



**PARTICIPATING IN THE
2015
SCHOOL GOVERNING BODY
ELECTIONS**



In 2013, Corruption Watch launched a campaign focussing on corruption in schools due to the high level of reports the organisation received from this sector. Based on the complaints received from the public, school governing bodies (SGBs) have been implicated in many cases of financial mismanagement of school funds. In 2015, parents will have the opportunity to participate in the SGB elections to ensure that the right people and processes are in place for children to receive the education they deserve. This handbook will answer all the questions that you need to know about SGBs, their roles and responsibilities, how to spot corruption in the SGB, and participating in the 2015 SGB elections.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER ONE: ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES	1
CHAPTER TWO: UNDERSTANDING PROCUREMENT PROCESSES FOR SGBS	3
CHAPTER THREE: CONFRONTING A CORRUPT SGB	5
CHAPTER FOUR: THE CORRUPTION WATCH KP5 PLAN FOR PARENTS AND GUARDIANS	7
CHAPTER FIVE: SGB ELECTION QUICK FACTS	9

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

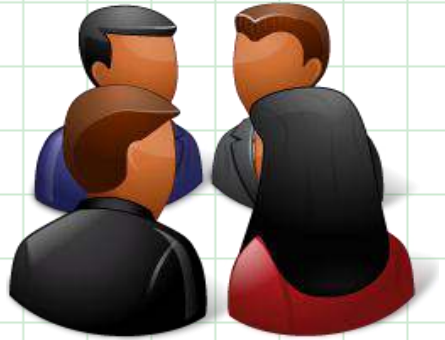
Q: What is a school governing body?

A: A school governing body, also known as an SGB, is a group of people that are democratically elected to be responsible for the governance of a school.

Q: Who can be part of an SGB?

If a person wishes to be voted in as an SGB member, he/she has to be one of the following:

- A parent or guardian of a learner at the school;
- A teacher at the school;
- Any other staff member at the school; or
- A registered learner at the school (grade 8-12).



IMPORTANT FACTS

The principal of the school must be part of the SGB. He/she is not elected.

There must be more parents/guardians than other members on the SGB, comprising at least 51%.

A person from the community or the owner of the school grounds can also be part of the SGB but he/she is not allowed to make decisions or vote on the SGB. Such members are called co-opted members.

Q: What are the responsibilities of an SGB?

2

The SGB has many responsibilities that are there to make sure that the school is run in a proper and legal way. The most important ones are:

1. Promoting the best interests of the school and striving to ensure its development through the provision of quality education for all its learners;
2. Supporting the principal, teachers and other staff of the school in the performance of their professional functions; and
3. Raising funds for the school. See section 20 of the Schools Act for all SGB functions and responsibilities.

NOTE

For an SGB to manage all of these responsibilities, a budget has to be drawn up. This gives details of the proposed income and proposed expenses for the next year. This budget must be prepared according to the Schools Act and approved by a majority of parents attending the annual general meeting. It is always good to ask local suppliers for their prices to get a rough idea of costs.

Q: What are the principal's responsibilities in the SGB?

A: The principal is on the SGB so that he/she can give advice on educational matters (e.g. subjects to be taught at the school and the teachers and resources needed for the proper teaching of the subjects). The principal must support the SGB in the exercising of its functions. **He or she does not get involved with bookkeeping processes or the school's money systems unless the SGB gives this job to him.**

UNDERSTANDING PROCUREMENT PROCESSES FOR SGBS

Q: What does procure mean?

A: To procure is to buy products or services.

Q: When does a school have to procure?

A: As soon as the SGB is given information about what products or services are needed at the school (e.g. textbooks, computers, cleaning service etc.).

Q: Whose responsibility is it to procure?

A: It is the SGB's responsibility to buy products and services for the school. This does not have to be done by all the members. A committee from the SGB can be elected that will help with procuring products and services. This committee needs to follow the Department of Basic Education's rules of the province that the school falls under. That is because the rules are different for every provincial office. So make sure with the local district office or provincial office of what the rules are.



In order to make procurement transparent and fair, these are the basic rules that SGBs should follow:

- Let people from the community or surrounding communities know that the school is looking for a certain product or service;
- Always make sure that the SGB gets at least three quotes from different suppliers (a quote from each supplier);
- Try to choose a supplier that is not a friend or relative of any of the members on the SGB. If that cannot be done, the member of the SGB must not be part of the decision making meeting that decides which supplier the school is going to procure from;
- Choose a supplier that gives the product or service at the amount that the SGB was planning to spend, or at a lower price;
- Have a system where the more members who can sign for the payment of the supplier, the better; that is if the school is making its own payments; and
- Make sure that there is proof of every discussion, payment and agreement made. This helps the SGB when there are questions about the spending of money.



CONFRONTING A CORRUPT SGB



Q: What is corruption?

A: Corruption is when a person uses public resources to make him/her rich or to make a friend/relative rich. When this happens, there are other persons that suffer because of the corrupt person's actions. Doing something corrupt is not only about receiving money, it can also be the receiving of a gift or using things such as cars,

facilities and equipment to benefit another person, and not who the resources were meant for.

