to bring up new items for debate, discussion and/or resolution.
- Date, time and place of the next meeting.
- Closure (and time)

The minutes should be circulated to each person before the next meeting. This gives SGB members time to consider what was agreed upon and what they may have to do before the next meeting. These minutes would then follow a similar path at the next meeting (proposed and seconded as a true reflection, signed by the Chair, and filed into the Minutes File).

The Minutes File, then, forms the most important record for the SGB. It records what decisions were taken, what discussions were held and who was there at the time.

An Example of SGB meeting minutes

PQR SECONDARY SCHOOL

Minutes of the SGB meeting held on 16 July 2003, at 18.30 in the staff room.

Present: Mrs. S, Mr. D, Mrs. E, Mr. F, Mrs. G, Mr. K, Mrs. X, Mrs. K, Miss H, Mrs. I. and Mr. N.

Absent: Mrs. K

Chair: Mrs. S

Minutes: Mr. N

1. Welcome and apologies

Mrs. S welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies were received from Mrs. K who is away on business and unable to attend.

2. Approval of the Agenda

Correction and approval of the minutes from the previous meeting

Minutes of the meeting on 30 March 2003 were read. There were no corrections and the minutes were approved. (proposed Mrs. X and seconded Mr. K)

3. Matters arising

The parental information evening needs to be moved from 3 August 2003 to 10 August 2003 as the original date clashed with the inter-school chess competition.

As reported by the Principal, it is to be noted that after the complaint at the last meeting that classrooms were looking dull and unattractive, the situation has improved substantially and all classrooms have displays on their walls.

4. Curriculum matters

Language enrichment classes will be held for those learners in grade 8 and 9 who require language development. Class educators should provide Miss C with a list of names of those learners who require these classes by 30 July 2003.

All grade 11 and 12 learners will be attending a Career Guidance exhibition on 14 August 2003. The necessary transport must be arranged. Miss H will arrange the transport.

5. Financial report

In terms of income, 85% of parents have now paid their fees and a total of R 380 000 has been realised. We have also raised R 50 000 from donations, sales and open day. We have spent R 150 000 on stationery, R 120 000 on excursions and R 4 000 on staff welfare. We intend to spend R 75 000 on printing in the next 5 months leaving R 35 000 for the maintenance to be done on the school hall. We are within our budget in all items bar the unexpected cost of printing. We have R 14 000 in the bank. Outstanding fees from parents are R 125 000 and we owe creditors R 35 000.

6. Principal's report

Record details of the report here

7. Other business

Record details here

8. Date and time of next meeting

The next meeting will be held on 30 September 2004 at 18h30 in the staff room.

The meeting was closed at 20h00.

Signature (Chair)

RECORDS OF POLICIES

In terms of the South African Schools Act (Act No. 84 of 1996) School Governing Bodies (SGBs) are given certain functions that they have to carry out. As part of these functions, SGBs are given the responsibility to develop school policies on specific areas. The policies that the SGB must develop are:

1. An SGB constitution;
2. A mission and vision statement;
3. An admissions policy;
4. A language policy;
5. A religion in education policy;
6. A code of conduct for learners;
7. A school safety policy; and
8. An HIV/Aids policy.

The next section of the manual provides details of the different policies and the records that must be kept by the School Governing Body.

2.4 The Constitution of a School Governing Body

The first policy that an SGB must develop is its constitution. Section 18 of the South African Schools Act provides some guidelines for this constitution, but SGBs are free to add any clauses to their constitution as long as they remain within the spirit of the South African Schools Act and the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa. The constitution can contain the following:

- A preamble;
- Legal Status of the school;
- Composition of the School Governing Body (SGB) – (the number of elected members will depend on the number of learners at the school);
- Term of office of both elected members and office bearers;
- Objectives of the school;
- Governance, powers and functions of the SGB;
- Recognise the principal as the head of the School Management Team (SMT);
- Election procedure for members of the SGB, as well as the office bearers;
- Details of meetings of the SGB, including notification, proceedings, quorum requirements, proxy votes, recusal, voting and minutes;
- The duties of the Chairperson, vice-chairperson, secretary, and treasurer;
- Procedures for filling vacancies on the SGB;
- The Annual General Meeting (AGM);
- Funding breakdown, records and auditing procedures;
- Procedures for recording Amendments to the SGB Constitution.

