

Understanding School Governance

Manual 3

Conducting Meetings and Keeping Records



DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND CULTURE
UMNYANGO WEFUNDO NAMASIKO
DEPARTEMENT VAN ONDERWYS EN KULTUUR



PROVINCE OF KWAZULU-NATAL
ISIFUNDAZWE SAKWAZULU-NATAL
PROVINSIE KWAZULU-NATAL

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A comprehensive index can be found at the back of Manual 7.

Glossary:

The meaning of some of the words used in this manual

The verbal agreement given to a motion. No disagreement is heard.

The requirement of a person to answer for his or her actions.

An ad hoc committee is a short-term committee appointed to carry out a particular task.

The suspending of a meeting until a later date.

Latin = "things to be done". The list of items of business for consideration at a meeting.

A change to a motion that is being considered by a meeting.

The statements submitted to the Annual General Meeting; usually an Income and Expenditure Statement and a Balance Sheet, showing the financial results of activities during the past financial year, and the financial position at the close of that year, respectively.

An outline of the planned use of the finances for various activities of an organisation for a fixed future period; usually a year.

Regulations drawn up by an organization to regulate its internal affairs.

The vote granted to the chairperson of a meeting, in addition to the usual deliberative vote to which he/she may be entitled to by virtue of his/her membership, to enable him/her to decide a question before a meeting when the votes cast for and against are equal.

The closing of the debate on a question before a meeting, usually proposed with the wording: "..that the question now be put." This means that the proposer would like a vote taken immediately.

One or more persons appointed or elected by a superior body, to whom a specific matter, or a specified group of matters, is referred for consideration and report back. A committee may be either a 'standing committee' or an 'ad hoc' committee.

Acclamation

Accountability

Ad Hoc

Adjournment

Agenda

Amendment

Annual Financial Statements

Budget

By-laws

Casting vote

Closure

Committee

Deliberative vote	The vote cast by a member after considering an issue.
Draft	A preliminary form of a document, drawn up to serve as a basis for consideration and possible amendment.
Dropped motion	A motion that lapses because there is no seconder, or which, with the consent of the meeting, is withdrawn by the mover.
Formal motion	A motion which interrupts the discussion on a question before a meeting, and which relates to a point of procedure.
In committee	A procedure whereby non-members are excluded when a matter that the chairperson of the meeting thinks should not be discussed in public, is dealt with.
Inter alia	Latin= 'among other things'.
Interim report	A report issued at any time before a final report. Often a type of 'progress report'.
Majority	The greater part of those voting at a meeting. Questions are usually settled by a simple majority of votes, unless a larger proportion is prescribed in the standing orders.
Minutes	A record of the proceedings at a meeting. After being signed by the chairperson as a true reflection of what took place at the meeting, they become the organisation's official record of those proceedings.
Motion	A proposal formally submitted to a meeting for adoption. When submitted to the meeting, and seconded, it becomes 'the question,' and if it is adopted by the meeting, it becomes a 'resolution' of that meeting.
Next business	A formal motion whereby the debate on a particular question before a meeting may be abruptly terminated without a decision being reached. ("I propose that we move to the next business,...")
Point of order	A question raised at a meeting calling attention to some irregularity in the way in which the meeting is being conducted, such as the absence of a quorum.
Poll	Same as a ballot.

The deferment of a meeting, or of the consideration of a particular matter before the meeting, before commencement, until a later date; compare with adjournment.

To be in charge of a meeting and exercise control of it.

A vote cast by a person who is authorised to stand in for another person.

A motion which has been accepted by the chairperson of a meeting, and which is engaging the attention of the meeting.

Latin = 'of whom'. The minimum number of members who must be present for the meeting to be properly constituted.

An account, submitted to the body that commissioned it, of the matters that have engaged the attention of a standing committee, or the findings and recommendations of an ad hoc committee.

A formal decision taken by the members at a meeting.

Rules governing procedures to be followed in all meetings.

A motion that has been modified by a duly accepted amendment, and which has still to be adopted by the meeting. (See section 8 for more details)

Literally means 'of one mind'. All those present are in agreement.

Postponement

Presides

Proxy vote

Question

Quorum

Report

Resolution

Standing orders

Substantive motion

Unanimous

INTRODUCTION TO THE MANUALS

What are these manuals for?

This series of manuals has been designed to help school governing bodies in their task of overseeing the governance of schools. The manuals give an overview of the main issues that all school governing bodies need to understand and put into practice in order to be effective.

The manuals are an accessible training and reference guide for governing bodies. They explain the key requirements of National and Provincial legislation, and some of the practicalities of putting them into practice.

These manuals replace earlier manuals produced by the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education and Culture soon after the South African Schools Act of 1996 required all public schools to form governing bodies.

The Manuals

Manual 1:	Introduction to School Governance
Manual 2:	School Governing Body Elections
Manual 3:	Conducting Meetings and Keeping Records
Manual 4:	School Fund: Departmental Regulations
Manual 5:	Basic Financial Systems for Schools (training manual)
Manual 6:	Discipline and Codes of Conduct for Learners
Manual 7:	The School as Employer

Manual 3:

Conducting meetings and keeping records

Manual 3 gives school governing bodies the information they need to hold effective meetings. The manual is designed to give governing bodies an introduction to choosing the correct type of meeting to hold, how to prepare for the meeting, and how to conduct the meeting in an efficient and effective way. It also gives ideas on how to deal with different situations that can occur in meetings. It includes sections on the duties of those involved in meetings and emphasises their rights and responsibilities.

A short section on keeping records is included.

At the back of the manual you will find exercises based on the contents. They are designed to help you become familiar with meeting procedures.

How to use this manual

As a reference tool

The manuals are designed to be an accessible reference for members of governing bodies. They have been written and designed so that ordinary citizens playing a role in school governance can have their questions answered in a way that is easy to understand, and is applicable to their own situations.

Wherever possible, the approach that has been used features:

- non-technical language
- a 'frequently asked questions' approach
- brief and straight-forward answers
- references throughout the text to legislation which applies to particular issues
- additional information and examples that will assist you to apply the information
- exercises which can be used by individuals or governing bodies to help consolidate information
- formats and templates to help in carrying out various tasks
- a comprehensive index.

The approach in these manuals is specifically designed to help with immediate queries and to allow members to become familiar with governing body issues. For technical and legal matters it is essential that the manuals be read in conjunction with the relevant legislation, most of which can be found in the two volumes making up the 'Operations manual for KwaZulu-Natal schools' which is available in all schools.

As a training tool

The exercises at the back of this manual are designed to be used for training of new governing bodies and new members of governing bodies. Members can work through the exercises on their own, or as a group. Even members of governing bodies who are familiar with the information may find the exercises useful. Many of them are based on case study examples or areas where there is often confusion or difficulty with putting the legislation and regulations into practice.

As a reference tool

As a training tool

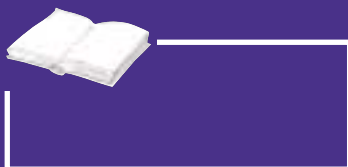
In this column you will find additional information in boxes. The boxes for different kinds of information look different from each other. The boxes are explained on this page.



How is this manual designed?

This manual is designed in the same way as this page. A question which is often asked by members of school governing bodies is given. The question is answered directly below it. The answers are as brief and direct as possible. They usually explain what is required by law in a way that is easier to understand than the legislation itself.

Where there is information that is regulated by legislation, you will see a box like this.



This box will tell you where to find more information in another manual or part of this manual.



This box will give examples.



This box will give you the definition or meaning of a word or concept.



The information in this box is an exception to the rule or a special case.



If there is more detailed information about how to do something it will be in a 'how to' box.



The information in this box is something that you should take particular note of.

1

INTRODUCTION TO MEETINGS

There are many different ways to hold meetings. The style that any committee or structure decides to use will depend on the people who make up the committee, the kinds of issues to be discussed and how formal the decision-making needs to be. School governing bodies will each develop their own style of holding meetings. This is fine, as long as every governing body makes sure that:

- the discussion and decisions are recorded;
- the records or minutes of the meetings are stored at the school and form a permanent record of the proceedings of the meetings held;
- national and provincial legislation is adhered to.

You can read more about how to record the discussions and about the regulations in this manual.

1.1 What is a 'meeting'?

A meeting happens when two or more people are notified to come together to share information and discuss and decide upon matters of common interest. It can only be a formal meeting though, if they have received notice of the meeting beforehand.

Meetings are an important way for people to communicate with each other and for democratic decision-making. If meetings are run well, and good discussion and decision-making happens, the organisation holding the meetings is usually efficient and effective. If meetings are not well planned and run, they can be seen as a waste of time and the organisation will not have a proper forum for communication. Your aim should always be to enjoy a constructive, positive meeting, and this should be an agreed goal of all those present. But this isn't as easy as it sounds. A meeting can slip into a negative mode very quickly. This happens because the people participating in the meeting all have different ideas, and often each thinks that their own idea is best! In reality contentious issues do emerge, for both the chairperson and the members.

There are some basic principles for meetings. These principles have developed over hundreds of years.



See 'Minutes' in
Section 8.5

They are:

The majority rules.

An entire group will not often agree and even though we strive for consensus, it is not always possible. If there is not agreement from everybody, the desires of the majority are carried out.

The rights of the minority are protected.

All the rights that are so important to us in our new democracy are important in meeting procedure. The majority do not have unlimited power and the minority still have the right of free speech, the right to vote, the right to stand for office, and the protection of a constitution.

Business must be achieved.

The reason that meetings are held is to further the desires of a group or organisation. Meetings should make progress on setting, monitoring and achieving the objectives of the organisation. If no progress is made the people who elected the members have the right to question why there is no progress.

