

# Guidelines for Schools

Standards & Sub-standards



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“When accountability knocks, who will answer?”

(Abelmann & Elmore, 1999)



## Guidelines for Schools

### Key Areas & Standards / Indicators

Many schools are on a journey to excellence. As a school leader, if you are serious about building a foundation with an exceptional culture and climate in your school, where teaching & learning as well as learner achievement are considered to be 'good' to 'outstanding', where learner & teacher safety as well as learner conduct are prioritized by governance structures, management and leadership, then the following 'Standards'/'Indicators' may assist you to build that foundation. The 'Standards'/'Indicators' are a guide only. It is hoped that you find them useful.

These guidelines will assist you as you ask yourselves: How good is our school? How good are we now? How good can we be?

### Introduction: Vision, Mission and Values

- The vision and mission are relevant and meaningful in the context of the school.
- The vision of the school fosters a culture that embraces diversity and promotes inclusivity for all learners, their families and staff members.
- The mission provides clear and equitable guidelines for admissions, the learning environment, informs planning, decision-making and support for school improvement.
- School stakeholders collectively support and drive the ideals of the vision and mission.
- The vision and mission are regularly reviewed to ensure relevance and effectiveness.
- The school community embodies strong values which are evident in the school ethos/culture and reflected in the interactions among stakeholders.

### Key Area 1: Learner Achievement

#### Standards/Indicators

- 1.1 Learners achieve well in the Foundation Phase (where applicable).
- 1.2 Learners achieve well in the Intermediate Phase (where applicable).
- 1.3 Learners achieve well in the Senior Phase (where applicable).
- 1.4 Learners achieve well in the Further Education and Training Band (where applicable).
- 1.5 Learners read, speak, listen and write well in the language of learning and teaching.

- 1.6 Learners handle numbers with ease, calculate accurately, mentally and with electronic devices, and apply their mathematical skills effectively to solve problems.
- 1.7 Learners participate and achieve well in extra-and co-curricular as well as cultural activities as part of the school enrichment programme.
- 1.8 Learner achievement, progression and promotion (academic throughput) are improved by implementing strategies which include the provision of targeted support for learners at risk and consistent collaboration with all stakeholders.

## Key Area 2: Teaching and Learning

### Standards/Indicators

- 2.1 Teachers encourage a positive learning environment to create a supportive and dynamic learning experience for all learners.
- 2.2 The delivery of the curriculum is relevant, innovative and consistently reviewed to ensure its effectiveness.
- 2.3 Lessons are purposefully planned to use teaching and learning time optimally and to enhance learning in an innovative and learner-centred way.
- 2.4 The teacher sets the example and insists on the correct use of language by learners.
- 2.5 The teacher uses open-ended questions, inviting learners to think and/or offer a range of possible answers in order to further deepen learners' understanding.
- 2.6 Learning activities and experiences are appropriately differentiated for individual learner needs and remedial support is given.
- 2.7 Lessons and activities emphasise vital 21st- century skills including creativity, communication, collaboration and critical thinking and include global and digital citizenship, self-directed learning and environmental sustainability.
- 2.8 Cultural knowledge is recognised and valued throughout the lesson.
- 2.9 Teachers collaborate actively to strengthen teaching methods and enhance learning outcomes.
- 2.10 Teachers' subject knowledge enables them to adapt their teaching strategies to cater to the diverse learning needs of their learners.
- 2.11 Clean, tidy and well-organised classrooms promote a positive classroom culture and an optimal learning environment.
- 2.12 Teachers use a range of strategies to ensure that all learners can learn effectively within a respectful inclusive environment.
- 2.13 Regular and constructive feedback (assessment for learning) is consistently provided to learners to support learning and facilitate improvement.
- 2.14 Regular marking and constructive written feedback provide learners with personalised guidance and suggestions for improvement.
- 2.15 Available learning and teaching support materials (LTSM), including digital technology resources, are used optimally to reinforce learning.
- 2.16 Teachers actively engage in professional development through attending relevant courses, conferences and other learning opportunities.