An example of an SGB Constitution follows:

EXAMPLE - CONSTITUTION OF SCHOOL GOVERNING BODY

Adopted on 11 November 1997 at a duly constituted meeting of the members of the Governing Body of ABC Primary School.

1. Preamble

In terms of the S A Schools Act, No. 84 of 1996 ABC Primary School was declared a Section 21 Public School. Under this legislation, certain powers, functions and duties are invested in the Governing Body to determine the ethos, character and philosophy of the school. The effective management and organization of the school through its Governing Body, and other matters relating to its operation, are embodied in this Constitution.

2. Legal status

The School is a juristic person, with legal capacity to perform its functions in terms of the SA Schools Act.

3. Composition

The Governing Body shall consist of ten (10) elected members, and a maximum of five (5) co-opted members. The school principal is not elected to the SGB, but is automatically a member.

Members of the Governing Body shall include the following:

- The Principal;
- Two (2) Educators;
- One (1) Non-educator;
- One (1) learner from 8th grade or higher;
- Six (6) Parents.

4. Term of office

The term of office of each elected member shall be a maximum of three (3) years at which time the member must voluntarily resign. Members may be re-elected.

The term of office of each co-opted member shall be a maximum of one (1) year at which time the member must voluntarily resign. Should the committee agree, the member may be co-opted for an additional term.

5. Objectives

The main objectives of the school are in line with the mission statement and are to educate and prepare our children to do the following:

1. Prepare for and accept the challenges and demands of a changing society, and
2. Play a meaningful role therein.

6. Governance and management

1. Governance

Subject to the SA Schools Act, the governance of the school is vested in the Governing Body and it therefore stands in a position of trust towards the school.

2. Powers of the Governing Body

In terms of the SA School Act, the Governing Body shall:

- Determine the admission policy of the school;
- Determine the language policy of the school;
- Determine the policy for religious observances;
- Set school fees and ensure the collection of school fees;
- Join voluntary association(s) representing governing bodies of public schools.

3. Functions of the Governing Body

In terms of the SA Schools Act, the Governing Body shall:

- Promote the best interests of the school and strive to ensure its development through the provision of quality education for learners;
- Adopt a code of conduct for learners;
- Develop a mission statement;
- Support the principal, educators and other staff of the school in the performance of their professional functions;
- Determine times of the school day consistent with any applicable conditions of employment of staff;
- Administer and control the school's property, and buildings and grounds;
- Encourage parents, learners, educators and other staff to render voluntary services to the school;

- Recommend the appointment of educators to the Head of Department (of the provincial department), subject to the Educators Employment Act 1994, and the Labour Relations Act 1995 (No. 66);
- Recommend the appointment of non-educator staff to the Head of Department, subject to the Public Service Act 1994 and the Labour Relations Act 1995;
- Allow the reasonable use under fair conditions of the facilities of the school for educational programmes not conducted by the school;
- Meet at least every three months;
- Keep minutes of its meetings;
- On request, make the minutes of meetings available for inspection by the Head of Provincial Department;
- Prepare an annual budget;
- Establish and administer a school fund into which all money received by the school must be paid;
- Raise revenues including voluntary contributions to the school in cash or in kind;
- Open and maintain a banking account;
- Prepare annual financial statements;
- On request by an interested party, make annual financial statements available for inspection;
- Annually report to parents, learners, educators and other staff;
- Convene annual meetings respectively with parents, educators and other staff.

4. Management

The Principal within the authority of the Head of Provincial Department undertakes the management of the school. This duty is executed in collaboration with the School's Management team.

7. Election of members to Governing Body

The election of members shall be determined by way of a secret ballot to be conducted at an appropriate time as set out in the Provincial regulations. The Provincial regulations detail matters relating to the following:

- The eligibility of members and voters;
- Nominations and candidates;

- Electoral officers;
- Voting and counting; and
- Appeals and grievances.

The Governing Body should be aware of the above and should comply with the regulations.

8. Election of office bearers

Once the Governing Body has been elected and co-opted, office bearers need to be appointed. At the first meeting of the Governing Body, office bearers must therefore be elected. A minimum of four is required as follows:

- A chairperson;
- A vice-chairperson;
- A secretary; and
- A treasurer.

The principal of the school shall preside at any meeting convened to elect the Chairperson.

Only elected members of the Governing Body (and not those who are co-opted) may be Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson.