Human feelings must be respected.

Any group is made up of individuals, each of whom has feelings. Courtesy and consideration are as important in our business relationships as in our personal relationships.

Sometimes these four principles contradict each other. For this reason organisations develop rules and procedures to keep each principle in place.



1.2 Why do we have rules and procedures?

Rules and procedures help the chairperson and the participants in the meeting to organise their procedure and to prepare for their discussion. They also help people to know what to expect in the meeting. By deciding on all the rules beforehand, a lot of time can be saved in the meeting. Can you imagine how disorderly and time consuming a meeting would be if there was a debate about what to discuss, how to vote and when to have a tea break during every meeting?

There are two main kinds of rules and procedures that are followed when holding meetings. These are Set Procedure and Standing Orders.

1.3 What is set procedure?

In order to ensure that a meeting is orderly and that no time is wasted, a set of established rules about how a meeting is conducted are followed. These rules are called *SET PROCEDURE*.

Set procedure allows all the necessary business to receive attention and gives all participants a chance to express their opinions.

1.4 What are Standing Orders?

In the same way as a soccer game has to run according to set rules, a governing body meeting has rules called *STANDING ORDERS* which control the way its meetings are conducted. Standing orders are established rules that the governing body uses to ensure that its meetings are run in a consistent manner. Standing orders can be about very minor matters like whether to have a tea break, and about major issues like voting procedures.

These Standing Orders are drawn up by the governing body itself and are in addition to the constitution. Standing orders can be changed by a majority vote.

The rules governing the conduct of meetings come from:

- i) Legislation
- ii) The governing body's constitution
- iii) Local custom or convention



SASA, the KZN regulations and, usually, the school's own constitution ensure that a set procedure must be followed.

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For example the set procedure for a meeting might include a set of agenda items which are followed in each meeting.

eg

Examples of standing orders could include:

- Report formats for committees
- The time, date and place of meetings
- Debating and voting procedures
- All points directed through the Chairperson
- Seating arrangements



A standing order can be suspended for a meeting or any part of it, if necessary.



Robert's Rules of

Order is recognised as an authoritative reference on meeting procedure.

1.5 What are the rights and responsibilities of members attending meetings?

There are basic rights of democratic procedure that underpin all interactions and transactions at meetings. For each of these rights, there are corresponding responsibilities.

Here is a summary:

RIGHT	RESPONSIBILITY
1. To receive notices	To keep informed of the organisation's activities
2. To attend meetings	To arrive on time and remain until closure
3. To propose motions	To learn the correct way of making proposals
4. To speak for or against a motion	To be courteous and follow the debating rules
5. To vote or abstain from voting	To participate (understand the issues and consider the results)
6. To nominate or be nominated	To choose suitable candidates
7. To serve on committees	To become familiar with the issues dealt with by the committees
8. To inspect the records	To read the minutes carefully
9. To resign	To try to resolve differences
10. To be treated equally	To abide by the decisions of the majority

Adapted from Husemeyer, L. (Ed.) *Know your Rights Amagi Books* 1992.

2

TYPES OF MEETINGS

There are several different types of meetings for which a governing body is, or may be responsible.

2.1 What are regular (ordinary) meetings?

Regular meetings are the meetings held at least every three months (or once a term) to deal with routine matters of governance. The governing body can decide that it will meet more often, if it needs to. The secretary of the governing body must give every member at least fourteen days' written notice of the date, time and place of the meeting and of the business to be discussed at the meeting.

The governing body may agree on a longer notice period if it wishes.

2.2 What are General Meetings?

SASA stipulates that the governing body must meet with the parents, learners, educators and other staff at the school, respectively, at least once a year (see 2.3 below).

'Respectively' implies that every year there should be at least one meeting with each of these groups.

For parents, the chairperson must call a meeting if he or she receives a written request for a meeting, which is signed by at least 15% of parents, and which sets out the business to be discussed at the meeting.

The parents must be given at least 14 day's notice of a meeting.



KZN Act 3 of
1996 (P.N. 149
of 1997) Regs.
21,22, 23, 25, 30



SASA
Section 18(2)(a)



KZN Act 3 of
1996 (P.N. 149
of 1997
Reg. 30(3)



This meets the SASA requirement (see 2.2 above) and the KZN Regulations.

2.3 What are Annual General Meetings?

The constitutions of school governing bodies generally stipulate that there should be an *Annual General Meeting (AGM)* of parents, learners, educators, and other staff respectively, once a year.

At each of these four meetings it is usual to present:

- an annual report by the chairperson which details the activities of the governing body during the preceding year; and
- the annual financial statements (this includes the budget for the forthcoming year).

Annual General Meetings allow the stakeholders to see that the governing body is operating in a satisfactory manner. There should always be an opportunity for the stakeholders to question the governing body members.

2.4 What are Extraordinary (Special) meetings?

An extraordinary meeting is called to discuss a specific item of business. It usually has a very short agenda and no other items may be added to the agenda. These meetings are often convened to discuss matters that cannot wait until the next *Annual General Meeting*.

The chairperson must call an extraordinary meeting if he or she gets a written request:

- signed by at least three elected members of the governing body and setting out the business to be discussed at the meeting; or
- from the Head of Department or Regional Chief Director, setting out the business to be discussed at the meeting.

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For example: An Extraordinary Meeting might be called to discuss changes to the budget projections, or a new important project.

2.5 What are urgent meetings?

The chairperson may call a meeting to discuss urgent matters. The only business that can be discussed at the urgent meeting is the business for which the meeting was called.

The secretary must give at least 24 hours' written notice of an urgent meeting.

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For example, an urgent meeting might be called to discuss a crisis issue, like damage to a building which must be repaired or the sudden resignation of the school principal.

2.6 What are meetings at short notice?

Any meeting may be held at shorter notice than provided for in the regulations as long as:

- all members agree in writing to a particular meeting being held despite the lack of sufficient notice in terms of the regulations; or
- all members are present at a meeting called at short notice and pass a motion condoning (overlooking) the lack of adequate notice in terms of the regulations.



See KZN Act 3 of 1996 (P.N. 149 of 1997) Reg. 25.

NOTES

3

PREPARING FOR MEETINGS

3.1 How do we prepare for meetings?

Good preparation is a key to a successful meeting. It is generally the task of the chairperson and secretary to ensure that preparations are done well. The following questions may help in the preparation:

- What kind of meeting is it?
- What is its purpose?
- Who is to take part?
- Are all the key participants available?
- What topics are to be discussed?

This allows the secretary to prepare items such as reports, statistics and plans, as well as the routine paperwork. It also allows the secretary to remind others of their expected participation - for example, the chairperson of an ad hoc committee may be scheduled to give a report-back.

- When is the meeting to take place?

It is difficult to make arrangements that suit everybody. For routine meetings, participants tend to prefer a fixed date and time for every meeting.

For other meetings the chairperson should determine the best date and time based on past experience and consultation.

- Where will the meeting be held?

The venue is one of the most important factors to consider in preparing for a meeting. There are many things that should be considered such as:

- ❖ Possible noise from outside
- ❖ Possible interruptions
- ❖ The size of the room
- ❖ Seating
- ❖ Toilet facilities
- ❖ Lighting

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For example, 'Routine meetings of the governing body will take place on the first Thursday of every term, at 17:00, unless an alternative arrangement is made at the previous meeting.'



3.2 How much notice should we have of a meeting?

The first meeting

The principal must convene the **first** meeting of the school governing body within 21 days after its election.

Ordinary meetings

For **ordinary** meetings of the school governing body the secretary must give each member at least 14 days' written notice of:

- the date, time and place of the meeting;
- the business to be discussed.

Urgent meetings

For **urgent** meetings the secretary must give at least 24 hours' written notice.

Extraordinary meetings

For **extraordinary** meetings the secretary must give written notice as for ordinary meetings.

Meetings at short notice

For meetings **at short notice** either;

- the meeting can be held despite the lack of sufficient notice in terms of the regulations, provided that all members agree in writing; or
- the meeting can be held provided that all members are present and pass a motion condoning the lack of adequate notice in terms of the regulations.



The Regional Chief Director may approve the holding of the first meeting at a later date if he/she is satisfied that there are good reasons.



For a summary of notice periods see Section 8.3.



Notice the emphasis on **ALL** members.

3.3 Who should attend meetings?

All members should make every effort to attend all meetings. When a person agrees to stand as a member, he or she is agreeing to the responsibilities of the post, which include attending and participating in meetings.

The governing body can decide to invite someone who is not a member of the governing body to attend a meeting. They might decide to do this if the items for discussion on the agenda require special input, or information, or if they want some advice.

If someone who is not a member is present at the meeting, he or she cannot vote and must leave the meeting when the governing body requests them to do so.

The governing body can request a staff member to be present at a meeting, if the staff member's participation will contribute to any discussion on the functions of the governing body.

3.4 What should I do if I cannot attend a meeting?

You should give your apology, well in advance, to the secretary or the chairperson. If you are absent from a meeting, you should make sure that you get the minutes of that meeting, read them well and make sure that you understand what was discussed and decided on.



See also the information on quorums; Section 5.9.



See KZN Act 3 of 1996 (P.N. 149 of 1997 Reg. 24 (1) & (2).

