

Parental involvement and responsibilities in support of learning

The South African Schools Act has the interests of all South Africans and its children at heart, and is premised on the principle that you, the parent, have a fundamental **right to participate** in decisions taken about your children's educational future.



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Rights and obligations of parents

- You need to know and be informed that all school policies must be aligned to the South African Constitution.
- You should have access to information regarding your rights and obligations in terms of the South African Schools Act, 1996.
- You as parents/guardians, must specifically be informed about your rights and responsibilities with regard to the governance of the school, including the process of deciding the school budget, any decision of a parent meeting relating to school fees, the code of conduct for learners, the language policy and the religion policy.
- You have an obligation to be interested and support your children in their schooling.

Financial obligations of parents

- You should attend the annual meeting where resolutions will be taken by a majority of parents about the school fees.
- At such a meeting the resolution will provide for
 - the amount of fees to be charged and
 - equitable criteria and procedures for parents who are unable to pay school fees for the total, partial or conditional exemption from the payment of fees.
- You are to inform the schools if your financial status change during the year if it affects your paying the school fees. You can still qualify to apply for the above.
- You will be expected to abide by the resolution adopted at that meeting.
- You are liable to pay the school fees as charged or as determined by the extent to which you have been exempted from payment.
- You may appeal to the Head of Education against a decision of a governing body regarding your exemption from the payment of school fees.
- You are expected to attend a general meeting of parents to discuss and approve the budget prepared by the governing body, before the budget is finally approved.
- You must make sure that the budget does not have hidden costs.

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The role of the parent w.r.t school policies

- The school governing body, which includes elected members from the parent body, is the structure that governs the school.
- If you are not elected to serve on the school governing body or its various sub-committees, you still have the right to be involved in the affairs of the school, by attending parent meetings that involve the development of school policies and decisions about the school fees.
- The policy development process should include input from you to accommodate the diverse needs of families.
- The school governing body, which represents you, must decide on policy i.e. the language of instruction, the religion policy, the school admission policy, etc.
- You should request that you are provided with school related information and school policies regarding admissions, language, school fees, excursions, etc.
- You need to acquaint yourself with the necessary information and school policies.
- The school governing body is legally bound to report to you once per annum, and to keep you informed about issues affecting you, including school policies that will direct procedures and processes in the school.

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General responsibilities as the parents of enrolled learners

- Support the learning process.
- Encourage and support homework.
- Ensure and monitor learner attendance.
- Ensure the safety and well being of learners.
- Attend school meetings regularly.
- Support the school's code of conduct.
- Be acquainted with the learners' code of conduct.
- Support effective parent/school communication.
- Support the governing body, principal and teachers.
- Besides the curriculum, families should support schools in field trips, assemblies, student performances and sports events.



General support in teaching and learning maths (numeracy) at home

You can do a lot to improve the maths skills of your children at home.

The following are some examples:

- Teach your child about shapes by making sandwiches and cutting them into shapes, e.g. squares and triangles.
- Ask them to make pairs, etc.
- Measure popcorn/maize in a cup: $\frac{1}{4}$, $\frac{1}{2}$, $\frac{3}{4}$ cups.
- Let your child make a shopping list.
- Play number plate games, e.g. adding or subtracting 2-3 digits in the number plates while you travel.
- Let your child read road signs.
- Play games with money, e.g. I have 3 coins in my hand that are worth 50 cents. What coins do I have?
- Encourage your child to use a deck of playing cards to make up his/her own games for the family to play, using numbers and patterns.
- Using a deck of playing cards, ask questions about the colour and shape of the cards, add cards, subtract cards, and sort or order cards, e.g. ace to king and king to ace.
- Play a memory game
- Tell the time
- Use matchsticks to add, subtract and make shapes.
- Have your child help you sort the laundry that needs to be washed, e.g. sort colours, count while sorting, or put types of washing (e.g. towels or shirts) together.

General support in teaching and learning literacy at home

You can do a lot to improve the reading, writing and language skills of your children at home.

The following are some examples:

- Read to your child every day.
- Share family stories.
- Talk, talk, talk – your child learns about spoken words by listening to you.
- Read cereal boxes, tinned foods and cleaning material containers.
- Play “I spy with my little eye, something that begins with ...” (name a letter)
- Have your children’s eyesight and hearing tested early and every year.
- Give books or magazines to your children as presents.
- Make sure that caregivers spend time talking with and reading to your child.
- Praise your child for work done well.
- Get library cards for the whole family and visit the library regularly.
- Teach your child how to read warning labels.

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