9. Meetings of the Governing Body

Notification

The Secretary shall, in consultation with the Chairperson, determine the venue, date and time of any meeting, and shall notify each member in writing, at least 14 days prior to the meeting, stating the nature of the business to be transacted.

The Governing Body shall meet at least once during a school term.

Proceedings

Subject to the provisions of the SA Schools Act and the provincial legislation, the Governing Body shall determine its own rules relating to the format and procedures at meetings.

Quorum

The majority of the members (50 % plus one) of the Governing Body form a quorum

Proxy Votes

Any Governing Body member who cannot attend a meeting shall be entitled to issue a written and signed proxy to any other member of the body if a particular motion is to be subject to a vote. Such other member shall be given authority to vote for the non-attending member.

Recusal

Where a matter affecting the personal interests of a member is discussed, the member shall withdraw and leave the meeting for the duration of the discussion.

Voting

All decisions of the governing body shall be taken by a majority vote, i.e. showing of hands unless a secret ballot is requested

Minutes

The Secretary shall record the minutes of every meeting in the language determined by the Governing Body

10. Duties of the Chairperson

The Chairperson shall preside over meetings of the Governing Body. The role of the Chairperson is to allow the meeting to proceed timeously but allowing for worthwhile discussions.

11. Duties of the Vice-Chairperson

The Vice-Chairperson would be required to stand in during the absence of the chairperson, and to assume all the appropriate duties.

12. Duties of the Secretary

The Secretary should deal with correspondence, take minutes, ensure safekeeping of all official documentation, and provide assistance where necessary. Furthermore, the Secretary must ensure all members are notified of meetings in good time. Minutes of the previous meeting and proposed agenda should be circulated to all members well in advance. Minutes should be pasted into a book (so that they cannot be removed). The previous meeting's minutes must be signed by the Chair as a true record of that meeting's outcomes.

13. Duties of the Treasurer

The treasurer is responsible for all procedures and transactions regarding the school's income, expenditure and assets, including other duties. The Treasurer must keep each year's balance sheet and general ledger copies of all bank statements, original chequebooks and stubs, and budgets.

14. Vacancies on the Governing Body

If a vacancy arises as a result of the departure of the educator or support staff representative, the principal shall officiate as electoral officer and arrange a meeting in terms of the regulations in order to elect a new member for the remainder of the term.

Should a vacancy arise as a result of the departure of a parent, the vacancy will be filled at the next Annual General Meeting (AGM) for parents. A co-opted member may be given voting rights for a fixed time frame to fill the vacant post.

15. Annual General Meeting

The Chairperson of the Governing Body is required to call a General Meeting of all parents at least once a year.

The quorum at each AGM shall be the lesser of either (a) 15% of the total number of parents of the school or (b) 120 parents of the school.

16. Funding

School fees and budget

The Governing Body of the school shall prepare a budget each year, which shall include a breakdown of the school fee requirements, in terms of the estimated income and expenditure of the school for the following financial year.

Parent's liability for payment of school fees

Unless the parent has been totally, partially or conditionally exempted from paying school fees, s/he is liable to pay the fees as determined by a majority of parents at an AGM. The Governing Body commits itself to ensuring that parents/guardians are informed of their right to exemption and, if applying for exemption, are given assistance.

Financial Records

The Governing Body shall keep records of funds received and spent, and of its assets, liabilities and financial transactions; as well as draw up financial statements for presentation to the parents at the AGM.

Audit

The Governing Body shall appoint a registered auditor to audit the records and financial statements of the school, and submit a copy of the auditor's report to the HOD within 6 months after the end of the financial year.

Financial Year

The financial year of the school commences on 1 January and ends on 31 December each year.

17. Amendments to the SGB Constitution

A decision to amend any aspect of the Constitution requires a two-thirds majority of the membership of the Governing Body.

2.5. Vision and Mission Statement of the School

According to Section 20(c) of the SA Schools Act, the SGB must develop a mission statement for the school. A vision states where the school community wants the school to go, while the mission statement states how it will get there. They should be brief and can follow the format below:

ABC Primary School's Vision:

Creating New Paths in Learning, Doing and Serving

ABC Primary School's Mission Statement:

We aim to create new paths in learning, doing and serving by:

1. Placing learning first in everything we do;
2. Providing our educators with development opportunities;
3. Emphasising the importance of developing skills in our learners;
4. Offering a rich cultural and sport environment including leadership and adventure programmes;
5. Ensuring all our learners engage in community service;
6. Developing our school premises fully.