3.5 Where should we sit at the meeting?

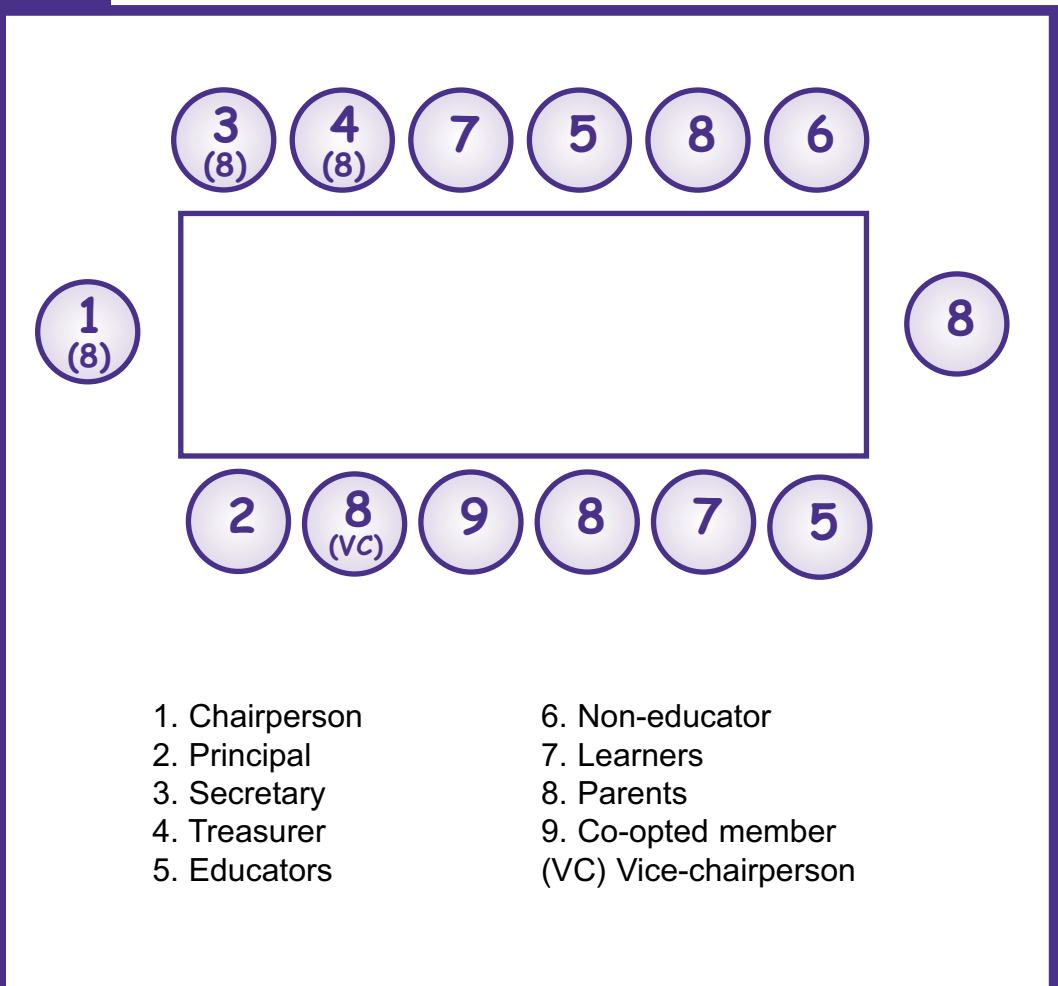
You should arrange the seating at the meeting in the way that makes discussion most efficient. If possible, all the members should be seated around a table, so that everybody can be seen, and so that you all have somewhere to put the paperwork in front of you.

At most meetings you will find that the chairperson, secretary and treasurer sit near to each other. This is so that they can manage the process of the meeting well, and so that they have all the documentation that they need close by.

You should try not to sit in segregated sexes, races, interest groups (e.g. finance committee all sit together) or representative groups (e.g. educators all sitting together.) Having a good seating mix in the meeting helps to promote discussion and good communication, and the sharing of ideas.

Here is an example of a good seating arrangement:

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4

OFFICE-BEARERS

4.1 What office-bearers should there be?

The legislation provides for the following:

- Chairperson
- Vice-chairperson
- Treasurer
- Secretary

Remember that the principal, staff members and learner representatives are not eligible for election as chairperson or vice-chairperson.

Each of the office-bearers has responsibilities and duties.



KZN Act 3 of
1996 (P.N. 149
of 1997) Reg. 20





What if you are dissatisfied with the way in which the chairperson is managing the affairs of the governing body or the meeting?

In both cases you would bring your concern to the attention of the chairperson. If you are not satisfied with his or her response to your concern, you may choose to propose a motion of no confidence in the chairperson. The motion then has to be dealt with in the usual manner. This is a most extreme measure, however, and should not be lightly contemplated.



For more information on decisive and deliberative votes see Section 5.12.

4.2 What are the duties and responsibilities of the chairperson?

The chairperson:

- presides at meetings of the governing body;
- calls meetings after consultation with the principal;
- determines the agenda of meetings after consultation with the principal; and
- presides at meetings of parents, educators, learners and non-educators called by the governing body.

The chairperson is seen by most people as the representative of the governing body. He or she is seen as the official mouthpiece and any statement that he/she makes is regarded as coming from the governing body as a whole.

The chairperson conducts meetings and is therefore responsible for their proper management. This includes:

- Calling the meeting to order and making sure that there is a quorum.
- Obtaining the meeting's approval before signing as correct the minutes of the previous meeting.
- Ensuring that the members keep to the rules and procedures.
- Presenting matters in the order in which they appear on the agenda.
- Deciding whether any proposals, motions and counter motions presented at the meeting are in order and within the functions of the governing body.
- Maintaining order.
- Ensuring correct voting procedure.
- Decisively ruling on points of order.
- Cutting down on unnecessary discussion.
- Ensuring that all members have a chance to speak in any discussion.
- Protecting a speaker from unacceptable interruption.
- Using a casting vote to decide an issue.



What if you as chairperson find that there is an obvious 'power-bloc' within the governing body? This group is in effective control.

A power-bloc exists when a group of people unite with a common purpose in mind. There are no formal mechanisms for dealing with issues like this. The solution may depend on your conflict resolution skills and on individual meetings in which you try to show how the situation is impacting negatively on the work of the school governing body.



Some golden rules for chairpersons:

- Be brief
- Be a leader
- Listen attentively
- Speak with authority
- Stand above petty differences; be impartial
- Maintain an orderly meeting
- To control others, control yourself
- Keep the members informed
- Be modest
- Be trustworthy



See also
Chairperson's
Agenda' Section 6.3.



eg

For example the chairperson might absent herself if she has a financial interest in the topic to be discussed.



The principal may designate members of staff to assist the secretary and treasurer.

4.3 What are the duties and responsibilities of the vice-chairperson?

The vice-chairperson is there to support the chairperson, and to stand in for the chairperson in meetings in some circumstances.

- If for any reason the chairperson is absent, the vice-chairperson takes over his or her responsibilities at the meeting.
- If the chairperson is late, then arrives, it is customary for the vice-chairperson to continue in the chair, at least until the item under discussion has been dealt with.
- In the rare event of the chairperson having to vacate the chair and absent him or herself, the vice-chairperson takes over while that item is dealt with.
- During the time that the vice-chairperson is in the chair he or she has all the powers of the chairperson. This includes having a decisive vote as well as a deliberative vote.

4.4 What are the duties and responsibilities of the treasurer?

The duties and responsibilities of the treasurer often vary according to the size of the school. Large schools may have clerical assistance but in smaller schools it is often the principal who doubles as the treasurer. The school governing body may choose to appoint a parent in an honorary capacity, assisted by the principal or an educator.

A treasurer looks after the finances of the school. This may include:

- managing the collection of school fees;
- ensuring that bills are paid;
- monitoring expenditure;
- ensuring that sound financial books are kept.

He or she should also keep the members informed of the school's current financial position. This is usually done at meetings.

The treasurer has the following responsibilities at meetings of the governing body:

- Presenting the 'Treasurer's Report' at each regular meeting. This report outlines current income and expenditure, and the present balance, and compares the actual position with the position anticipated by the budget. The report is in written form and is retained by the secretary as a permanent record.
- Preparing detailed financial statements for the AGM, and presenting them.
- Preparing the budget with the chairperson.
- Presenting the budget at the Annual General Meeting.
- Answering questions related to finance at the AGM.
- Advising the members on the raising of funds.
- Leading discussion on the setting of the school fees to be recommended to the parents.



In a public school today, the treasurer plays a key role. He or she has to have a thorough understanding of the school's finances and ensure that all other role-players share this understanding. The treasurer should not only be aware of the current position with school finances, but also be able to compare it with what happened in the past. He or she should also be able to forecast future trends to some degree.

The members tend to rely on the treasurer not only to keep them informed, but also to advise them if there is any problem that should cause concern. It is essential that the treasurer works closely with the chairperson (and the principal, if the principal is not the treasurer) and that there is a free flow of information and ideas.

If there is an administration clerk tasked with recording the school's finances, the treasurer should make a point of getting to know that clerk well and having frequent discussions with him or her.

On the school's finance committee, the treasurer is obviously a key role-player and would probably be the chairperson.

In presenting information to the school governing body the treasurer has to remember that very few members will be expert with finance, so the information should be presented as simply as possible. The use of simple illustrations such as bar graphs might assist.

Above all, the honesty and integrity of the treasurer must be beyond question.

eg

For

example, the treasurer should be able to make predictions like; "If the present pattern of fee-paying continues we will have a shortfall of R8000 compared to the estimate in our budget."



See

manuals 4 and 5 for detailed information on school financing.



