



本署檔號 Our ref: (41) in EMB(SAS1/DSS)/POL/17/2(I)/C

來函檔號 Your ref:

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21 May 2007

To: Supervisors/ Heads of Schools under the Direct Subsidy Scheme

Dear Sir/ Madam,

**Best Practices in School Operations Recommended
by Independent Commission Against Corruption (ICAC)
for Direct Subsidy Scheme (DSS) Schools**

As publicly funded schools, DSS schools are accountable to the public for proper use of government funds and the quality of their educational services. A fair, open and transparent system would help forestall corruption and malpractices. For this purpose, ICAC has completed a study on "Admission Procedures" and another one on "Administration of Staff" and subsequently, they held sharing sessions for DSS schools in April 2006 and January 2007 respectively. Besides, the recommendations of the ICAC are now attached at Annex for your reference and appropriate action. You are also required to take note of our advice and guidelines issued from time to time on the subject concerned.

You can also visit ICAC's website <http://www.icac.org.hk/eng/0/1/10/17/14811.html> for the booklet "The Integrity Management for Schools – A Practical Guidebook for School Staff" specifically published for the education sector. The ICAC has also issued two best practices modules on "Procurement Procedures in Schools" and "Staff Administration in Schools". If you wish to seek further advice on the related matters, please contact the Corruption Prevention Department of the ICAC at 2826 3209.

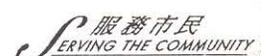
For other enquiries, please feel free to contact Mr. L F WONG at 2892 6412 or Ms Tracy LAM at 2892 5788.

Yours sincerely,


(Mrs. Lydia LEUNG)

for Permanent Secretary for Education and Manpower

c.c. CSDOs


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Recommendations on Admission Procedures of Schools under DSS from Independent Commission Against Corruption

- (a) DSS schools should include pupil admission criteria and procedures in their school development plan.
- (b) DSS schools should remind parents in the application form not to offer any advantages to school staff in connection with their applications.
- (c) To strengthen the monitoring of admission process, DSS school principals should submit to their SMC a report detailing the number of applications received, interviewed and accepted, the “discretionary” admissions made by the principal, and the complaints received and their investigation outcome, etc. after each admission exercise.
- (d) To uphold the integrity of staff, DSS schools should draw up ethical instructions and their commitment to open and fair practices for staff’s compliance. Staff concerned should be required to declare any conflict of interest when taking part in the assessment/ interviews.

- (e) Best practices in Pupil Admission:

Admission Criteria

- draw up fair and objective pupil admission criteria in accordance with the principles laid down by the EDB (e.g. not to conduct written examinations in secondary/ primary one admission);

Publicity

- publicise the school’s admission criteria and application procedures (e.g. through school website or application form) and organize briefing sessions to all interested parents, to enhance transparency;

“Discretionary” Admission

- specify the number/ percentage of places allocated for “discretionary” admission of pupils by the principal, which should be approved by the SMC before the admission exercise commences;

Shortlisting of Applicants

- if it is impracticable to interview all applicants, formulate a set of criteria and shortlist applicants for interview based on a pre-defined qualifying score or ratio of interviewees and vacancies available.

Interviews

- assign two staff to interview applicants together, as far as practicable, and provide staff involved with detailed guidelines (e.g. discussion topics or sample questions) and conduct briefing sessions to staff to explain the admission criteria to ensure consistent assessment standards;

Post-Central Allocation Admissions

- in addition to notifying the successful applicants by phone, announce the list of successful applicants and the deadline for registration on the school website and send a confirmation letter to the applicants who have rejected the offer when contacted by phone, to prevent abuse of the notification process;

Record Keeping

- keep proper records of admission exercise (e.g. applications, assessment results, notes of meetings) for a specified period, say one year, to facilitate subsequent monitoring checks; and

Handling of Complaints

- establish formal procedures for handling complaints relating to pupil admission, drawing reference to the relevant EMB circular, and report the outcome to the SMC.

**Recommendations on
Administration of Teaching Staff in Schools under DSS
from Independent Commission Against Corruption**

- (a) It is imperative for DSS schools to put in place an effective staff administration system that is seen to be fair, accountable and transparent, so as to prevent allegations or perception of mismanagement and malpractice.
- (b) To enhance staff's awareness of conflict of interest, DSS schools should draw up proper procedures, with work-related examples, to require SMC members and staff to avoid and declare conflict of interest arising from their duties.
- (c) Best practices in staff administration:

Recruitment Procedures

- advertise all vacancies of teaching posts;
- register and keep properly all applications received;
- set up a panel of two or more staff to shortlist and interview candidates;
- devise an interview form to assess candidates based on pre-defined assessment criteria;
- submit a report on the number of applications received, shortlisted and interviewed, the criteria adopted, etc., to facilitate the SMC's consideration in recommending selected candidates for the SMC's approval;

Offer of Appointments

- inform all new appointees of the school's staffing structure, pay scale, etc. when making an offer of appointment;

Performance Appraisal

- conduct performance appraisal interviews for all staff concerned, informing them of the management's comments on their performance and, if any, their gradings, in particular any adverse comments which may lead to disciplinary action;
- make known to all staff the pay adjustment mechanism for schools adopting a performance-based pay structure;

Promotion Procedures

- have an objective system for assessing the candidates and devise an assessment form with pre-defined criteria for use by the selection panel in assessing individual candidates;

- submit a report by the selection panel summarizing the comments and, if applicable, gradings / marks of the recommended candidates, as well as the unsuccessful ones, to the SMC for its consideration and approval;

Complaint Handling

- have a mechanism to handle complaints relating to staffing matters and draw up complaint handling procedures to ensure that grievances and complaints are dealt with properly; and
- require the school head to appoint independent staff, where appropriate, to look into the complaint, inform the complainant of the result, and keep proper records for future reference; and

Staffing Policies and Procedures

- lay down clear policies and procedures for various staff administrative functions, incorporating the good practices listed above, and make them known to all staff.