2.6 Admissions Policy

Section 5 (5) of the South African Schools Act says that a School Governing Body must draw up an Admissions Policy. The Admissions Policy must be in line with the Admission Policy for Ordinary Public Schools (a General Notice issued by the Minister of Education in terms of the National Education Policy Act of 1996).

An admissions policy should deal with the following:

- Residential qualification – subject to provincial policy;
- Admission of learners who live outside a demarcated zone;
- Maximum age requirements – based on national policy;
- Any proof or documentation required by the school;
- Deadlines for application to be admitted into grade 1 or grade 8.

With regard to residential qualification and admitting learners who live outside the demarcated area, section 34 of the Admission Policy for Ordinary Public Schools states:

“If a feeder zone is created [by the Head of Department, after consultation with representatives of governing bodies]:

- a. Preference must be given to a learner who lives in the feeder zone of a school or who resides with his or her parents at an employer’s home in the feeder zone;
- b. A learner who lives outside the feeder zone is not precluded from seeking admission at whichever school he or she chooses. However, access to a chosen school cannot be guaranteed;
- c. A learner who lives within the feeder zone of a school A must be referred to the neighbouring school B, if school A is oversubscribed. If school B is oversubscribed, the Head of Department must find an alternative school within a reasonable distance. If that is not possible school A must admit the learner;
- d. The preference order of admission is: -
 - i. Learners whose parents live in the feeder zone, in their own domicile or their employer’s domicile;
 - ii. Learners whose parents’ work address is in the feeder areas; or
 - iii. Other learners; first come first served.”

In the box below is an example of a possible Admissions Policy:*Residential qualification:*

Learners residing with their parents/guardians and whose closest high school is ABC Primary School will qualify for admission on the grounds of place of residence. Appropriate proof of residence will be required, e.g. electricity, water, and rates statement.

Legal guardianship:

Legal guardians, who are not the biological parents of an applicant, will need to provide a court order as proof of guardianship.

Admission of learners residing outside the demarcated zone:

Learners who reside outside of the area but whose parents work within a reasonable distance of the school will qualify for admission. (Note: It is useful to discuss an actual limit (in kilometres) or a boundary so that this distance is well defined).

Children of employees of the school will qualify for admission to the school.

Learners and their parents who reside or work out of the area will be accepted on a first-come-first-served basis (if there are any spaces left in the school).

Additional consideration will be given to learners who already have a brother or sister in the school.

Date of application:

Applications for admission to the school must be submitted by (date).....

There are certain things that a governing body **cannot** put into its admissions policy as stated by the Admission Policy for Ordinary Public Schools (a General Notice issued by the Minister of Education in terms of the National Education Policy Act of 1996).

Example 1:

The Admissions Policy for Ordinary Public Schools says that a learner can only be enrolled in grade one in the year that he or she turns seven (except where substantive reasons can be given).

Therefore, a school cannot say in its admission policy that it will accept learners into grade one who are five or six years old.

Example 2:

The Admissions Policy says that the governing body or the principal of a school cannot conduct any admissions test.

Therefore, a school admissions policy cannot say that it will accept learners only if they can pass an English fluency test.

Example 3:

It is also important to note that a school cannot exclude a learner based on his or her health status. Therefore, a learner who is HIV positive or who has AIDS cannot be refused admission to the school.

2.7 Language Policy

Another policy that the School Governing Body must develop is a language policy for the school. In the process of developing this policy the SGB should consult widely with the learners, parents and teachers of the school. It is important to remember that the language policy should depend on the needs of learners and should not be dependent on resources at the school. It is also important to remember that the South African Schools Act (section 6) specifies that the language policy of a school may not be used by the school as a form of racial discrimination or to exclude learners. The school must keep a record of decisions taken regarding the language policy. The public may have access to the records on the language policy.

Points to consider when deciding on a language policy for a school:

- What is the predominant language (or languages) spoken by the learners of the school?
- What language or languages should be used as the language of learning and teaching at a school?
- Are teachers available to teach in the language/s chosen?
- Does the school have the necessary learner support materials to teach in other languages?
- How does the policy support maintenance of home languages?
- How does the school assist learners whose home language is not the language of learning and teaching chosen by the school?