4.5 What are the responsibilities and duties of the secretary?

The secretary has the following duties:

- Keeping up-to-date records of all members' details such as addresses, telephone (and fax) numbers, etc.
- Keeping in close contact with the chairperson and assisting him or her wherever possible.
- Compiling notices of meetings in conjunction with the chairperson, and circulating the notices.
- Ensuring that the venue is available.
- Making arrangements for suitable refreshments.
- Preparing the agenda, in conjunction with the chairperson.
- Assisting the chairperson with the 'chairperson's agenda', if required.
- Making enough copies of the agenda, the previous minutes, and important reports.
- Ensuring that the attendance register, the minute book and any other records that need to be referred to, are available at meetings.
- If any equipment is to be used, ensuring that it is available.
- Reading the minutes of the previous meeting, when requested to do so by the chairperson.
- Recording accurately the outcome of any voting.
- Recording the minutes.



See Sections 8.6 to 8.8 and section 8.13 for more information on 'Minutes'.

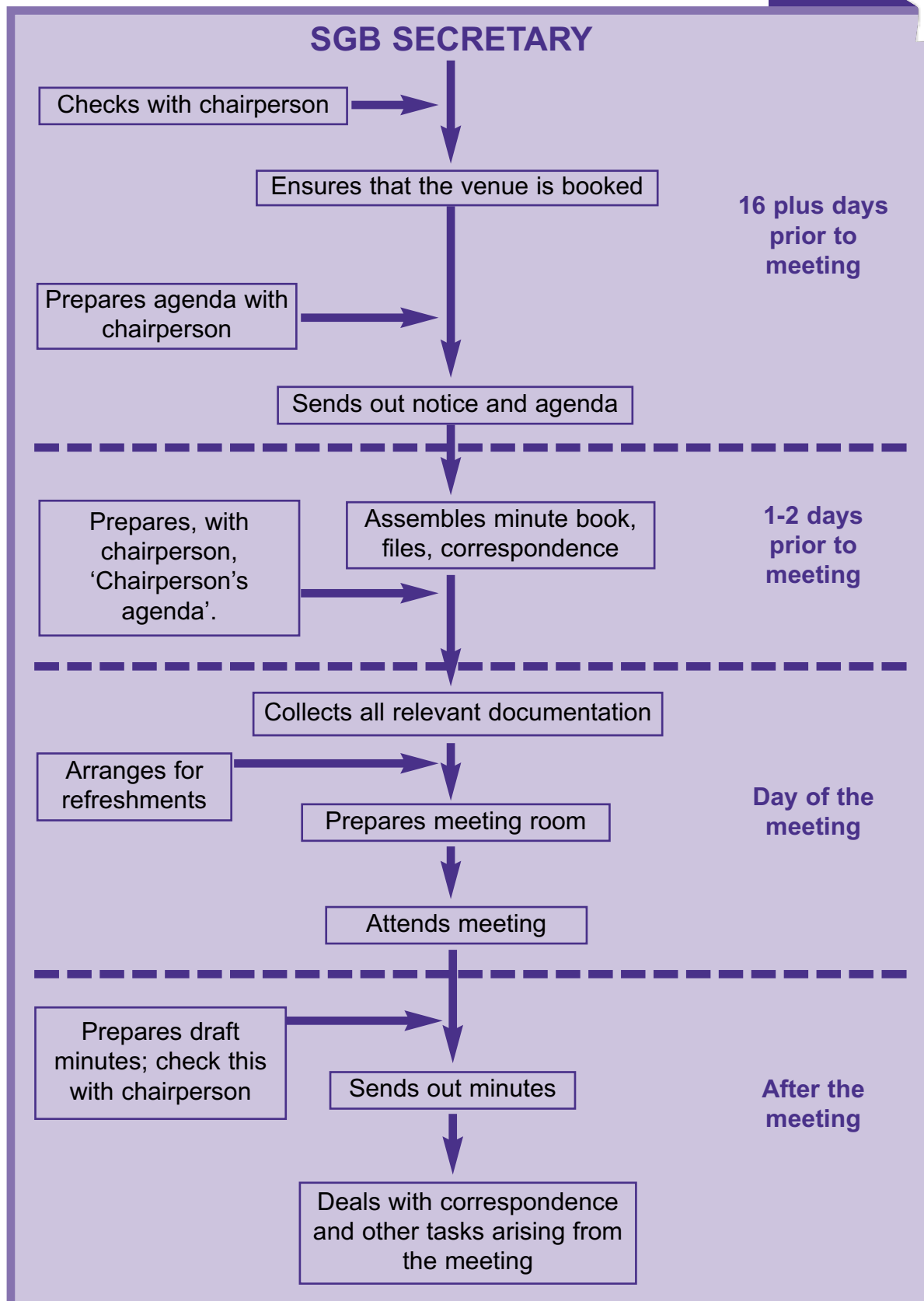


- Preparing a draft of the minutes, checking them with the chairperson and sending out the final version to the members.
- Attending to the school governing body's correspondence.
- Being responsible for the school governing body's documents and records.
- Carrying out the instructions of the school governing body.
- Giving information and help to every committee member as required.

The secretary should be a good organiser, methodical, calm and clear-headed, tactful and approachable. During a meeting it is

usual for the secretary to sit near to or next to the chairperson in order to record proceedings accurately and assist the chairperson with the technical details of running the meeting.

This diagram will show you how a governing body secretary could organise his or her tasks.



4.6 What should we do if an office-bearer cannot be present?

The chairperson

Normally the vice-chairperson would take the chair, but if he or she is also absent, the meeting elects a chairperson from amongst its members.

Note that if for any reason an acting chairperson adjourns a meeting, the following meeting is seen as a direct continuation of the adjourned meeting. The person who acted as chairperson at the adjourned meeting will usually take the chair for the part of the following meeting that deals with the unfinished business.

The treasurer

If the treasurer is missing the meeting may choose to wait until the following meeting for his or her report. No new business involving information about finances should be discussed or decided on if the treasurer is absent.

The secretary

If the secretary is absent the meeting elects some other person to take the minutes.

4.7 What should we do if an office-bearer resigns?

If one of the office-bearers resigns, the governing body elects one of its members to fill the vacancy for the remaining period of the term of office. This election should take place at the first meeting after the resignation.

5

MEETING PROCEDURE

5.1 What are the proper procedures for conducting a meeting? (the *rules of procedure*)

There are many rules to ensure that meetings progress in an orderly way. These are rules that are used by committees, businesses and governments all over the world, and which have developed as a result of experience.

In most of the meetings of the governing body, your decisions will probably be made by reaching consensus. This means that all the members will agree to an action through a process of discussion. This is usually the best way to make decisions.

Most of the procedures that you will read about in this section are rules that could be used if there is a need to formally vote on an issue. Going to the vote can cause division within the group, because people are required to take a firm position on an issue. Nevertheless, there may be some occasions when your governing body has to decide on an issue by voting. These procedures will guide you if you do.

The governing body must decide which rules it needs and intends to adopt, and should incorporate them in its standing orders.

The procedures in this section are just some of the different procedures that you could select.

5.2 How do we debate an issue?

Conducting debates in a meeting can be extremely difficult. Everyone seems to want to talk at once, and some people are insistent that their points be heard. There are some rules that can help with conducting debate or discussion:

- Matters must be dealt with in the order in which they appear on the agenda.
- The chairperson should try to let those **for** (in support of) a proposal all make their points first, and then those **against** should speak. This will help to organise the debate.
- All speakers should address their comments to the chairperson. (The 'Chair')

- Every member has the right to speak once to the motion being proposed and once to any amendment. The proposer has the right to reply.
- The chairperson has the right to sum up the total debate.

What if there is an unruly member?

It is the chairperson's responsibility to control members. This should be done in a tempered and progressive manner. At first the chairperson should simply ask the member to co-operate. If this fails, the chairperson can formally name the member and state the problem, then request the member to come to order. If that too fails, the majority of members present can vote to exclude the unruly member from the meeting.



5.3 What are motions and resolutions?

- A motion is a formal proposal submitted to a meeting. It is proposed by a proposer.
- A motion becomes a question if it is seconded and accepted for discussion.
- The question is then tabled for discussion.
- If the question is accepted by the meeting, for example by a majority vote, it becomes a resolution that is binding on the school governing body.

The following rules apply to motions:

- A motion must be proposed and seconded.
- If no seconder comes forward, the motion lapses.
- Motions must be positively worded.
- Motions must fall within the scope of the notice of the meeting, the agenda and, of course, the constitution.
- Motions should deal with a single matter.
- The actual motion begins with the word 'that'. For example, "I propose that..."

5.4 What is a counter-proposal?

If a member opposes a motion, he/she may lodge a counter-proposal.

5.5 What is an amendment?

If a member disagrees with some aspect of a motion he or she may table a motion that the original motion be amended. This amendment may be done by:

- adding certain words;
- replacing certain words; or
- deleting certain words.

A member may not propose or second more than one amendment to the same motion.

If an amendment is properly proposed, seconded and accepted by the chairperson it is dealt with immediately. If the meeting then agrees to the amendment it is incorporated into the original motion and the revised motion is then called the **substantive motion**. If the meeting rejects the amendment the debate reverts to the original motion.

eg

A proposal often comes about after a report. For example: "I propose (or 'move') that the recommendation, in the report of the fund-raising committee, that a fete be held to raise money for extensions, be accepted."

eg

Instead of proposing that the governing body rejects a report from a committee, rather propose that the committee reviews the recommendations with a view to finding other solutions.

eg

An example could be; "I propose that the motion be amended by adding the words 'in the first term' after 'held'."

5.6 What is a procedural motion?

A procedural motion is moved when a decision needs to be made about the way in which the discussion is being held. It is a motion that is proposed whilst another motion is being debated. Its purpose is to make the members come to an immediate decision about whether to:

- stop the debate;
- postpone the debate;
- vote on the motion;
- settle some problem.

If seconded and adopted (accepted by voting) a procedural motion is dealt with immediately.

