

Section 7

Collaboration and Delegation

7.1 Collaboration with the Principal and Staff

- (a) Collaboration between the IMC, principal and staff is vital in promoting effective management and continuous improvement in schools. In a well-managed school, the IMC, principal and staff work in close partnership. Based on mutual respect and trust and a shared vision for their school, they support each other and recognise their respective responsibilities.
- (b) Broadly speaking, the IMC is responsible for developing school policies while the principal and the staff are responsible for the implementation of policies and the daily operation of the school. The IMC will not be involved in the day-to-day running of the school, which is the duty of the principal. Therefore, it is crucial that the IMC and principal agree on what constitutes the day-to-day management of the school and that the IMC delegates to the principal and staff the authority to perform those duties. In collaboration with the principal and staff, the IMC will :
- develop school goals and set directions for the school;
 - formulate school policies and make important decisions;
 - support the principal in managing the school; and
 - encourage the staff to improve quality.
- (c) On the other hand, the principal will discuss with the IMC major aspects of school life and how the school is managed. The principal supports the IMC by :
- managing the school in accordance with the Education Ordinance and with the school goals and policies set by the IMC;
 - overseeing the routine operations in the school;

- providing information and feedback on school performance; and
 - offering advice and making recommendations that will facilitate the IMC's decisions.
- (d) At the same time, the staff may provide support to the IMC and principal by :
- taking a positive attitude towards the IMC's decisions and working together with the principal to achieve the agreed targets; and
 - providing professional advice on school policies relating to curriculum development, classroom instruction and student activities.
- (e) A good working relationship is created among the IMC, principal and staff when there is effective communication and clear delineation of their complementary roles. They work most effectively together when a climate of trust and openness is fostered in the school.

7.2 Collaboration with Committees and Working Groups

- (a) There is no doubt that the task of school administration is complex and the working partnership can be extended to encompass various stakeholders and different members of the school community. The IMC may get teachers, parents, alumni and the community involved in school operations and decision making, through their participation in school committees, working groups and advisory councils formed to serve different functions. The teamwork in these committees and groups can contribute enormously to the smooth operation of a school. Thus it is

important that the IMC and the principal delegate authority appropriately to the committees and groups. This will enhance not only the transparency of school operations but also the ownership of the stakeholders. Committees and groups with delegated authority can make decisions and must report to the IMC both the rationale behind their decisions and the procedures for making them. Those without delegated authority can make recommendations to the IMC but not decisions.

(b) However, it is important for the IMC to avoid overlapping of functions between these committees and groups, which will lead to a waste of human resources. Thus, in collaboration with these committees and groups, the IMC will need to take a strategic view to consider if there are :

- clearly defined terms of reference for each committee and group;
- procedures to select members with appropriate knowledge and skills to serve on the committees;
- effective communication channels to collect feedback from the committees; and
- mechanisms to review regularly the overall organization of the working committees, so that changes can be introduced.

7.3 Restrictions on Delegation

With the authority delegated by the IMC, the principal, staff and various committees take the responsibilities to administer the school. Nevertheless, some key decisions cannot be delegated and must rest with the IMC. The IMC may seek recommendations but must make crucial decisions on matters such as approving/endorsing :

- the SDP, ASP and school budgets;
- the SR, school profile and audited accounts;
- staff appointments, promotions, leave and dismissals;
- investigations of cases of conflict of interest, complaints and disciplinary matters involving members of staff (including the principal) and decisions on follow-up actions ; and
- mechanisms for managing school funds, keeping school accounts and auditing school accounts.

Key Points

Close collaboration with the school principal and staff and appropriate delegation of authority are required for effective school management. Some basic principles are as follows -

- The IMC is responsible for developing school policies while the school principal and staff are responsible for the implementation of school policies and the daily school operation [Section 7.1];
- Appropriate delegation of authority to committees and groups within a coherent organisational structure would enhance transparency and ownership of the stakeholders [Section 7.2];
- Some key functions of IMC including school planning and self-improvement, formulating school policies and staff appointment and dismissal cannot be delegated [Section 7.3].