## Key Area 3: Learner Behaviour, Safety and Security

### Standards/Indicators

- 3.1 The positive ethos of the school is reflected in the respectful and affirming interactions between learners and staff.
- 3.2 A culture of inclusion is fostered which is aligned with the school's mission.
- 3.3 Vulnerable learners and those with specific needs are supported according to their unique requirements to ensure that they thrive academically and socially.
- 3.4 Adequate supervision and monitoring ensure that the school environment is safe and secure.
- 3.5 Safety policies and procedures that prioritise the physical, emotional and psychological well-being of learners and staff are implemented.
- 3.6 Regular risk assessments and emergency preparedness drills are conducted to ensure a safe learning environment.
- 3.7 Proactive measures to prevent and address bullying, discrimination and other negative behaviours are established.
- 3.8 The school provides appropriate counselling and support services to address mental health and well-being challenges among learners or can provide referrals for external assistance when needed.
- 3.9 The school offers appropriate career counselling advice/services to guide learners towards further education opportunities upon reaching relevant exit levels.
- 3.10 The Code of Conduct for learners is used equitably and consistently to promote a positive and fair disciplinary system.
- 3.11 The school premises are clean and consistently maintained to ensure a safe and pleasant environment for learners and staff.
- 3.12 A commitment to equity and inclusion is evident in the learning environment, policies and decision-making at both operational management and strategic governance levels.
- 3.13 Collaborative partnerships with the community, local authorities and other agencies are established to enhance safety measures.
- 3.14 Staff development includes training in sensitivity, diversity and strengthening inclusion mindsets to accommodate all learners' needs.
- 3.15 Boarding facilities:
  - 3.15.1 Boarding facilities have necessary security measures to protect the physical safety of learners.
  - 3.15.2 Clean and hygienic environments are maintained to promote the health and well-being of learners.
  - 3.15.3 Boarding house staff ensures that learners are appropriately supported and supervised.
  - 3.15.4 Suitably qualified staff provide pastoral, academic and disciplinary care for learners.
  - 3.15.5 The nutritional needs of all learners are met as well as their dietary and cultural preferences.
  - 3.15.6 A range of appropriate recreational activities are offered to boarders.

- 3.15.7 Boarding house staff (and all adults who reside with them) have undergone rigorous reference, background, and police clearance/ criminal records checks.
- 3.15.8 Accommodation and facilities are secure as well as age and gender appropriate to meet learners' needs and have adequate consideration for the privacy of learners.
- 3.15.9 Provision is made for the religious observances of different cultures.

## **Key Area 4: Leadership and Management**

### **Standards/Indicators**

- 4.1 The school has effective and transformational leadership that promotes a shared vision which inspires excellence, innovation and encourages professional growth amongst staff.
- 4.2 The School Management Team (SMT) implements transparent and inclusive practices that involve all stakeholders.
- 4.3 The SMT has a comprehensive understanding of the strengths and priorities for improvement of the school (SIP/SSE).
- 4.4 The SMT meets regularly, and routinely, in order to reflect on operational and strategic matters so that improvement in all areas of the school can be planned and implemented.
- 4.5 Regular evaluation of the quality of teaching and learning and continuous improvement strategies such as the provision of insightful feedback, guidance and mentoring are employed.
- 4.6 The SMT plans effectively to ensure that professional development enhances teaching practices and innovation.
- 4.7 The SMT can demonstrate the impact of their actions in improving the quality of teaching and learning.
- 4.8 Resources including human, financial, physical and technology are efficiently managed to support school improvement.
- 4.9 The SMT ensures that both teaching and non-teaching staff members have a comprehensive understanding of their respective job descriptions, roles and responsibilities.
- 4.10 The execution of roles and responsibilities is closely monitored by the SMT and the necessary support and resources are made available.
- 4.11 Staff attendance and punctuality contribute to a well-functioning school environment.
- 4.12 All staff members are held accountable to ensure that high standards of academic performance and professionalism are maintained.

## Key Area 5: Governance, Parents and Community

### Standards/Indicators

- 5.1 The governing body has a clear understanding of its roles and responsibilities.
- 5.2 The governing body has a clear understanding of the school's effectiveness and priorities for improvement and monitors the school's progress, reviews policies and procedures and ensures compliance with legal and regulatory requirements.
- 5.3 The governing body supports the school by establishing policies and guidelines that reflect the values and key priorities of the school community.
- 5.4 The governing body facilitates engagement and consultation with parents, learners and other stakeholders.
- 5.5 The governing body effectively fulfils its responsibilities in managing the school's finances by ensuring transparent financial practices, overseeing budget allocation, monitoring financial performance and making informed decisions to optimise the utilisation of resources.
- 5.6 The governing body safeguards the school's financial health and supports its vision and mission statements (the budget reflects the vision in financial terms).
- 5.7 Strategic leadership, accountability, decision-making, stakeholder representation and community engagement contribute towards the creation of a more positive learning environment and growth of the school.
- 5.8 The school engages positively and effectively with all stakeholders.
- 5.9 Learners feel listened to and are provided with platforms to develop their self-confidence and leadership skills.
- 5.10 Various strategies which may include regular parent-teacher meetings, progress reports, newsletters/yearbooks and online portals are implemented to foster greater parental involvement and facilitate the sharing of information.
- 5.11 Strong and collaborative professional relationships and a positive professional environment foster collegiality.
- 5.12 Active and consistent engagement with the district office facilitates curriculum support, professional development opportunities, governance support and other specialised services to benefit learners.
- 5.13 Effective links have been established with external organisations such as non-profit groups and community agencies to provide additional resources, mentoring and enrichment programmes or expertise.

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