

# **Staff Administration in Schools**



**Corruption Prevention Department  
Independent Commission Against Corruption**

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## Staff Administration in Schools

### General Principles

A sound system of staff administration is important to an organisation because it helps ensure that staff of the right quality are employed, enhance management credibility and staff morale, and minimise opportunities for abuse. The basic corruption prevention principles in staff administration are openness and fairness in staff recruitment, effective performance appraisal and promotion, clear accountability and impartial enforcement of rules and regulations.

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### Staff Recruitment

Both teaching and non-teaching staff should be recruited through an **open** and **competitive** system so as to prevent manipulation by those who are responsible for recruitment. The following is a gist of the recommended recruitment procedures.

### *Advertisement of Job Vacancies*

- Job vacancies should be widely advertised in popular newspapers and/or other channels
- The advertisement should set out clear job descriptions and requirements, and other essential information such as the application deadline and the contact point for enquiries.
- All applications received should be systematically recorded.

### *Vetting and Selection of Applicants*

- Shortlisting and selection of candidates should be based on predetermined criteria approved by the school management, and should involve more than one person as far as possible.
- A recruitment panel should be formed to conduct

selection interviews and skill tests as necessary.

- An objective assessment method should be devised and a standard form to record assessment by individual panel members.
- Assessment of candidates and recommendations of panel members should be properly documented.

### *Approval of Selected Applicants*

- The approval authority should be clearly defined.
  - In approving the appointments, the approval authority should ensure that the recruitment exercise has adhered to the laid down procedures, and that any deviations are justified.
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### **Staff Promotion**

Allegations of favouritism or unfairness to the management are not uncommon in staff promotion exercises. It is therefore important to ensure that staff promotion is conducted in a **fair** and **transparent** manner, and is seen to be so. The following points should be taken into consideration when a promotion exercise is conducted.

- Assessment of eligible candidates should be conducted by a panel based on pre-determined criteria.
- Open procedures should be adopted for promotion exercises, such as announcement of the promotion exercise and criteria, and composition of the panel.
- An objective assessment system should be devised, including the use of a standard form to record assessment by individual panel members.

- Candidates' past performance appraisal records should be taken into account for the purpose of assessment.
  - Assessment of candidates should be properly documented and kept for a prescribed period.
  - The approval authority should be clearly specified.
  - Promotion results should be announced as soon as possible to avoid speculation by staff.
  - A independent channel for review should be established to handle complaints made by unsuccessful candidates.
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### **Staff Attendance and Overtime Work**

Monitoring of staff attendance is important, particularly in the case of part-time or overtime work which is paid at hourly or daily rates. Loose control may give rise to false claims of work done or forged attendance records. This may lead to corruption if the malpractice is condoned by supervisory staff in return for advantages. To prevent any abuse, the following safeguards should be put in place.

- The authority for approval of leave, and part-time or overtime work should be clearly defined.
- Proper attendance records should be kept.
- Overtime work should be justified. Where overtime pay is involved, as far as practicable overtime work should be allocated on a fair share basis.
- Surprise site checks should be conducted.

## **Performance Appraisal**

Performance appraisal systems should be transparent and well administered. The following is a checklist of the essentials of an effective system.

- Purpose-designed performance appraisal forms should be used.
- The standards of performance required and assessment criteria should be made known to all staff.
- Levels of staff responsible for reporting, counter-signing, and overall review of the appraisal reports should be defined.
- Where practicable, a review panel could be formed to moderate appraisal reports of staff of the same grade.
- A channel for appeal should be established for aggrieved staff.
- Any disciplinary action such as warnings taken against poor performance should be properly recorded.

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## **Handling of Staff Complaints**

Mishandling of staff complaints may prompt the complainants to make allegations of corruption against the staff involved. A system for staff complaints should include the following:

- Complaint procedures should be well laid down, including recording of complaints, investigation and notification of results.

- Investigation of complaints should be made by an independent staff member or a panel of staff, and review by the School Management Committee or senior management, as appropriate.
  - There should be detailed documentation of investigation findings and actions taken.
  - A reply should be given to the complainant notifying him of the findings of investigation.
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### **Conflict of Interest**

A conflict of interest is a situation where the interests of the school compete or conflict with the private interests of a staff member or a school management committee member of the school.

Allegations of corruption may be made against the school management committee members or school staff concerned if they have any real or perceived conflict of interest when dealing with school matters in their official capacity. Members of the School Management Committees and school staff should therefore be required to avoid any conflict of interest, and to report such situations if they have arisen. School Management Committees and Schools should promulgate a system for declaration of conflict of interest. The following are the essentials of an effective declaration system.

- School Management Committee members or school staff should be required to report any conflict of interest that may influence, or appear to influence, their judgement or action in the performance of official functions, including staff recruitment, duty assignment, promotion, performance appraisal, selection of staff for training courses, study trips, etc.

- Declarations of conflict of interest should be made in writing, preferably on a standard form, or recorded in notes of meeting as appropriate.
- The staff declaring conflict of interest should refrain from handling the matter or there should be sufficient monitoring by senior staff or a second party to ensure impartiality.
- Guidelines on declaration of conflict of interest should include useful examples to assist school management committee members or staff in making declarations (Examples of conflict of interest situations are listed at the Annex).

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**Promulgation of Guidelines**

It is important that guidelines on policies and procedures are promulgated, revised regularly and issued to staff concerned to ensure consistency in practices. Any deviations from the guidelines should be justified and endorsed by the management.

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**Enquiries**

As the school management it is your responsibility to determine how best to apply the recommended measures to minimise corruption risks in your own circumstances.

School Management Committees and Schools interested in corruption prevention practices in other areas or those requiring further assistance in staff administration are invited to call our hotline Tel. No. 2526 6363 for tailor-made advice under conditions of the strictest confidence. We pledge to respond to your request within two working days.

**Annex**

**Examples of Conflict of Interest Situations**

The following are examples of conflict of interest situations. They are by no means exhaustive and School Management Committees (SMC) /Schools should draw up their own lists of examples for reference by committee members/staff.

- A SMC member, school head or teacher serving as a member of a Board to consider the recruitment, posting or promotion of staff, one of the candidates being his family, relative or personal friend.
- A school head making nominations or selecting staff for training courses, study trips or academic awards, one of the nominees/candidates being his family, relative or personal friend.
- A school head or teacher conducting performance appraisal on a staff member who is his family, relative or personal friend.
- A SMC member or school head soliciting or accepting donations from a staff member who is a candidate for promotion, study trip, etc.
- A teacher offering fee-charging private tutorials to his pupils or referring them to attend private tutorial schools in which he, his family, relatives or personal friends have a financial interest.
- A SMC member, school head or teacher acquiring investment, or any financial or other interest, in activities which may lead to conflict of interest with his official duties.