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# The Importance of Keeping Statutory Records in Secondary Schools

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**Abstract:** Organizations and institution are set up to achieve certain aims and objectives. To achieve their set aims, such organization or institution needs to keep records of events and activities that go on there. Without proper record keeping, organizations could hardly access information or provide it when needed by individuals or other formal organizations such as government. The school as a formal organization that is responsible for imparting knowledge is not an exception. There are certain records that secondary schools need to keep at regular intervals in order to effectively achieve their objective. This paper, examines therefore, the importance of keeping records in our Secondary schools. It also examines the statutory records in the schools and the problems of keeping school records in secondary schools. Finally, the paper concludes that statutory records is an important aspect of school administration which should not be ignored should be given the necessary attention it deserves to ensure that they are kept.

**Keywords:** Statutory, records, record keeping, secondary schools

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## Introduction

Organizations such as Schools are regulated by the government through agencies such as the Ministry of Education or the secondary school Board. These agencies have stipulated guidelines which secondary schools are expected to follow in ensuring that the aims and objectives of education is achieved. Statutory records is one of the guidelines secondary schools are expected to keep. School managers and administrators on their own depend much on these statutory records for their day-to-day administrations.

Therefore, the success or failure of our secondary school depend much on the proper keeping of these records. These records provide information about school staff, students academic achievement, the number and quality of facilities, courses/objects available in the school and the time for all school activities (Anyaocha, 2016).

Therefore, the need for secondary schools to keep proper record keeping cannot be over-emphasized. All the activities of schools on the proper keeping of records

and school managers should take it as an important and vital aspect of their daily schedule of activities. Proper record keeping anchors the failure or success of our secondary schools. As an important aspect of school administration, record keeping provides details about the school history and their vision.

### **The Concept Of Statutory**

The word, statutory is derived from the verb, statue meaning of law. The Advanced Learned Dictionary defined statutory of relating to, enacted or regulated by a statute.

Nwosu (2010) explains that the laws of the Ministry of Education states that the keeping of such records are legally binding on all schools in the various states. It is therefore, an offence for any secondary school not to keep them.

### **School Records**

The Advanced Learners Dictionary (2013) defines a record as on item of information put into a temporary or permanent physical medium. It is a physical medium on which information is put for the purpose of preserving it and makes it available for future reference.

School record, therefore could be defined as an information put into a temporary or permanent use by either the school, the student or for the general public consumption. (Nwosu, 2010).

Nzokurum (as cited in Anyaoha, 2016), states that the term school records are documented statements of facts about persons, facilitates, proposals and activities in and about the school. School records are also documented evidence of what a school does. It contains information about the school programme and activities.

Adedeji (2006), defines school records as the creator; storage, retrieval, intention and disposition of information relating to what goes on in a school and such information could be personnel, equipment and other information for the growth of the school. School records could be used for future purpose.

Anukam, Okunamiri and Ogbonna (2010) defines school records as information received or stored in relation to the day-to day activities of students, teachers and school activities. This information are compiled and stored in a retrieval system when needed so as to contribute towards the improvement of the school.

Therefore, for the school to achieve the objectives of education, it is necessary that it develops and apply modern principles of collecting, storing and preserving information. Through this, goals, problems and causes are indentified with the aim of finding solution to them.

### **School Record Keeping**

There are processes and guidelines of keeping various statutory records in the school. Anyaogu, (2016), listed the followings as same of guideline of keeping school records.

1. Records must be complete when they are kept regularly. If records keeping is not complete, certain information will not also be complete. In other words, such record-keeping is not reliable.
2. Record-keeping must be kept honestly. Information about record keeping should not be manipulated. Events should be recorded as they occur and also in their true perspective. There should be no bias in keeping records.
3. Record-keeping should be retrievable.  
Record should be kept in such manner as to retrieve it in the future. The system of retrieval should be simple. In case of filing, there should be filing cabinets and where necessary, computer system should be used.
4. Record keeping should be one that is usable. Record keeping is prepared, so that, it can be used in the future. It records cannot be kept to be used; it is no record at all.
5. Records must be backed up original documents.  
Record-keeping is kept in duplicate, triplicate etc. There shall be original copies kept in the files such as receipts, cheques, bills etc.

### **Various Statutory Records**

Any secondary school that worth their onions must keep the following statutory records in the school. Because they are mandated by the laws of the Ministry of Education, it is mandatory on all secondary schools to keep them properly and regularly.

