**TYPES OF SCHOOL RECORD KEEPING**

Educational management involves planning, controlling, implementing and monitoring of policies, as well as teachers and students activities. It embraces daily management as well as the formulation of short, medium and long-term objectives, policies and strategies in support of the educational goals.

School records can be classified into two types: statutory and non-statutory records. Statutory records are records prescribed by education edicts and laws of a state which must be maintained by school administrators. Non-statutory records, while not prescribed by law, are equally as important to the smooth functioning of a school. Ololube (2013, pp. 104-107) has identified a number of examples of the records found in schools and school systems:

**1. Admission and withdrawals register:** The admission and withdrawals register shows the names of students that are enrolled each year in various classes in a school and the names of those who withdrew from various classes in the school.

**2. Attendance register:** Attendance register shows the daily record of student attendance in each class in the school. At the end of every term, the class teacher closes the register and submits it to the school head to crosscheck and sign.

**3. Class timetable:** Class timetables are a record of how, when and where classes are held. These keep students organized and informed about upcoming classes and help students to manage their time and schedule.

**4. Education edicts and laws:** Education edicts are announcements of a law governing an educational system. They are decrees or proclamations issued by an authority that have the force of law.

**5. Health records:** Are records of the names of students who were ill and sent to local health centers, school sick bays or the hospital for treatment. These records indicate the nature of the sickness and the treatment administered.

**6. Individual cumulative record card:** This is a continuous record or a combination of records that contain comprehensive information about a student. It provides a summary of a student’s academic progress in school and also includes the student’s name, age, date of birth, date of admission, family background, social or extracurricular activities, etc.

**7. Lesson plan:** Lesson plans are records kept to guide teachers during their teaching activities. These are written on a weekly basis to determine what and how the teacher will teach. A lesson plan is developed based on the school’s scheme of work, unit plan or curriculum. It is presented to the head teacher for assessment, signature, date and name before it can be used for teaching.

**8. Log book:** A log book is an important official record kept to track significant happenings that take place in the school such as the death of students and staff, dates of resumption and closing of the school term, staff and student misbehaviour, etc. The head teacher keeps this book safely secured and must be presented to the Ministry of Education or School Board upon request.

**9. National Policy on Education:** The National Policy on Education (NPE) is a policy formulated by a government to promote education across the country. The policy covers early childhood, primary (elementary), secondary, and higher education. It also includes adult and non-formal education, technical and vocational education, distance education, educational services, planning, administration and supervision, and financing education.

**10. Disciplinary records:** Disciplinary records are kept to protect students from arbitrary punishment from teachers and to exonerate teachers from unwarranted criticisms by parents or students. In most cases, the head teacher approve of any disciplinary action before it is administered to a student or students. Records concerning the disciplinary action and its approval are documented for future reference.

**11. School cash book:** A school cash book is a system that helps organise school finances. It is a simple record that details all payments made and income received. It shows receipt of items and all expenditures. This book is kept with the accountant or clerk in the absence of a school treasurer.

**12. School stock book:** The school stock book shows the current supply of equipment and other materials in the school. It is usually divided into two parts. The first part showing the consumables items (chalk, dusters, diary, registers, etc.) and the other are showing non-consumable items (furniture, television, tape recorders, sporting and athletic equipment, etc.). It contains name, date of supply, and expiring dates of goods supplied, if applicable.

**13. School timetable:** A school timetable is a table used for coordinating four basic elements (students, teachers, subjects, and time slots, otherwise called periods) in a school system.

**14. School diary:** The school diary, also known as a teacher’s record of work, shows the things that are to be done and have been done each term for each class/subject in a school. This record helps to keep teachers motivated and on task (to complete the syllabus by the end of the term) and ensures continuity.

**15. Staff and student movement book:** The staff and student movement book details the entry and exit of staff and students in a school.

**16. Transfer and leaving certificates:** Transfer and leaving certificates are the forms approved by the Zonal Inspector of Education and signed by the haed teacher at the request of parents to permit their children to leave one school to attend another as a result of a parent’s work transfer, etc.

**17. Visitor’s book:** The purpose of a visitor’s book is to keep records of the names and addresses of visitors, date and time of visits, purpose of visits and who the visitor requested to visit. This book is kept by the head teacher or his or her assistant.