2.8 Religion In Education Policy

Another policy that a School Governing Body must develop and record is a religion in education policy.

It is important to note the following differences:

- **Religion Education** is part of the curriculum (life orientation).
- **Religious Instruction** is not part of public schools.
- **Religious Observance** may take place at schools if, for example, the school makes facilities available. However, religious observances must take place in the context of free and voluntary association.

Observance and practice of religions and issues of curriculum are beyond the parameters of these guidelines. For some schools religious issues might be important while for other schools they might be less important. It is, therefore, very important that the School Governing Body consult extensively with parents and the school community when developing this policy. Whatever policy a school governing body decides on they must take care that they act with in the terms of the law and that they do not practise discrimination on religious grounds.

Religion education is a curricular programme with clear and age-appropriate educational aims and objectives for teaching and learning about religion, religions, and religious diversity in South Africa and the world. The study of religion must serve recognisable education goals that are consistent with the aims and outcomes of other learning areas, and, like learning areas in the curriculum, programmes in Religion Education must contribute to developing the skills in observation, listening, reading, writing and thinking.

The following are a few issues to be considered when developing the school's Religion in Education Policy (Schools can, of course, look at any other issues or discuss any other questions that the school community believes to be important):

- Is there a predominant religion at the school?
- Should religious observances be held during school hours?
- How often would the school hold religious observances during school hours?
- Does the annual school calendar allow for religious holidays (e.g. Christian, Jewish, Muslim, Hindu, etc)?
- What arrangement needs to be made for learners and teachers who do not wish to participate in religious practices or religious education?
- Does the school want to encourage or discourage voluntary religious clubs or societies within the school?
- Does the school make allowances for different religious apparel?

In accordance with the Constitution, the South African Schools Act, and rules made by the appropriate authorities, the Governing Bodies of public schools may make their facilities available for religious observances, in the context of free and voluntary association, provided that facilities are made available on an equitable basis.

There are various types of religious observance:

- Voluntary public occasions, which make use of the school facilities, for a religious service on a day of worship or rest;
- Voluntary associations when the school community (teachers and pupils) gather for a religious observance;
- Observances held in a voluntary gathering of pupils and/or teachers during a school break; and
- An observance which may be ongoing, and entail other dimensions such as dress, prayer times and diets, which must be respected and accommodated in a manner agreed upon by the school and the relevant authorities.

3. RECORDING GOVERNANCE MATTERS

A useful way to manage the above SGB records could be through a register in which the policies, its amendments and all decisions are recorded. A register can be used for recording the misconduct of each learner, and the actions decided upon. The register must be updated whenever an incident occurs in the case of misconduct and whenever a decision is made in the case of the other policies.

An example of a policy register is provided below.

EXAMPLE – REGISTER OF GOVERNANCE RECORDS

Name of School: _____

POLICY	Date Originated	Amendment 1	Date	Amendment 2	Date	Decision
Constitution of SGB						
Admissions Policy						
Language Policy						
Religion in Education Policy						
Code of Conduct						
Other						

Chairperson’s signature: _____ Date: _____

Vice-Chairperson’s signature: _____ Date: _____

4. CODE OF CONDUCT FOR LEARNERS

The School Governing Body must also draw up a Code of Conduct for Learners. A Code of Conduct for Learners aims to promote a school environment dedicated to the improvement of the quality of the learning process. The code of conduct should be based on principles and values supported by the school community.

It is vital that learners feel that they “**own**” the Code of Conduct, as this will enhance adherence to and support for it. It should therefore be a result of **consultation** and **negotiation** amongst learners and members of the school community.

No two schools are the same, so the Code of Conduct for Learners is likely to be different for each school. Nevertheless, there are certain common elements that are listed in the box below:

1. **Introduction**
2. **Aim**
3. **The rights of learners**
4. **The responsibilities of learners**
5. **The responsibilities of teachers with regards to learners**
6. **The responsibilities of parents with regards to learners**
7. **School rules, regulations and procedures**
8. **The scope of the code of conduct and its legal implications**
9. **Disciplinary procedures**

The Code of Conduct may include a number of elements, for example:

The **school rules**, regulations and procedures could include the following:

- School hours
- Absence and leaving the school premises
- Dress code and appearance
- Rules that promote safety
- Rules that promote healthy relationships
- Rules that promote responsibility towards school property
- Medical treatment and emergencies
- Communication and meetings
- Textbooks and stationery
- Reports/assessments on academic progress

Disciplinary Procedures contained in the Code of Conduct must emphasise that corporal punishment was outlawed in schools in 1996 when the South Africa Schools Act was passed. With this act the government signalled its intention that discipline must be fair, corrective and educative and not punishment-oriented.

