

# Section 4

## Code of Ethics for School Managers

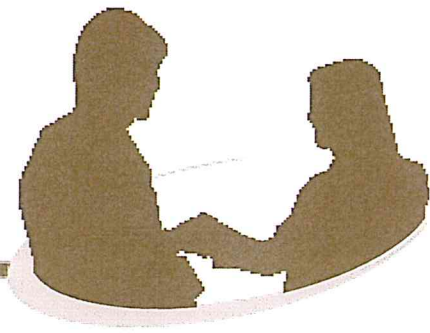
### 4.1 Basic Principles Governing the Work of Managers

- (a) As IMCs make important decisions that will affect the interests of different parties, it is of paramount importance that the school be governed in ways that inspire confidence in the public, and that decisions be made in an impartial manner for the benefit of the students and the improvement of the school.
- (b) Participatory decision-making under school-based management implies that a greater number of new managers will join those who have been contributing valuable time and efforts to school development. To create a common ground for managers to perform their duties in collaboration with one another, there is a cogent case for a set of values shared by all. The following paragraphs highlight the core values that many effective school managers have observed.

#### 4.1.1 Commitment

Managers have to set aside time to be involved in and well acquainted with the school. This includes :

- Familiarizing themselves with the Education Ordinance and Education Regulations, Code of Aid, IMC constitution and relevant circulars issued by the Education Bureau;
- Preparing for and attending IMC meetings, contributing to discussions and taking part in agreed actions after meetings;
- Getting to know the school through reading relevant papers, visiting the school and taking part in school activities; and
- Keeping abreast of educational developments by attending seminars and training courses.



#### **4.1.2 Selflessness**

Managers should avoid using their position for personal gain or the gain of other outside parties, including their friends and relatives. Even when managers are elected by certain constituents, such as parents or teachers, their role in the IMC is to give professional advice to improve student learning, not to serve the interests of their constituents.

#### **4.1.3 Integrity above Private Interest**

School managers have a duty to declare to the IMC any private interests relating to their duties as managers and to take steps to resolve any conflict of interest. The interests of the school as a whole, rather than the private interest of an individual manager, should always take top priority.

#### **4.1.4 Impartiality**

In carrying out duties such as those relating to appointments, promotions, complaint investigations and the award of contracts, school managers should be impartial. Their choices and decisions should always be based on merit and fairness. Under no circumstances should favor be given and advantages be solicited or accepted that will result in preferential treatment being given to any party.

#### **4.1.5 Collective Responsibility**

Under the school-based management framework, all decisions of a school are made by the IMC collectively. The IMC acts as a group. Each manager has a right to participate and to state his/her own views, while respecting the views of others. School managers have no authority as individuals and decisions should be made by a majority vote in IMC meetings. Once decisions are made by the group, individual managers are bound by them. Changes to such decisions have to be instigated through proper channels agreed on by the IMC.

#### 4.1.6 Accountability and Openness in Decision-making

School managers are accountable for, and should be as open as possible about, all the decisions and actions that they take. They should give reasons for their decisions and restrict information only when the interests of students and schools clearly demand this. Participatory decision-making in the IMC increases the openness and transparency of school governance as well as its accountability to the community.

#### 4.1.7 Confidentiality

Each manager must respect the confidentiality of those items of business that have been designated as confidential and must not disclose what individual managers have said and how they have voted. When a matter is under discussion by the IMC, the matter must not be disclosed before a decision is taken. The IMC should reach consensus on items to be disclosed by the spokesperson, who may be the supervisor. Managers have to follow the mode of circulation of confidential documents agreed by the IMC, for example, that these documents will be despatched by hand or in confidential envelopes and should be kept in places with security, such as in a locked cabinet.

### 4.2 School - based Code of Ethics

- (a) With reference to the above principles and in line with the Education Ordinance, the IMC is encouraged to develop its own code of ethics with binding effects on its members. A sample Code of Ethics for School Managers is at *Appendix II*. The IMC can take this as a reference in initiating discussion among managers and arriving at an agreed code, modifying and making additions as appropriate. Schools may also incorporate into the code the mission and vision of the sponsoring bodies as well as those of the school.



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- (b) The school-based Code of Ethics will help to foster a sense of identity among managers and serve as a useful reminder of the ethical standards and behavior they have agreed to bring to the task. The IMC may also choose to make known to the school community its own code. This will not only further enhance the transparency of the IMC but also help to publicise its work and so gain wider recognition from the community.
- (c) It is the personal responsibility of managers to understand and comply with the Code of Ethics. Violation of the provisions of the code may lead to public criticism, disrepute of the school and, in some cases, cancellation of their registration as a manager.
- (d) Managers who fail to follow the Code of Ethics may face internal action agreed on by the IMC. In circumstances where the existing laws and regulations are contravened, such as under the Prevention of Bribery Ordinance, prosecutions could be instigated. Hence, it is important that school managers carry out their managerial duties in accordance with the agreed code.
- (e) In October 1995, the Council on Professional Conduct in Education extracted and reprinted the *Code for the Education Profession of Hong Kong* (the Code) for all practising teachers in the hope that this would promote professional conduct within the profession. In formulating the school-based Code of Ethics for managers, the IMC may consider the Code as a reference with respect to the ethical standards of conduct in the education profession. Managers who wish to know more about the Code may visit the website of the Council on Professional Conduct in Education at [https://cpc.edb.org.hk/en/code\\_01.htm](https://cpc.edb.org.hk/en/code_01.htm).