**18. Syllabus:** A syllabus is an outline and a summary of topics to be covered in a school. A syllabus for a certain subject is often set out by an examination body such as the West African Examination Council (WEAC) who conducts, supervises and controls the quality of examinations for uniformity.

**19. Scheme of work:** A scheme of work is a guideline that defines the structure and content of a subject. It shows how resources such as books and equipment are to be used and how class time, class activities and class assessments are to be carried out to ensure that the learning aims and objectives of the subject are met. A scheme of work can be shared with students so that they have an overview of their subjects.

**20. Curriculum:** A curriculum is the set of subjects and their content offered at a school. A curriculum is prescriptive and is based on a more general document that which specifies what topics must be understood and to what level to achieve a particular grade or standard in an educational system.

**4. Characteristics of Good Record Management**

Managing school records according to Fasasi in Osakwe (2011) is meant to enhance the performance of school administrators. An adequate records management programme co-ordinates and protects an institutions records, sharpens the effectiveness of records as management memory, and helps to simplify intra-organisational and communication problems. The management of records in schools, like in any other organization, is a cyclic process involving principals, teachers, students, messengers and cleaners. Most records are handled by school heads and are kept manually, hence the processing, retrieval and ultilisation of records is not always easy. According to Ibara (2010) the following are characteristics or attributes of good record management (although modifications can be made):

**Completeness:** Complete and comprehensive records should be kept to give users all the information needed to plan and make effective decisions.

**Cost:** Records should not be too expensive to keep. This means that the financial cost of collecting, analyzing, synthesizing, storing and retrieving records should be low.

**Flexibility:** Data is flexible if it can be used by more than one user at different times for different purposes.

**Quality:** The quality of any information contained in any record must be accurate and reliable. The greater the accuracy and reliability, the higher the quality of information, and the more likely the information system is to work well.

**Relevance**: A relevant record is one that is useful to the needs of the system. A good deal of irrelevant information is kept, particularly in schools. Data that is no longer relevant and not required by law should be securely disposed of.

**Retention and Disposition of Records**: The disposition of records does not entirely mean destruction. Disposition can also include transfer of records to a historical achieve, to a museum, etc. In the case of schools, however, most records are disposed of when no longer needed. The public officials concerned may destroy these records upon expiration of the retention period.

**Timeliness:** Information contained in a record should be retrievable as it is needed rather than after important decisions have been made.

**Variability**: This refers to the degree of consensus arrived at among various users examining the record. The greater the consensus among users, the more accepted the record.

**Maintenance:** The maintenance of records involves all activities that ensure that they are in good condition, and kept in an orderly state. This is a central function of records management.

**5. Safely Managing and Preserving School Records**

School records management involves the storage, retrieval and use of information. It is the application of systematic and scientific control to all the recorded information that schools need for school administration. Poor records management results in difficulties in administering, planning and monitoring of educational systems globally (Ololube, 2013). In fact, poor records management and the lack of staff development with regards to the entire information cycle are responsible for a number of management and policy implementation problems in schools and Ministries of Education (Chifwepa, [n.d]). While different methods or systems can be used to bring about efficient records management, there are some basic rules that must be respected. The management of school records involves all activities that ensure that they are in good condition, and kept in an orderly state (Ololube, 2013). Some of the ways records can be safely managed and preserved according to are:

**Classification:** This is the methods of arranging records and files perfectly into groups according to subject. It ensures that school records are arranged in a logical order. The logical arrangement of files is central because it guarantees that files have their specific places and can be retrieved without snag and significant loss.

**File Storage:** After a classification system has been determined and files have been labeled, files should then be arranged accordingly and kept in a filing cabinet drawer. A filing cabinet or cabinets should be used for this purpose. The cabinet drawers in which the files are housed must also be labeled clearly and the files appropriately organized so as to maintain the relationship of the files to one another.

**File maintenance:** It is important to check the files periodically to ensure that they are in good condition, since they are prone to wear and tear. Some records in files may be loose and could fall out easily. These should be securely attached and reattached.

**Check Out:** When records or files are lent to users, a system must be worked out that tracks where and when certain files or records were lent to a user. Small cards may be designed to enable efficient control over the flow of files.

**Natural factors:** School records should be properly arranged and secured from natural hazards such as flooding, insects, rain, sun, termites and wind.