

Guidance Notes on Establishing the Code of Ethics for Managers of Incorporated Management Committees

Introduction

Managers are responsible for governing a school with a view to promoting quality education and improving the learning outcomes of students. Managers should steer the school's continuous development and strive to ensure its accountability. To lay a common foundation for facilitating collaboration amongst school managers to perform their duties, an incorporated management committee (IMC) should draw up a code of ethics that is binding on its managers.

Fundamental principles underpinning the code of ethics for managers

Managers should approach their work with professionalism, enthusiasm, objectivity and fairness. In performing their roles, managers should observe the following core values:

- **Integrity** – acting in good faith and making decisions based on the overall interests of students.
- **Objectivity** – not allowing bias, conflict of interest or undue influence of others to override their judgments;
- **Commitment** – setting aside time for participation in school activities and close acquaintance with the school;
- **Selflessness** – preventing from the use of their position for personal gain or the gain of other outside parties and taking steps to avoid any conflict of interest;
- **Impartiality** – carrying out duties with impartiality, such as those relating to promotion, complaint investigation and the award of contracts;
- **Collective responsibility** – being bound by decisions collectively made by the IMC;
- **Accountability and openness in decision-making** – adopting an open attitude and being accountable for all the decisions and actions taken by the IMC;
- **Confidentiality** – not disclosing any classified or proprietary information of the school to anybody.

Dos and Don'ts

Dos

Managers **should**

- ✓ be committed to serving the school;
- ✓ master the knowledge of education policies and skills in school management;
- ✓ have basic knowledge of the background and characteristics of the school, as well as the mission and vision set by the school sponsoring body;
- ✓ ensure that school funds are used and approved in a prudent and responsible manner to serve the designated purposes;

- ✓ ensure that an open, fair and competitive mechanism is adopted for the procurement of goods/services/assets, sale of assets, and recruitment of school staff, etc;
- ✓ ensure that the records, receipts, accounts or other documents they submit to the school are true and accurate;
- ✓ make decisions based on the overall interests of students;
- ✓ be willing to communicate and cooperate with other stakeholders;
- ✓ take possible measures to avoid any conflict of interest and declare any pecuniary or other personal interests when necessary;
- ✓ attend training courses to enhance knowledge and skills of school management.

Don'ts

Managers **should not**

- × disclose any classified or proprietary information of the school to anybody;
- × disclose discussions of meetings and views of individual managers without authorisation;
- × use their position as a school manager to seek any personal gain or financial benefits for their families or friends;
- × solicit or accept any advantage from students, parents, staff or any persons having business dealings with the school;
- × offer advantages to any director or staff of any organisation, or any public official, for the purpose of influencing such person or organisation in any dealings;
- × accept lavish, unreasonably generous, or frequent entertainment;
- × accept a loan from or through the assistance of parents or persons or organisations having official dealings with the school; or use a staff member as a guarantor for a loan or a hire purchase agreement;
- × involve directly in day-to-day management of the school.

References

- § Sections 40BF, 40BG and 40BI of the Education Ordinance
- § Appendix II: Sample Code of Ethics for School Managers, School Managers' Handbook
- § School-based Management Documents: Tips for School Managers, School Managers' Handbook, and Incorporated Management Committee – Establishment and Operation
- § Appendix 1: Sample Code of Conduct for School Managers, Best Practice Checklist – Governance and Internal Control in Schools (published by the Independent Commission Against Corruption)

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