As with the Code of Conduct, the school community (including the learners) must negotiate what steps and processes will be taken if a learner breaks the Code. The development process must spell out clearly for each instance of misbehaviour:

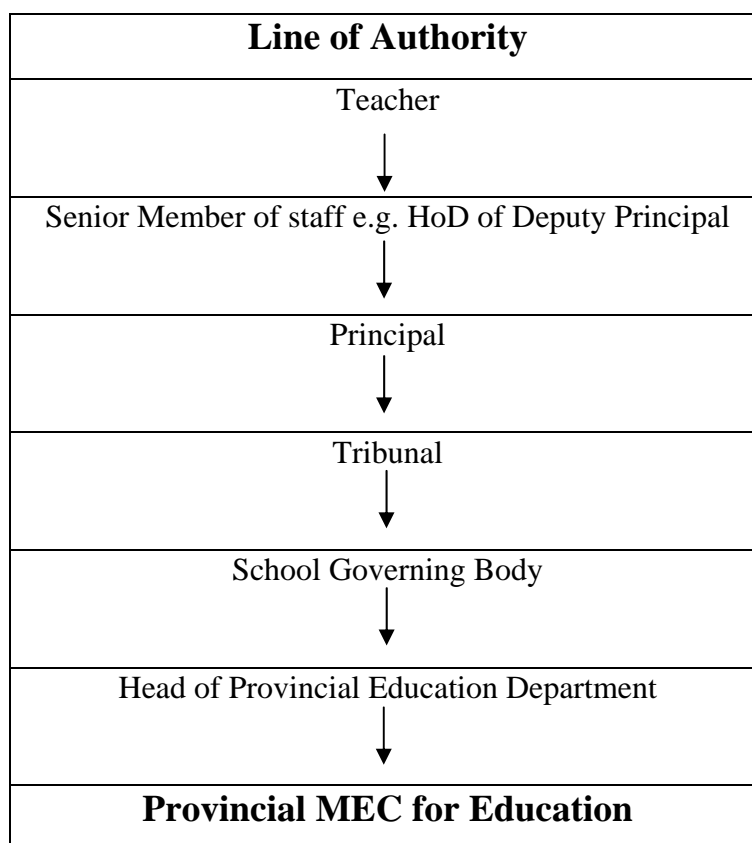
- Who takes action?
- When action will be taken?
- What action will be taken?

Each is dealt with in more detail below.

4.1. Who takes action?

The responsibility for maintaining discipline in the school lies with all the educators. The educator who is first informed or sees the problem must take responsibility and report the situation or deal with it if possible. The class educator spends most time with learners, so she or he is likely to deal with most disciplinary matters. However, the class educator is not the only person responsible. If necessary, the educator may refer discipline matters to a senior member of staff and then to the principal. If the misconduct is very serious the principal may refer the matter to a tribunal, the School Governing Body, the provincial education department, and ultimately the MEC of Education.

The line of authority is represented in this organogram below:



4.2 What action will be taken?

Misconduct by learners can take many forms. It is helpful to think of misconduct as fitting within five levels of seriousness. Any disciplinary action should suit the level of misconduct.

Levels are purely guidelines. Schools should determine the levels of misconduct for different violations. This is a school level decision.

Below is a sample layout of misconduct codes and actions that may be adapted for use by schools.