Strictly speaking, only a member who has not taken part in the debate on the original motion can propose a procedural motion.

If this motion is accepted, then the original motion must also be voted upon immediately.

eg

An example of a procedural motion is a 'motion for closure', which aims to bring to an immediate end the debate on a particular motion. It is usually proposed as; "I move that this matter is now put to the vote."

eg

For example, if a later item in the agenda deals with an offer from Ladysmith Black Mambazo to hold a fundraising concert for the school, a member might suggest a motion to reconsider the motion to hold a fete to raise money, in the light of new information.

5.7 What is a motion to reconsider previous motions?

If a member thinks that a wrong decision was made earlier in the meeting, he or she may propose that the motion be reconsidered. This must happen on the same day as the original motion was adopted.

This may happen if discussion at a later point in the meeting adds more light on an issue.

A motion that was previously defeated, or rejected by members, may be reintroduced with alterations.

What if a member wishes to discuss a concern about a staff member who is allegedly negligent?

This is a highly contentious issue.

On the one hand the legislation clearly states that a governing body or a member of a governing body in his or her capacity as a member of a governing body may not interfere with the professional work of an educator in the performance of his/her duties.

On the other hand the legislation also requires that a governing body or a governing body member must report any irregularities which may come to its or the member's attention to the Head of Department.

Much may lie in the interpretation of the words 'interfere', and 'irregularities'.

If at all possible the first response of a member could be to discuss the concern directly with the school principal. If, in the opinion of the member, the concern is not dealt with adequately, the member has a duty to take it further and in such circumstances he/she could discuss the matter with the chairperson. The chairperson's response may depend on the circumstances. He/she may decide to;

- i) approach the principal him/herself;
- ii) by-pass the principal and ask for an interview with a senior official such as the Superintendent, Education Management;
- iii) allow the member to table a motion of concern at the next school governing body meeting, notwithstanding the fact that the principal is a member of the governing body;

Such an action would almost inevitably lead to the issue becoming public. Subsequent action by the governing body would probably lie along the lines of (i) and (ii) above, the difference being that the issue has now been aired at the meeting and therefore not easily neglected.



KZN Act 3 of
1996 (P.N. 149
of 1997) Reg 4
(2) & (4)

eg

For example:

If the meeting begins to debate whether Ladysmith Black Mambazo or the local choir are better entertainers, a member might raise a point of order. He or she would say: "Chairperson, is this issue relevant to the motion to accept Ladysmith Black Mambazo's offer or not?"

eg

If there are thirteen members on a governing body the minimum number needed for a quorum is seven.

5.8 What is a point of order?

A point of order is also a type of procedural motion. Any member, at any time, who feels that the rules are being broken, brings that concern to the attention of the chairperson. All other business is suspended until the chairperson gives a ruling. A point of order is always raised as a question to the chairperson whose ruling on the matter is final.

Points of order are usually raised in the following situations:

- If a quorum does not exist.
- If a member believes that a motion or amendment is not permitted in terms of the rules of the organisation (or the law of the land).
- If the debate has drifted away from the matter being discussed.
- If there has been some irregularity.
- When unacceptable language has been used.
- When it is believed that there is no 'question' before the meeting.

5.9 What is a quorum?

A quorum is the minimum number of members whose presence at meetings is necessary before any business can be validly dealt with at the meeting.

For governing bodies a quorum is the majority of members.

If a quorum is not present at a properly convened meeting, the meeting must be adjourned for at least eight days but not more than fourteen days.

The secretary must give notice of the adjourned meeting.

A governing body is entitled to deal with all business on the agenda of an adjourned meeting on the new meeting date, even if there is not a quorum present.

5.10 What is 'Protection'?

A member, usually whilst speaking, may feel that his/her rights are being infringed in some way, for example by continual interruptions. In such a case the member may choose to ask for help from the chairperson by requesting 'protection' from the Chair. The chairperson must decide whether the appeal is justified. If he or she agrees that it is, steps must be taken immediately to bring the meeting back to order.



5.11 What is meant by 'recognise'?

Sometimes many people wish to comment or pose questions and they all want attention at the same time. To keep order and assure them that each will have a chance to speak, the chairperson may point to each in turn and state "I recognise speaker number 1, I recognise speaker number 2, I recognise speaker number 3,..." and so on.

5.12 What is proper voting procedure?

There are various ways of voting. The school governing body, should decide on the best method for it to use, and then write that down as part of the constitution or the standing orders.

eg

The secretary could record the decision like this: 'By general consent the committee agreed to follow up on the matter.'

General Consent

This is used when there is obviously no opposition to the matter being dealt with. Everybody is in agreement.

Acclamation (by voice)

If the chairperson thinks that all members seem to be in agreement, but wants to make sure, he or she can ask the members to voice their approval or disapproval.

The chairperson says: "Those in favour say 'Yes'."

Then says, "Those not in favour say 'No'."

There are some obvious limitations to this style of voting. It is usually used if the matter is very popular and no opposition is expected.



Show of hands

This can be used when an accurate vote is needed; for example when a two-thirds majority must be proved. The problems with this method are that it can sometimes be difficult to count if there are lots of people voting, and there is no secrecy.

Ballot

This is a secret vote. It is used when the voters may not wish their votes to be public. It is the system used in school governing body elections but for ordinary meetings the governing body may choose to use more simple methods.

Voting by proxy

One voter can vote on behalf of another provided that he or she has been legally authorised to do so. If voting by proxy is going to an acceptable method of voting for your governing body, the constitution or standing orders must make provision for it. The person who allows another member to vote on his or her behalf must sign a form transferring the voting power to another named person. Often the proxy vote is given to the chairperson who is trusted by the absentee voter.

Casting vote

Standing orders often give the chairperson a casting vote (a decisive vote) as well as the usual deliberative vote. This means that if all the votes (including the chairperson's vote) have been cast and there is a tie, the chairperson can give a casting vote to settle an issue. A wise chairperson does everything possible to avoid having to do this, as it can be a cause of conflict.

Abstaining

A member who does not wish to vote and wants this noted, may request that his or her abstention be recorded.

Abstentions are not taken into account when deciding on majority votes.

eg

If there are 13 members and;

- 4 abstain from the vote;
- 5 vote for the issue; and
- 4 vote against the issue.

There is a majority vote in favour of the issue despite the fact that 8 members did not wish to vote for it.

NOTES

6

THE AGENDA

The agenda is the 'transaction list'; a list of all the items that must be dealt with at the forthcoming meeting. The agenda may be made up of purely routine business items or it may include other matters such as an address by an expert on a particular topic.

The agenda for a forthcoming meeting should be sent out together with the notice of the meeting, in order to give the members time to prepare.

Remember to include guidelines for the agendas of meetings of the governing body in your standing orders.

6.1 Why do we need to have an agenda?

There are many reasons why an agenda is a useful tool:

- Matters that naturally follow one another can be put on the agenda in sequence (order planning) and can then be logically dealt with.
- It helps ensure that business carried over from a previous meeting is included and dealt with.
- All necessary business is dealt with. It makes sure that, during the meeting, items are not forgotten or ignored.
- If delivered in good time to the members it reminds them of business for which they must prepare.
- It helps to ensure that the meeting is run correctly.
- It makes time-planning possible so that time is not unnecessarily spent on unimportant issues. It is acceptable to give a time limit and to cut the debate when time is up.
- It ensures that back-up material (documents, reports, maps, quotes, builders' plans, etc.) are available at the meetings.

The secretary is responsible for preparing the agendas. He or she should work with the chairperson, being sure to include items requested by members and committees. The previous minutes should be checked to ensure that items carried over from the previous meeting are included.

There are various types of agendas. Some give only an outline, or headings, whilst others include more detail such as specific

motions. Some agendas have an 'Action column' on one side. This is for members to note down the names of people who will be following up on particular items. Certain agendas are very explicit. They make known:

- What matters are to be discussed.
- Why these matters are to be discussed.
- What is hoped to be achieved.

The phrases 'For information,' 'For discussion,' and 'For decision,' can be added to an item to make the intention clear.

6.2 What should be included in an agenda?

On the next pages there is a comprehensive list of items that could be included on an agenda. It is up to individual governing bodies to decide on the format that would be best for them. There is a certain order in which items are usually dealt with, but it is not binding.



This list does not imply that every agenda must include all items! The agenda for a meeting should never be too long. A meeting that lasts for several hours results in poor concentration on the part of the participants. Rather divide a very long agenda into two separate meetings.



Possible Agenda items

1. Call to order

At the time announced in the notice of the meeting, the chairperson calls the meeting to order.

2. Welcome

The chairperson welcomes all present and thanks them for their attendance.

He or she then checks that a quorum is present. If not, the members discuss informally what can be done (such as adjourning whilst some members are persuaded to attend).

The chairperson checks that all members received the notice of meeting. It may be read again to ensure that all agree with its contents, or 'taken as read'.

3. Ceremonial observance

A prayer or invocation can be said immediately after the welcome.

4. Attendance register and apologies

All those present should sign an attendance register. If apologies have been given to the chairperson, secretary or another member prior to the meeting, they should be announced.



5. Adoption of agenda

The chairperson reads the agenda and asks if there are any amendments. If these are proposed and adopted they are added to the agenda by general consent.

6. Approval of the minutes

The chairperson asks the secretary to read the minutes of the previous meeting. If the minutes have been previously circulated, the chairperson may ask if he or she can 'take the minutes as read'. This assumes that all have already read the minutes. This is a time-saving device but it has obvious disadvantages and it is preferable to have the minutes read out in full.

The chairperson then asks if there are any corrections to the minutes.

If there are no corrections the minutes are approved as read. This approval is in the form of a motion that has to be proposed, seconded and adopted.

