

Uniform Protocols for Accountability at School Level and for Supporting Schools

1. Introduction

There must be well identified and defined steps that lead to a successful process of holding employees accountable. The challenge in the sector is that all steps are skipped and the focus is on the last step where employees are called upon to account why they did not do certain things when they were not informed about what to do, how to do it and by when it should be done. There is usually no monitoring and support provided during the delivery of programme. Questions are only asked at the end when the programme has failed and by then it is too late for any intervention programme. Labour relations processes to charge a person with misconduct are bound to fail under such circumstances. There need to be a contracting period, support, monitoring, reporting, provision of feedback and the drafting of an intervention programme for a successful accountability system to be implemented at all levels of the system.

2. Legislative framework

The sector has all the legislative frameworks in the form job descriptions for school based and office based officials in the form the Personnel Administrative Measures and other pieces of legislations such Acts, Regulations, policies, standards, Collective Agreements to can hold officials accountable for the delivery of service and the performance of performance. There is therefore no need for the sector to develop additional laws or policies.

3. Protocol at all levels

3.1 The organogram and supervisory levels

The sector has levels of accountability structures at all levels, established through levels of seniority by law. The organogram of school indicates reporting and accountability levels form a teacher, HOD, Deputy Principals and Principal. Similar structures apply at both District and provincial level from First Education Specialist, Deputy Education Specialist, Chief Education Specialist to Director level. The

administrative level has its organogram which also reflect reporting and accountability structures with clear job descriptions

The level of seniority as developed by the organogram at each level of the sector places certain officials as supervisors to others. A supervisor is by law responsible to manage the performance of the official at the lower level and demands accountability for the performance of such an official.

3.2 Contracting period

The first step towards holding employees accountable is to start with a contracting period between the supervisor and the supervisee. At the start of a calendar year, supervisors at various levels of the system must meet with their supervisee to agree on the deliverable at a specified period of time. This is called the contracting stage. The agreement includes key deliverables to be achieved, activities to be performed and the time line within which the tasks must be completed. The agreement must include the standard to measure the level of achievement. This may be for an example the number of assessment tasks in a subject and grade, submissions of monthly reports on absenteeism, late coming, reports on disciplinary cases, financial report, learner outcomes after assessment, infrastructure maintenance, curriculum coverage, LTSM utilisation, scholar transport, school feeding and others. All these item and more are allocated supervisors in the form of HODs, Deputy Principal, Senior Teachers, Subject Head or Committee Heads who are charged with the responsibility to ensure that team members perform their task. It is they who have to set agreeable:

- Standards;
- Key deliverable;
- Activities; and
- Time lines

The agreed upon contract which is based on the employee's job description, Acts, Regulations, policies, standards, Collective Agreements is then signed by both the supervisor and the supervisee as a binding contract to hold the supervisee accountable for the delivery of such an agreement and the agreed upon performance standard and at a specified period of time. This is also called a work plan.

3.3 Support, Monitoring and Evaluation

Contracting is followed by the delivery of the programme by the employee in line with the pre-determined deliverables and activities at the required standard and at given period of time. It is during this stage that the supervisor provide the employee with the necessary resources to perform the expected responsibilities and provide all the necessary support in terms of moral support, guidance, capacity building, mentoring and coaching.

Regular monitoring is necessary at this stage to ensure that the plan is implemented as agreed and deviations are identified early enough to bring the programme back into track. Templates are used during this stage. The template should cover the deliverables and activities that should have been delivered during the period in question as determine the successful completion of such. It is advisable that the templates used should have been made available in advance and mediated before use.

3.4 Reporting and accountability sessions

The completed templates are at this stage analysed and interpreted with the aims of clearly describing the success or lack of in the achievement of pre-determined goals. It is during this stage when the contract is revisited and discussions are held about how successful the deliverables were met. The discussions include good practice that led to the achievement of the deliverables and challenges that may have impeded the achievement of some activities. A report is the compiled on the achievements or lack thereof with gaps identified and intervention strategies developed. This is what should happens when District Directors or Circuit Managers invite principals to what is commonly known as “Accountability Sessions”.

AT school level, such sessions should take the form of School Management Team (SMT) meetings during which HODs report about the performance of the teachers they supervise in the phase they manage. The report should include reports on teacher attendance, learner attendance, curriculum coverage, assessment task, learner performance during every SMT meeting.

Reporting includes the submission of written reports on pre-determined aspects at the expected delivery time lines. Adherence to deadlines is a performance measure in itself. Principals are expected to provide regular report to Circuit Managers and the

District on various school matters ranging from attendance records, learner performance records, disciplinary records, curriculum coverage, etc. Failure by the principals to provide such reports constitute poor performance and regarded as misconduct as it indicates the failure of the principal to manage such important aspects of school management.

The reporting process applies to officials at district provincial and national level as well with the same accountability process and disciplinary steps instituted by their supervisors.

The accumulation of poor reports should lead to progressive disciplinary steps taken in line with the prescript of the Employment of Educators Act of the Public Service Act where applicable by the supervisor. The supervisor should in turn provide reports on the performance of the supervisee and the steps taken to remedy poor performance failing which the supervisor is made to account for failing to take action to correct poor performance in his/her area of jurisdiction.

3.5 Feedback and Intervention

It is important for supervisors to provide feedback on their findings to their supervisee. The report should be provided through discussions followed by a written report to form part of the accountability records. The feedback session should be followed by the evaluation of the original agreement and its amendment where possible with plans to intervene on identified gaps.

3.6 Consequence management

3.7 South

African

Schools Act



Employees are held accountable in terms of the applicable laws, policies, performance standards and procedures in the organisation. Legislation must be referred to as and when employees are called upon to account for their performance and conduct. Legislation is used legislation to create an organisational culture, attitude, conversation, behaviour, rituals, beliefs. Acts, Regulation and circulars merely create a framework within which schools can function. They are enablers that create unlimited innovative ideas within those parameters to produce excellent schools. Relevant sections of the law should always be quoted when employees have to answer to their supervisors in formal or informal disciplinary procedures.

4. Conclusion

The holding of officials accountability for their performance and conduct should be applied regularly and consistently failing which it will lose mean. The following test should be considered whenever employees are held accountable in their line of duty as it defines how consequences management is applied:

- Is there a law or instruction?
- Is it written down?
- Is it made know known to all employees?

- Does it stipulate a sanction?
- Is the law consistently applied?