There are many kinds of corruption, the most common forms include:

- Bribery — when a person is offered money or a gift(s) by another person to get a favour;
- Solicitation — when one person gets another person to commit a crime, or to receive money or a gift(s), so that he/she can get a favour;
- Nepotism — when a person gives another person employment or a favour because he/she is a family member; or
- Fraud — giving wrong information so that a person can benefit illegally from a procurement deal or employment.

Q: What can a person do if he/she suspects corruption in the SGB?

6

A: When there are suspicions about corruption in the SGB a person can:

- Approach a member of the SGB whom you trust to report your suspicions about corruption; or
- In cases where there is no one who can be trusted or if the chairperson, treasurer or principal are the members who are suspected, approach the head of department at the province's Department of Basic Education.

Q: How can the SGB prevent corruption from occurring at its school or amongst its members?

A: It is always good to know and to follow the rules that the Department of Basic Education gives the school when trying to protect the SGB or the school from corruption. But here are easier things to do as a way of keeping the SGB or school corruption free:

- Share the responsibilities of the SGB among as many members as possible, e.g. have the payment of a product or service signed off by a few people instead of one;
- Give the school community monthly or termly reports of the SGB's activities. These can be reports about how much money the school has received and what it was used for, and what the SGB is planning to do;
- Allow parents, staff and any other relevant persons to view all documents filed by the SGB;
- Encourage all members of the school community to report corruption if they suspect anything. So, it may be helpful to elect a committee that will handle such issues; and
- Try to get a financial person who is not part of the school community to have a look at the SGB's and school's records.

THE CORRUPTION WATCH SCHOOLS KP5 PLAN FOR PARENTS AND GUARDIANS

It is very important for parents or guardians to be involved in their children's education. One of the ways of being involved is to **know** about and **participate** in the management of the school:

- **Knowing** is to get information that will help a person understand issues;
- **Participating** is making sure that a person gets involved and uses the information in a responsible way.

That is why Corruption Watch has written the KP5 (know and participate) plan for parents or guardians who have children at school.



Below is the list of five important things that a parent or guardian must think about and do when dealing with your child's school.

8

(KP1) Have the members of the SGB been duly elected, and what are their responsibilities?

(KP2) Does the school have a sound financial policy in place?

(KP3) Are there committees or subcommittees that look at:

- Money matters (school fees, fundraising, feeding scheme etc.);
- Planning for the school to get products and services like cleaning, office equipment, teaching and learning materials and equipment etc.; and
- The hiring of teachers, administrators, food handlers etc.?

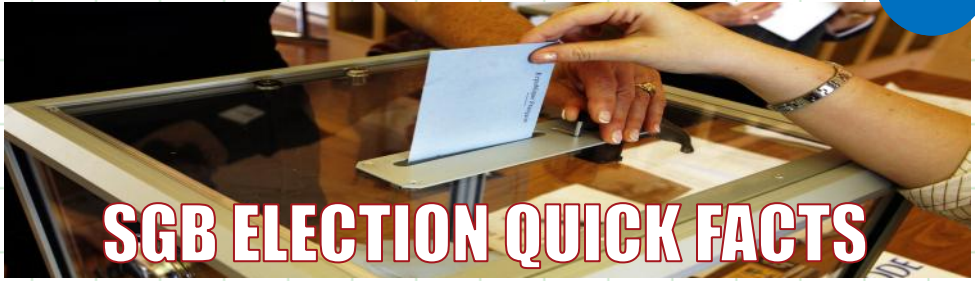
(KP4) The school must have files or books where the following must be recorded:

- Minutes of all SGB meetings (including committees and subcommittees);
- Receipts of products and services that are paid for; and
- All reports of the school's activities as well as future plans.

(KP5) What is the school's plan for preventing and dealing with corruption?

In other words, has the school put in place:

- Rules that describe what corruption is and what happens if a person is suspected of being corrupt?
- A committee that will deal with suspicions of corruption?
- Ways that allow people to report corruption freely without feeling afraid; and
- An awareness programme that discusses corruption issues with learners, teachers, SGB members and other staff members?



SGB ELECTION QUICK FACTS

- The SGB elections are scheduled to take place from 6 to 28 March 2015.
- Every school in the country must hold an election during this period.
- An electoral officer (who must be a principal at another school) is appointed for each school.
- The electoral officer must notify parents of the election and supply them with the nomination form as per the applicable provincial regulations.
- Educators, non-educator school staff, and learners vote their representatives through different processes.
- Nominations for and elections of parents can take place through a nomination and election meeting held on the same day or through a full day election preceded by a nomination process.
- Parents are encouraged to provide their identity documents when voting.
- If there are more parents nominated than the spaces on the SGB, a poll is taken.
- 15% of the parents on the voters roll need to be present on the day for the election to be quorate. If not, the election is rescheduled for another date. At the second meeting, the nomination and election process will proceed with whoever is present regardless of how many parents are present.
- Every nominated parent must have the opportunity during the meeting to address the other parents and state their vision for the school.



REPORT CORRUPTION

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