Only those members who were present at the previous meeting can have any say in dealings with the minutes.



What if you are not happy that the minutes are a true reflection of what transpired at the last meeting?

- You should immediately bring your concern to the attention of the chairperson. This could be in the form of a motion, if necessary. Your concern would then be debated and you would have to accept the decision of the majority.



See also the note on new urgent items, in the 'What if..' box on page 41.

eg

The chairperson could say: "May I sign to signify that these minutes are a true record/reflection of proceedings at the meeting held on...?"



Note that even if an error in the minutes is noticed only much later, it can still be corrected.



Correcting the minutes

Minor corrections, such as spelling, are corrected immediately and initialled by the chairperson. Major corrections, such as a decision being incorrectly recorded, have to be dealt with by means of a correcting resolution. The corrections will appear in the next minutes. The original minutes are not altered, except for the incorrect minute being highlighted and a reference made to the correction to be found in the next set of minutes.

The minutes, with the corrections duly noted, are then approved.

Noting corrections in the minutes is not always done and for this reason, if checking the records, it is important to study both the minutes of the meeting itself and the minutes of the subsequent meeting as well.

eg

For example, extensive repairs to the buildings, or negotiations with the authorities for debt relief.

eg

For example, if a member was asked at the previous meeting to obtain quotes for equipment, the quotes can now be presented.

7. Matters arising from the minutes

The chairperson asks if there are any matters arising from the minutes. Examples of these could be matters which:

- are on-going, and which need a progress report;
- were raised at the last meeting, but not finalised;
- are a result of a member wanting to add to, reconsider or revisit an item reflected in the minutes;
- were deliberately postponed at the last meeting, perhaps to give the members more time to consider a proposal. These matters are sometimes dealt with separately under the agenda title; 'Unfinished business'.

When dealing with matters arising, the chairperson should ensure that members do not stray into discussion on topics that have nothing to do with the previous minutes or that will be dealt with under an item later on the agenda.

8. Correspondence

The secretary usually reads out any correspondence received. If action is required as a result of the contents of the correspondence, it may be settled immediately, or postponed until 'New business' is dealt with. If it relates to an item already on the agenda, it should be dealt with when that item is reached.

9. Reports

Reports are usually given by the treasurer, the principal and the chairperson. In addition, there may be reports from standing and ad hoc committees.

10. New business

This is strictly new matters which have not been discussed at previous meetings. It is usually a good idea not to finalise an item of new business immediately, if it is felt by some members that it is being rushed.

11. Good of the Order

This item is not often included in agendas, but it can be very useful. It is a time when useful comments and observations can be made. Praise, so often overlooked, can be given and achievements celebrated.

12. General

Items which do not belong in any other category are dealt with here. Also if members requested items be placed on the agenda at the beginning of the meeting, they are dealt with at this point. Some standing orders do not allow members to put issues on the agenda at the last minute. This is often because some members abuse the privilege by asking for contentious items to be placed on the agenda, knowing that others are ill-prepared to deal with them.

13. Announcements

These can be forthcoming events. The date of the next meeting can be settled here.

14 Adjournment (also called 'Closure')

To adjourn means to end the meeting. Often closure includes a vote of thanks. The time of the adjournment must be noted in the minutes. No business can be dealt with after the meeting has adjourned.



What if the agenda is not completed before the agreed closing time of the meeting?

The chairperson must ask the members for their views. If the consensus is that the meeting should continue there is no real problem with doing so. However, if a member has arranged to leave at that time and objects to the meeting continuing without him or her, the chairperson may have no alternative but to suspend the discussion on the rest of items until the next meeting.



What if a member wants to add a new urgent item to the agenda, half way through the meeting?

According to strict procedure, this item should not be added to the agenda, unless there is some provision to do so in the standing orders. Normally the only way to deal with the issue would be to convene an urgent meeting or a meeting at short notice. In reality, however, it is probably in the best interests of the school and the members to accept that it was a genuine error and include the item, **provided that all the members present agree.**

6.3 What is a chairperson's agenda?

The chairperson should be well prepared for the meeting. It is a good idea before the meeting for him or her to make some notes about the agenda items, to help with the running of the meeting. These notes can be written on to a copy of the agenda. This is called a chairperson's agenda. The secretary should assist with this task.

eg

Agenda		
Time	Subject	Notes
16:00	1. Welcome	Welcome Mrs Ngidi (To report on AIDS awareness week)
16:04	2. Adoption of agenda	
16:06	3. Apologies	Mr Dlamini on leave
16:08	4. Approval of minutes	Incorrect date; page 2
16:10	5. Matters arising from the minutes	Remember the follow-up on the fence repair (page 3)
and so on		

7

COMMITTEES

7.1 What is a committee?

A committee is a group of people appointed by the governing body as either a standing (permanent) committee or as an 'ad hoc' (temporary) committee.

A standing committee is usually appointed to perform a specific, on-going function such as managing the finances. Its powers and duties are determined by the governing body, which gives it specific terms of reference. In doing this the governing body does not hand over power or rights, it merely delegates them.

The governing body does not have to carry out the decisions of one of its standing committees.

An ad hoc committee is usually appointed by the governing body to carry out a specific task such as investigating and reporting on some matter. Once the task is completed the committee is dissolved.

7.2 Who should be the chairperson of a committee?

The governing body appoints a convenor to get the committee up and running. The chairperson of a committee must be a member of the governing body.

7.3 Who can serve on these committees?

The governing body may appoint people who are not governing body members as members of a committee. It is a good idea to appoint experts in a particular field to assist the governing body.

7.4 What committees should we have?

The need for committees varies from school to school.

Standing committees could include Finance, Grounds and buildings, Staff appointments and Discipline. Ad hoc committees may be formed to tackle particular projects such as a fund-raising event.

If the school caters for learners with special needs, there should be a committee on special education needs.

eg

Examples of standing committees could include:

- Finance
- Discipline
- Maintenance

An example of ad hoc committee could be one appointed to investigate the need to review the curriculum.



KZN Act 3 (P.N.
149 of 1997)
Reg. 29 (5)

7.5 Do committees operate just like the main body, with a secretary, minutes and so on?

Committees tend to operate less formally than the main body, but this does not mean that they can neglect the need for good systems and proper records. Sometimes the job of secretary is rotated amongst the members so that one member is not burdened with it.

7.6 How do committees interact with the main body?

The chairpersons of each active committee are expected to report back to the governing body at every meeting. This report should preferably be in written form to assist the secretary of the main body with his or her record-keeping function.

8

RECORDS

All of the documents used by a governing body are part of its written records.

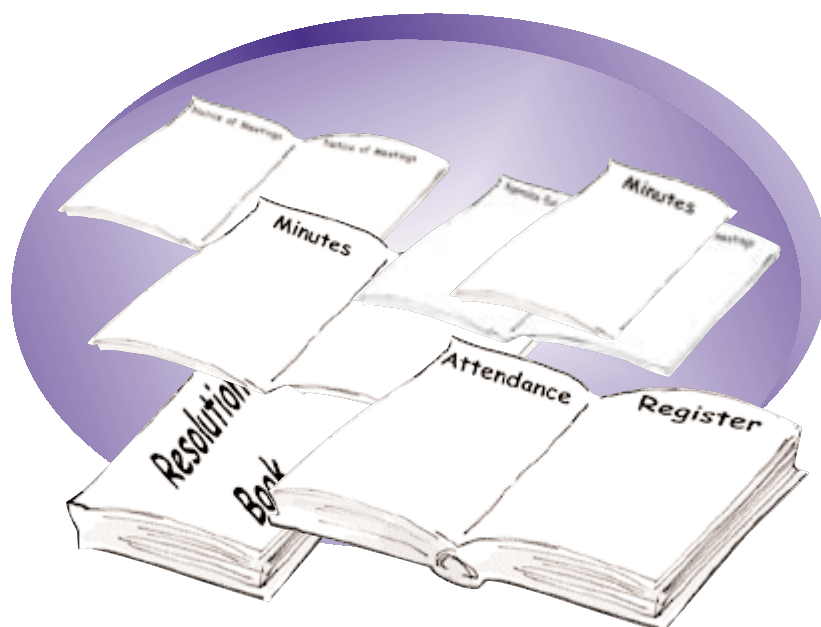
8.1 For how long should the records be stored?

The records of a governing body are very important documents. They constitute an important element of the history of the school. Apart from the fact that they may be needed by the Department at some stage, they are also vital in ensuring continuity from one governing body to the next. They should, therefore, be kept permanently.

8.2 What records should we keep?

Every governing body should keep, use and store:

- Notices of meetings
- Agendas for meetings
- Attendance registers
- Minutes of meetings
- A resolutions book
- All correspondence



The only exception is the records of voting, which are kept for a limited period. See Manual 2 for retention periods for vote records.



You can read information on the agenda in section 6 of this manual. There are examples of agendas on pages 51 and 52.



You will find examples of notices on page 51.

8.3 What are notices of meetings?

The secretary (or, if it is an election meeting, the electoral officer) must send or hand out written notices of meetings to all members (or parents, educators, non-educators and learners) in good time.

The periods of notice are:

1. First elections for new schools.	Within 60 days of establishment.
2. First elections for existing schools.	Within 60 days of a date determined by the Minister by notice in the Provincial Gazette.
3. Election meetings for parents.	At least 14 days before the date of the proposed meeting.
4. Elections of educators and non-educators to the governing body.	At least 7 days before the date of the election meeting.
5. Elections of RCL members to the governing body.	Not specified, but ample notice should be given.
6. Ordinary meetings of the governing body.	At least 14 days before the meeting.
7. Ordinary meetings of the RCL.	Not specified, but ample notice should be given. The period should be specified in the RCL constitution.
8. Urgent meetings.	At least 24 hours.
9. Extraordinary meetings.	At least 14 days.
10. Budget meetings for parents.*	At least 30 days.
11. General meeting of parents.	At least 14 days.



