

Guidelines for Community Involvement and School Committees

Purpose

The purpose of community involvement is to encourage the community to take responsibility for the education of its children and the development of the school.

Responsibility

The Head Teacher is responsible for finding opportunities for the community to become involved in the life of the school and for monitoring progress.

The community has a responsibility to support the education of its children and plan its involvement with the Head Teacher.

The School Committee is responsible for the development of the school and communicating with parents and the wider community.

The PEO has a responsibility to meet with school communities and encourage their support and involvement.

Policy

1. Community involvement is an integral part of the education of the young people of Vanuatu. The school community shall be offered opportunities to support and become involved in the education of its children.
2. Skill activities such as gardening, art/ craft, cooking and cultural studies are the responsibility of the community.
3. The community is responsible for the physical development and maintenance of the school, including buildings, equipment and grounds, as well as the welfare of school staff.
4. Every school shall have a School Committee with representatives from the community and the school. The role of the School Committee is to help the Head Teacher manage the operation of the school and the involvement of the community.
5. The first duty of the committee is to help the teachers at the school to do a good job. The committee must not, however, interfere with a teacher's professional duties.
6. The Head Teacher shall be the Secretary of the School Committee.
7. The Committee shall have a minimum of three members – the Secretary and at least two other members elected by the community at a general meeting conducted by the Head Teacher.
8. The quorum for a School Committee meeting shall be three, consisting of the Head Teacher and two other committee members.
9. The Committee shall elect its own Chairman.
10. Decisions shall be made by majority vote, with the chairman having a casting vote.

11. The Committee shall keep accounts. Expenses may be reimbursed to members in accordance with Ministry directives but no remuneration will be paid.
12. The PEO shall meet with school communities at least once per year to encourage their ongoing support.

Procedure

The Head Teacher shall hold a meeting between the community and school staff at the beginning of the school year to determine how the community can support the education of its children.

The results of the meeting shall form part of the Annual School Plan.

A good size for a school committee is nine members plus the Headteacher. Three members should resign each year and three new members should be elected. Members may stand again for election. This ensures some fairness in the selection of members. Heads should inform their PEO of the names of all members. Any changes in membership should also be notified.

The Head Teacher and the School Committee will meet monthly to review progress and plan further support.

All members of the committee should be interested in the school and be prepared to encourage its development. They should meet at least once a term and talk about the progress of the school. Both the local community and the school staff should know what has been discussed. Committee members should be encouraged to visit the school to see what progress is being made.

The Head Teacher acts as the Committee Secretary and must write down a short record of each meeting. A Treasurer should also be appointed from among the members to look after the school's finances and ensure proper accounts are kept. All records belong to the school and should be handed on from one committee to the next.

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The school committee should assist the Head Teacher develop the school by:-

1. Taking an interest in the work of the school and of the individual teachers.
2. Raising funds to help to keep the school, its furniture and its housing for teachers in good repair. This may include negotiating material assistance from government and non-government organisations.
3. Helping to organise community involvement in school events.
4. Representing parents' opinions in agreeing school rules with the Head Teacher and teachers.
5. Making sure that fees are paid (if there are fees) and that children do not suffer if fees become a problem to the family. Remission of fees may be possible, but Heads should consult their PEO for guidance on national policy to ensure fairness.
6. Finding local people who can offer help, for example with maintenance, building, weaving, carving, local customs and so on.
7. If the school has boarding facilities, the School Committee and the Head Teacher should monitor the welfare of the children boarding.
8. Helping to resolve any disputes concerning the school and the local community. Where this is not possible, Heads must report to their Provincial Education Officer.