## Key Points

(a) The core values that an effective school manager should observe are -

- commitment [Section 4.1.1]
- selflessness [Section 4.1.2]
- integrity above private interest [Section 4.1.3]
- impartiality [Section 4.1.4]
- collective responsibility [Section 4.1.5]
- accountability and openness in decision-making [Section 4.1.6]
- confidentiality [Section 4.1.7]

(b) An IMC should develop its own code of ethics with binding effects for its school managers. [Section 4.2]

# Appendix II

## Sample Code of Ethics for Managers

### A Code of Ethics for School Managers

#### Foreword

To be a school manager, one needs to have an interest in the education of young people in Hong Kong and be keen on participation in school activities. A manager is willing to devote time to work for the IMC and exchange ideas on educational and school management issues with the principal, teachers and other managers. Apart from this, managers need to acquire the necessary knowledge of educational policy and develop skills in school management.

As a school manager, he/she fully understands that the overall aims of education is to enable every person to attain all-round development in the domains of ethics, intellect, physique, social skills and aesthetics according to his/her own attributes so that he/she is capable of life-long learning, critical and exploratory thinking, innovating and adapting to change.... (Reform Proposals for the Education System in Hong Kong, Education Commission, 2000). Every school should help all its students, whatever their ability, and including those with special educational needs, to develop their potential as fully as possible in both academic and non-academic aspects. The school will not give up any opportunity to educate every individual child.

#### Code of Ethics

A school manager shall do his/her utmost to promote the education of students by adhering to the following commitments :

##### **School mission and goals**

- Shall contribute to the development of sound management and educational practices conducive to the attainment of the school mission and vision.



- Shall ensure the attainment of school goals and the target performance of students.
- Shall endeavour to foster the all-around and unique development of every student.
- Shall base his/her decisions solely on the interests of students and the school.

#### **Support to staff**

- Shall contribute to the establishment of an effective staff management system, for example, by means of staff professional development, delegation and performance management.
- Shall support the work of all teaching and non-teaching staff as they make their contributions to the school.

#### **School management**

- Shall seek all possible opportunities to develop his/her knowledge, skills and understanding in school management.
- Shall be involved in and knowledgeable about the school by visiting it, taking part in school functions and meeting with staff, parents and students.
- Shall not disclose any classified or proprietary information of the IMC or school to anybody without authorization, and also take necessary measures at all times to prevent the leakage or misuse of the information.
- Shall ensure that the financial and human resources of the school are solely and properly used for school business and in the interest of pupils.

### **IMC meetings**

- Shall do his/her best to attend the IMC meetings, contribute to the discussions and take part in necessary follow-up actions.
- Shall abide by the majority decisions of the IMC.
- Shall respect the confidentiality of the discussions of confidential items and shall not disclose the views of individual managers and how they have voted.
- Shall recognise that all IMC members are collectively accountable for the decisions and actions of the Committee.

### **Conflict of interest**

- Shall not use his/her IMC membership for any personal gain or procurement of financial benefits for his/her family or friends.
- Shall avoid conflict of interest and declare any private interests relating to his/her duties as a school manager.
- Shall absent himself/herself during an IMC meeting when a decision is made on a matter in which he/she or his/her immediate family have any direct pecuniary interest.
- Shall not accept lavish or frequent entertainment from persons having official dealings with the school (e.g. suppliers or contractors) lest he/she will be placed in a position of obligation to the offerers.

### **Acceptance of advantages**

- Shall not solicit or accept any advantage from pupils, parents, staff and any persons having business dealings with school (e.g. suppliers and contractors) without the IMC's permission.



- For any gift offered voluntarily to him/her in his/her official capacity, shall regard it as a gift to the IMC and seek the IMC's permission for acceptance and the method of disposal.
- Shall decline to accept any gift if the acceptance could affect his/her objectivity in conducting the IMC's business and induce him/her to act against the interest of the pupils.

### **Commitment of the Education Profession**

The following items are extracted from Chapter 2 of the Code for the Education Profession of Hong Kong (the Code). The IMC may take the Code as a reference in formulating the school-based code of ethics. For detailed contents of the Code, please visit the following website:

[https://cpc.edb.org.hk/en/code\\_02.htm](https://cpc.edb.org.hk/en/code_02.htm)

A member of the profession :

- Shall strive in every way for any improvement which will help or encourage students' physical and psychological development so as to fulfill society's expectations of a profession.
- Shall uphold professional autonomy as an indispensable condition for the exercise of the education profession's social responsibilities and shall strive to create a working environment which fosters professional autonomy.
- Shall strive to uphold the honour, dignity and ethics of the education profession and to foster unity and harmonious working relationships within the profession.
- Shall constantly endeavour, through a variety of channels, to improve his/her self-development, self-growth and knowledge of educational and world developments.
- Shall promote the highest possible image of the profession by fostering public understanding of the profession and maintaining effective public relations.

- Shall exert every effort to provide a professional service, to raise professional standards and to promote a climate that encourages the exercise of professional judgement.
- Shall strive to support and enrich the education profession's ideals and achievements so that the profession is attractive to high quality recruits.
- Shall endeavour to promote the understanding and respect of different cultures in order to enhance harmony between those of all origins and races.
- Shall make every effort to establish and maintain effective channels of communication within the profession to ensure its healthy development.
- Shall refrain from activity that is detrimental to the image of the profession.
- Shall not advertise or canvas for the purpose of promoting his/her own advantage.
- Shall not accept gratuities, gifts or favours that might impair professional judgement.
- Shall, when making any public statement in his/her capacity as a professional educationalist, state clearly, when appropriate, his/her qualification to make this statement; the capacity in which the member is speaking; on whose behalf the member is speaking; and any association with any party or vested interests that may benefit from such statements.