See SASA Section 38(2)

*The budget for the ensuing year is normally presented at the Annual General Meeting for the parents. If this is to be done, there must be at least 30 days' notice of the meeting.

8.4 What are registers?

An attendance register should be taken at all meetings. The secretary must record the names of all those present at the meeting in the minutes. It is a good idea for the secretary to write down the names in his or her notes and then use the register as a cross-check. The signatures of those present serve as proof that the members were present in person, should the minutes ever be queried.

As membership of the RCL and the SGB is usually stable over the period of the term of office, the secretary may wish to prepare a typed register of the names of members in alphabetical order. Members can then sign next to their names.

Remember to leave space on the register for the names of non-members who have been asked to attend a meeting for a specific purpose. With these it is a good idea to add a brief note to the register, explaining why they were at the meeting.

If a member arrives late, the time that he or she arrived, and the agenda item being discussed, should be written down next to the signature on the register. Similarly, those who have to leave early should note on the register the agenda point at which they left and the time.

8.5 What are minutes?

The minutes are the written record of what has been said at the meeting. It is the task of the secretary to record the minutes. The main arguments and decisions of a meeting are summarised and recorded in the minutes.

At the beginning of the next meeting, the secretary is required to read the minutes of the previous meeting aloud and they must be corrected, their adoption proposed and seconded by members of the committee, then signed by the chairperson in the presence of the committee.

The minutes must be written concisely and clearly and must not leave any possibility for speculation or alteration. The spaces for the signature of the chairperson and the date of their confirmation must be left open immediately beneath the last entry in the minutes. Any supporting documents, such as a report written by a member and tabled at the meeting, are added to the minutes.



KZN Act 3 (P.N.
149 of 1997)
Regulation 26



Useful words include:

said :-
(straightforward)

stated :-
(more formal)

argued :-
(shows there was disagreement)

emphasised :-
(stressed)

urged :-
(wants others to agree)

mentioned :-
(not a vital point)

All discussions on matters, directives of the Department and the principal, general topics and organisational matters must be recorded. All decisions made must, without fail, be formally and correctly noted. In this manner the minutes will serve as a reference to the staff and parents at any stage and whenever required.

8.6 How do you take and record minutes?

During the meeting it is easier to simply write in point form, and then to rewrite your notes into formal minutes.

- First, write down the agenda number of the issue to be discussed, and give it a brief title.
- During the discussion, note down major points. Remember to name the speaker.
- Finally, write down the decision that was made. This means what the members agreed to do, who agreed to do it and by when they agreed to do it.

Here is an example of how a discussion could first be noted in point form, and then written up into formal minutes:

eg

NOTES:

Mrs Nhlapo: We should ask the newspapers to write an article about the school - very few people know what has been achieved.

Discussion:

- Agreed that this is a good idea.
- What we want the papers to include.
- What papers to contact.

Decision:

Mrs Mngadi and Mrs Nhlapo: to write the statement about the school.

Mr Jackson: to talk to a reporter from the 'Natal Witness'.

Mr Msomi: to contact 'Ilanga'.

Take note: It was decided to ask to see the story before it is printed, so we can alter what we don't like. All this to be done before the next meeting.

ENTRY IN MINUTES

6.1 Newspaper article on school activities.

It was suggested that, before the next meeting, the 'Natal Witness' and 'Ilanga' be approached to write an article on the activities of the school. This was agreed to and the following members were chosen to carry out the task: Mrs Mngadi, Mrs Nhlapo, Mr Jackson, Mr Msomi.

The minutes should follow the agenda of the meeting. There should be a heading in the minutes for each item on the agenda.

8.7 How are the minutes kept?

The secretary is held responsible for the filing of minutes and agendas in a PERMANENT bound book with numbered pages. This is a book from which pages cannot be removed or inserted or alterations made.

The minute book is kept safely at the school.



You will find an example of minutes of a meeting on page 53.

8.8 May the members decide to exclude something from the minutes?

Members may feel that they do not want something noted in the minutes if it is a very sensitive issue.

Nothing that is discussed at a properly constituted meeting can be removed from the record. If a chairperson feels that an issue about to be discussed is of a sensitive nature he or she can suspend the meeting to allow informal discussion. After the meeting resumes, all comments are once again recorded.



What if a member tells the secretary that his or her remark is "off the record"?

This should be discouraged. If the person does not want the remark recorded, it should not be uttered in committee.

8.9 . What is a resolutions book?

This is an optional, but useful book in which the secretary records all those resolutions which become binding on the governing body and therefore part of their policy. The book should be well-indexed so that the resolutions can be found easily.

Resolutions remain the policies of the governing body until or unless they are rescinded or amended at a later date.

eg

The governing body receives many appeals for financial assistance and realises that it has been inconsistent in its past responses, leading to accusations of favouritism. A member proposes this motion:

"...that in future, unless there are exceptional circumstances, only appeals from charities in the local town will be considered by this governing body."

This is adopted and therefore becomes a policy decision of the governing body. The secretary records the resolution in the Resolutions book and indexes it under 'Charities'.

8.10 How do we keep records of correspondence?

All correspondence to and from the governing body must be routed through the secretary and chairperson. The secretary organises all the incoming mail, and is responsible for preparing outgoing mail. Usually the chairperson writes all outgoing letters but if a letter is written by another member, for example an appeal from the chairperson of the fund-raising committee, the chairperson should countersign it. His or her signature signifies that he or she knows what is in the letter, and agrees with the contents.

All correspondence is read at the routine meetings and becomes part of the permanent records of the organisation. The secretary must therefore keep all incoming mail and signed copies of the outgoing mail.

8.11 Examples Of Notices

Example: Notice of meeting for a governing body

Simunye CP School

Notice of Meeting

A meeting of the governing body of Simunye CP School will be held on Saturday, 16 August 1997 at 10:00 in the Principal's office. The agenda is attached.

J. Nkosi
11 Iris Street
Drasty 3470
033-5061083
30 July 1997

Example: Notice of meeting for AGM of parent body

Simunye CP School

Notice of Annual General Meeting

The first Annual General Meeting of the parent body of Simunye CP School will be held on Saturday 23 August 1997 at 10:00 in the school library. The agenda is attached.

J. Nkosi
11 Iris Street
Drasty 3470
033-5061083
30 July 1997

8.12 Examples Of Agendas**Example: Items on the agenda of a regular (routine) meeting****Meeting of the Governing Body of Simunye CP School 16 October 2000.**

1. Opening and welcome
2. Notice of meeting
3. Attendance register and apologies
4. Minutes of the previous meeting
5. Matters arising from the previous minutes
6. Treasurer's Report
7. Chairperson's Report
8. Any other business (or General)
 - 8.1. Cleanliness of the school grounds
 - 8.2. Readathon day
 - 8.3. Selection of representatives for an interview panel
 - 8.4. Preparations for the Annual General Meeting
9. Date of next meeting
10. Closure and vote of thanks

Example: Items on the agenda of an Annual General Meeting

Annual General Meeting of Simunye CP School 20 November 2000

1. Opening and welcome
2. Notice of meeting
3. Attendance register and apologies
4. Minutes of the previous Annual General Meeting and any Special General Meetings
5. Matters arising from the minutes of the previous meetings
6. Chairperson's annual report
7. Annual financial report
8. Appointment of auditors for the following year
9. Any other business
 - 9.1. Ideas for fundraising
10. Closing and vote of thanks

Item 9: The agenda for an AGM is a closed agenda and is drawn up by the chairperson of the body.

Item 8 will only apply to schools where a firm of auditors is used. However, the parents are entitled to know the name of the person appointed to scrutinise the financial statements of the school and so this item should appear on the agenda of the AGM.

Example: Items on the agenda of Special (Extraordinary) Meetings

Special meeting of the governing body of Simunye CP School 3 March 2001

1. Opening and welcome
2. Notice of meeting
3. Attendance register and apologies
4. Reason for meeting: Unrest at the school
5. Closure

A special meeting is called to discuss a specific item of business and has, therefore, a very short agenda. At a special meeting, no other items of business may be introduced by any member.

8.13 Example of Minutes

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of the Simunye CP School held on 23 August 2000 at 17:00 in the library of the school.

PRESENT: Mr J. Nkosi (Chairperson)
 Ms T.T. Bengu (Vice-Chairperson)
 Mr S.N. Dlamini (Secretary)
 Mr B.V. Ngcobo (Principal)
 Mrs V. Thusi (Treasurer)
 Ms C.N. Zondi
 Mr P. Green
 96 parents as per attached attendance register

APOLOGIES: Mr C. Smith
 Mrs T. Mngadi
 Mr S. Nhlapo

1. OPENING AND WELCOME:

Mr Nkosi welcomed all members present and introduced the Superintendent for the Circuit, Mr X. Zulu.

2. NOTICE OF MEETING:

The notice of meeting was taken as read.

3. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING:

The minutes of the inaugural meeting of the Simunye CP School were read by the Secretary. The adoption of the minutes as a true and accurate reflection of the proceedings of the previous meeting was proposed by Mr S. Nhlapo, seconded by Mrs T. Mngadi and signed by the Chairperson.

4. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE PREVIOUS MINUTES:

4. 1. Fencing around the school

The Principal reported that the matter had been dealt with and the Department had completed the perimeter fencing.

The heading of the minutes tells us: **WHAT** the meeting was, **WHERE** it was, **WHEN** it was.