LEARNER MISCONDUCT – CODE LIST

Level of Misconduct	Code	Description of Misconduct
<u>Level 1</u> Minor violation of general classroom discipline	1-01	Failing to attend class on time
	1-02	Leaving class without permission
	1-03	Cheating in class test
	1-04	Failing to complete homework
	1-05	Dishonesty with minor consequences
	↓ ↓	
	1-99	
<u>Level 2</u> Minor violations of school code of conduct or rules	2-01	Frequent repetition Level 1 infringement
	2-02	Possession or use of tobacco
	2-03	Truancy of several classes
	2-04	Cheating during examinations
	2-05	Verbally threatening safety of another person
	↓ ↓	
	2-99	
<u>Level 3</u> Serious violations of school code of conduct or rules	3-01	Frequent repetition Level 2 infringement
	3-02	Minor injury to another person
	3-03	Possession or use of alcohol/narcotic substance
	3-04	Severely disruptive behaviour
	3-05	Possession of a dangerous weapon
	3-06	Theft/Vandalism
	↓ ↓	
3-99		
<u>Level 4</u> Very serious violations of school code of conduct or rules	4-01	Frequent repetition Level 2 or 3 infringement
	4-02	Threatening with a dangerous weapon
	4-03	Intentionally causing physical injury to somebody
	4-04	Extortion of another person's property
	↓ ↓	
	4-99	
<u>Level 5</u> Criminal- serious violations of school code of conduct or rules but also of civil law	5-01	Frequent repetition Level 4 infringement
	5-02	Possession and peddling of narcotic substances
	5-03	Assault
	5-04	Sexual harassment or abuse
	5-05	Robbery or major theft
	5-06	Intentionally using a dangerous weapon
	↓ ↓	
5-99		

DISCIPLINARY CONSEQUENCES - CODE LIST

Level of Misconduct	Code	Description of Action Taken
<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Level 1</u></p> <p>Minor violation of general classroom discipline</p>	1-01	Verbal warning
	1-02	Detention
	1-03	Demerits
	1-04	Menial task e.g. cleaning classroom
	1-05	Extra work
	↓ ↓	
	1-99	
<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Level 2</u></p> <p>Minor violations of school code of conduct or rules</p>	2-01	Any level 1 disciplinary action
	2-02	Disciplinary talk with learner
	2-03	Talk with parent or guardian
	2-04	Written warning
	2-05	Behavioural contract with learner
	↓ ↓	
	2-99	
<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Level 3</u></p> <p>Serious violations of school code of conduct or rules</p>	3-01	Any level 2 disciplinary action
	3-02	Referral to counsellor, social worker etc.
	3-03	Suspension from extramural activities, support
	3-04	Written final warning
	↓ ↓	
	3-99	
<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Level 4</u></p> <p>Very serious violations of school code of conduct or rules</p>	4-01	Any level 3 disciplinary action
	4-02	<i>Referral to relevant outside agency</i>
	4-03	Application to department for limited suspension
	↓ ↓	
	4-99	
<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Level 5</u></p> <p>Criminal- serious violations of school code of conduct or rules but also of civil law</p>	5-01	<p><u>Note:</u> to be carried out by higher school authority, SGB and Department</p> <p>Application to the Department for expulsion or transfer from the school after a tribunal hearing</p> <p><i>Law Enforcement Authority involvement</i></p>
	5-02	
	5-03	
	5-04	
	5-05	
	↓ ↓	
	5-99	

4.3 Recording misconduct

Individual Record of Learner Misconduct

Each time disciplinary action is taken against a learner, an individual record of learner misconduct should be completed for the relevant learner. This record provides the details of the misconduct by providing a description of the errant behaviour and rating the misbehaviour in terms of seriousness. The disciplinary consequences and actions taken are also recorded and the parent/guardian is required to sign the form as acknowledgement of the misconduct and consequent disciplinary action. The learner's individual disciplinary record should be attached to the learner's profile card. This record provides information on the disciplinary history of the learner and may be used to motivate specific support interventions for the learner.

School Register of Misconduct

Once the individual learner misconduct record has been completed, the details of the misconduct and ensuing disciplinary action must be transcribed, by the designated member of the SMT, onto a composite School Register of Misconduct.

The School Register of Misconduct provides an overall picture of all disciplinary measures instituted by a school. The register must be updated each time a disciplinary action is taken against a learner and should be kept in the SGB File in the Principal's office.

A sample of an individual learner misconduct record is provided below.

INDIVIDUAL RECORD OF LEARNER MISCONDUCT

School: _____
 Learner: _____
 Enrolment Date: _____
 Gender: _____

EMIS Number: _____
 Admissions No: _____
 Current Grade: _____
 Age of Learner: _____

Details of Misconduct			Reported by and Signature	Action Taken		Acknowledged by		
Date	Level	Description		Code	By: Capacity and Signature	Parent / Guardian	Date	Signature

5. SUMMARY

This manual has discussed the records that School Governing Bodies should keep. They are:

1. Minutes
2. Policies
3. Disciplinary Procedures and records
4. Changes of matters of Governance