The next section of the minutes tells us: **WHO** was at the meeting, **WHO** sent apologies for missing the meeting.

Notice of meeting: This is recorded as either 'was read' or 'taken as read'.

These are read by the secretary, amended if necessary and approved.

These are taken in the order that they appear in the previous minutes and are recorded under the same headings as the previous minutes.

5. CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT

Mr Nkosi read his report (attached) in which he highlighted the successes of the school, especially in the field of sport.

The chairperson's report need not be recorded in detail as it should be a written report that is read by the chairperson and then attached to the minutes.

6. ANNUAL FINANCIAL REPORT:

Mrs Thusi summarised the financial report (attached) for the members and reported that the school fund showed a balance of R616,30 for the financial year. She stated that the school fees would have to increase in the following year to cover the proposed expenditure on new sporting equipment.

The annual financial report is normally handed out to all the parents so that they can scrutinise the balance sheet for themselves and question any item of expenditure. The financial report must be adopted by the members.

The adoption of the financial statement was proposed by Mrs M. Msimang and seconded by Mr L. Hlatswayo.

After some discussion the following increase in the school fees was proposed by Mrs F. Wood, seconded by Mr K. Khathi and adopted by majority vote:

School fees to be increased to R160 per annum per child.

7. APPOINTMENT OF AUDITORS:

Mr. W. White, seconded by Ms F. Zungu, proposed that the firm of Dinkleman and Swart be re-appointed as auditors. The motion was carried unanimously.

8. ANY OTHER BUSINESS:

If there is any correspondence to be dealt with, it is now recorded, followed by any other business.

8.1. Ideas for fund raising:

The following ideas were put forward by the meeting:

- A walkathon
- A 'civvies' day for learners
- Possible raffles
- A fête
- A cultural day

Mr Nkosi thanked the parents for their contribution and said that the ideas would be discussed at the next governing body meeting.

9. CLOSURE AND VOTE OF THANKS

Mr Nkosi thanked the governing body for the work done in 2000 and wished them well for the coming year. The meeting closed at 19:30.

The closure of the meeting is recorded very simply.

ACTIVITIES

1. General Review

Select the correct answer.

1. An ad hoc committee is
 - a) an informal group
 - b) formed to deal with a particular issue
 - c) a permanent feature of all governing bodies
2. An agenda is
 - a) a list of items for consideration at a meeting
 - b) a summary of the minutes of a meeting
 - c) sufficient record of the proceedings at a meeting
3. A resolution is
 - a) an item tabled for discussion
 - b) a firm decision of the governing body
 - c) an amendment to a motion
4. The difference between an 'adjourned' meeting and a 'postponed' meeting is that a postponed meeting
 - a) never started
 - b) started but was not completed
 - c) has to be agreed to by all members
5. If a chairperson uses a casting vote it
 - a) replaces his/her deliberative vote
 - b) is in addition to his/her deliberative vote
 - c) counts as two votes
6. The chairperson of a committee must be
 - a) a parent member of the governing body
 - b) any member of the governing body
 - c) an expert in the field
7. A dropped motion is one that
 - a) has been replaced by an amended motion
 - b) is a repeat of an earlier motion
 - c) has lapsed because it has no seconder

8. A major feature of voting by ballot is that
- the voting is secret
 - it is used only when several vacancies exist
 - it is the system used in all school voting
9. Minutes are kept in a
- two-quire exercise book
 - file to make insertions easier
 - bound book with numbered pages
10. At a school governing body meeting a quorum exists when
- there are more parents than non-parents
 - there are more voting members than non-voting members
 - the number of voting members present is more than half of the total membership.

2. 'The majority rules'

- List the reasons for believing the principle that 'the majority rules' is a sound one for governing bodies.
- List possible problems with the principle.

3. Standing orders

As a group, decide on 5 principles that you believe should underpin all standing orders for a school governing body.

4. Contributions of members of a school governing body

Explain briefly what contribution each of the following members can make to the effective functioning of a governing body:

- Educators
- Non-educators
- Learners
- Parents
- Co-opted members
- Principal

5. Non-routine meetings

Suggest situations where each of the following may be necessary:

- Urgent meetings
- Meetings at short notice
- Extraordinary meetings

6. Effectiveness of the school governing body

At the routine annual meeting of the school governing body the chairperson asks if there are any items on the agenda to be placed under 'General'. To her surprise one staff member asks that the staff's lack of confidence in the school governing body be added.

1. Ordinarily this situation should not have arisen. Explain why.
2. How should the chairperson handle it?
3. Recent research has shown that in many KZN schools the professional staff do not have a high opinion of the governing body. Suggest why this has happened.
4. At this staff meeting it was resolved that an ad hoc committee should investigate how to improve the situation.
 - (i) Who should serve on this committee?
 - (ii) How should they go about their investigation?

7. Types of meetings

1. List the different types of meeting that could take place in a school environment.
2. Suggest how often each should take place.

8. Venue

List some of the factors that should be considered when selecting and preparing a meeting venue.

9. True or false?

- 1) Ordinary meetings of the governing body should be held every term.
- 2) The governing body can save time by combining their annual meetings with the learners and the staff.
- 3) Any member of the governing body can call for an extraordinary meeting to be held.
- 4) Any meeting can be held at short notice if the members present agree to the shorter notice.
- 5) Reports tabled at a meeting become an integral part of the minutes.
- 6) If neither the chairperson nor the vice-chairperson arrives for a meeting the members can elect any parent member present as acting chairperson.
- 7) A motion can be amended by a counter-motion.
- 8) If a member feels that the debate on a motion is fruitless, he/she can propose that the matter is immediately put to the vote.
- 9) The chairperson's ruling on a point of order is final. The same point cannot be raised again during the debate.
- 10) If there is no quorum at a properly convened meeting it must be adjourned for at least a week.
- 11) Once an item is on an agenda, it must be dealt with.
- 12) The law states that every governing body meeting should open with a prayer.
- 13) Minor corrections to minutes can be done simply by crossing out the original and inserting the correction as long as the chairperson signs and dates the alteration.
- 14) 'General consent' implies that the vast majority of people agreed, with only a few voting against.
- 15) Anyone can attend a governing body meeting, with or without an invitation.

10. Role-play 1

Mrs Ngidi, the principal is a woman of firm views. She tends to dominate all governing body meetings. Informally some of the governing body members have complained to Mr Majola, the superintendent, about this. He decides to chat to her about it over tea in her office. However, knowing her firm views he first prepares himself by compiling a list of the points he wants to discuss. To his surprise he finds that Mrs Ngidi, anticipating the discussion, also has a list of points to justify her stance.

- 1) Select a 'Mrs Ngidi' and a 'Mr Majola' from your group.
- 2) Split the group into two. Each sub-group will help Mrs Ngidi and Mr Majola prepare their lists.
- 3) Allow the discussion between Mrs Ngidi and Mr Majola to proceed.

11. Role-play 2

Chairperson:

As Chairperson you know that the matter of the erection of the fence will cause much discussion and disagreement on your committee, despite the fact that at an earlier budget meeting funds had been allocated for it. Nevertheless you still hope to reach consensus on the matter.

Secretary:

You are new to the job of secretary and are still not sure of what you should be minuting. As a result you keep interrupting to ask "should I minute that?" You also fall behind and try to stop discussion while you catch up. As an elected committee member you want to support the erection of the fence so you find taking the minutes very frustrating.

Member 4:

You are a slothful individual but also very dominant. You did not bother to attend many previous meetings, so are out of touch. This does not stop you making comments and asking questions even though these questions reveal your lack of preparedness. To make matters worse you never read previous minutes and have not brought your documentation with you.

Member 1:

As a member of this committee you are pleased because at long last a matter about which you are very keen (the fencing of the school grounds) has appeared on the agenda. You have done much research into this. Due to your keenness and your knowledge that other members are not keen on the idea, you are anxious and try to dominate, interrupting and shouting down all opposition.

(Note: The fence has been budgeted for.)

Member 2 (and 5):

You know that Member 1 is very keen to have the school fenced but you have seen how, in other schools, the fence was vandalised and became ineffective. You would rather spend the money on something else even though a fence has been budgeted for.

Member 3:

You are a highly respected community elder, noted for your ability to allow all people a fair say. You know the discussion on fencing will be lively, and you try to use your expertise and experience to help achieve a positive outcome.

12. Illustration

Study the illustration on page 33 after Section 5.10. Assume that the person now demanding protection has been negative and disruptive throughout the meeting and other members are now expressing their various emotions.

- 1) What could the chairperson have done earlier to prevent this situation?
- 2) What can be done to quieten things down?
- 3) Under what circumstances do you think that this situation could develop in a school governing body meeting?

ANSWERS**1. General Review**

- | | | | |
|------|-------|------|------|
| 1) b | 2) a | 3) b | 4) a |
| 5) b | 6) a | 7) c | 8) a |
| 9) c | 10) c | | |

9. True or False

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1) True. | 8) True. |
| 2) False. There must be separate meetings for each group. | 9) True. |
| 3) False. At least 3 members must sign a request. | 10) False. The minimum is 8 days. |
| 4) False. All members must agree. | 11) True. The item must be aired even if it is immediately postponed. |
| 5) True. | 12) False. There is no prescription on this matter. |
| 6) True. | 13) True. |
| 7) False. A counter-motion opposes a motion. | 14) False. All must agree. |
| | 15) False. Attendance is by invitation from the governing body. |

In compiling these manuals we acknowledge the use of the following

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Steenkamp SM, **Meetings in practice**, JP van der Walt and Son Pretoria 1994.

See also:

Mort S, **The Minutes**, Gower 1991 Education Library Pietermaritzburg.