Anyaogu (2016) listed the following as some of the statutory records kept in the secondary schools

1. Admission Register
2. Attendance register
3. Log book

4. Punishment book
5. Visitors' book
6. The school time table
7. Syllabus
8. The scheme of work
9. Diary of work
10. Lesson notes
11. Students Academic records
12. Staff Movement book
13. Staff Attendance
14. Testimonials
15. Inventory of physical facilities

### **Admission Register**

This is the register in which the names of past and present students of the school are recorded. It contains such information as: Name of the students, Date of birth, sex, name of parent/guardian, address. Last school attended, age, and class. The admission list must be numbered severally.

### **Attendance Register**

This is used for keeping the daily attendance of students in the school. The attendance register is marked twice daily with strokes. It contains such information as child's regularity to school, and used also in checking lateness, absenteeism, truancy. It is also used for guidance and counseling purposes.

### **Log Book**

The Log book contains the history of the school and other important events. It contains the following visit of important personalities, public holidays, long/short vacation, excursion, sports, interviews and publications, permission, death and condolences.

### **Punishment Book**

This is sometimes referred to as Black book. The punishment book contains the following information: names of the visitors, addresses, purpose of visit, comments, signature and date. Visitors' book provides records of visitors to the school. It also provides link to the visitor after he might have gone.

### **The School Time Table**

This is a document that illustrates times, place, subject and periods of each subject in a week and term. It provides orderly direction and avoids clashes as teachers attend lessons at the allocated time and place. It is pasted on the school notice board, staff room notice board and the principal's office. It is prepared by the Dean of studies or the Vice principal. The time table ensures that each subject receive adequate attention. It also helps to prevent boredom and helps the school principal to monitor the activities of teachers in the classroom.

### **Subject Syllabus**

This document shows the topics to be taught, subject by subject. The syllabus must be covered before the commencement of the examination especially in external examination such as WAEC, NECO or BECE. The syllabus is used to prepare the scheme of work. It also assists in assessing the level of preparedness of students to be registered for external examinations.

### **The Scheme Of Work**

The scheme of work shows details of what should be covered in each subject in a term and in a week. It is a work plan as it shows the topics as drawn from the syllabus. Like the subject syllabus, it also shows the level of preparedness of the students in external examinations and also serve as a guide and check on teachers.

### **Diary Of Work**

This contains the record of work to be done each week and the record done weekly. The diary provided information for new and old staff on topics that has been covered. It also serves as a guide to school administrators on the attitude of the teachers to their subjects.

### **Lesson Notes And Plans**

This states the breakdown of each lesson's topic into logical and sequential manner, it is drawn from the scheme of work and kept by every teacher. It's the scheme of work and kept by every teacher. Its components include, the topic, the date, the duration, class to be taught, the educational objectives to be achieved, teaching materials and entry behavior. Lesson note serves as a guide for effective teaching. It is also a way of ensuring that the teacher has prepared for the day's teaching.

### **Students' Academic Record**

This document is written in triplicate. A copy to the parents through the student while the second copy is retained by the school and put in the child's file.

It contains the following: Number of subjects, student's performance in each subject. This document provides authentic information to parents on the academic performance of their children. It also provides information to outside bodies, including employers of labour.

### **Staff Movement Book**

It monitors the daily staff movement in the school, mostly during the period of instruction. Some staff sneaks out of the school for private business without permission, hence the need for the book. It contains the serial number, name of staff, time of departure, Destination purpose, time of arrival and signature.

### **Staff Attendance**

This records staff attendance to school. Each staff must sign on resumption/arrival and also sign before departure. It is kept in the principal's office for proper monitoring. Staff attendance serves as a check on staff lateness and non attendance to school. It provides information on staff discipline too.

### **Testimonials**

This is a document printed and issued to all the students who have completed their course of study in the school. Nzokurum (2013), notes that testimonials are issued to those who completed primary six and senior secondary. It contains the following; Name of the students, class on admission, admission number, and last class passed. Academic intelligences activities while in school and Head teacher's signature.

### **Inventory Of Physical Facilities**

Anyaogu (2016) states that this document records the number of buildings, classrooms, furniture, equipment and other physical facilities, It helps the school to monitor the conditions of the facilities in order to repair or replace them. It also helps to check stealing school properties by some staff.

### **Importance Of Keeping School Records**

The importance of keeping school records cannot be over-emphasized. A school record is the centre-piece of all school activities and general administration.

Anukam et al (2010), listed the following as some of the importance of keeping school records:

- a. To ensure strict compliance with the requirements of the education law.
- b. For planning and budgeting purposes
- c. To serve as indices for assessing performance of students, school and teachers.
- d. To provide useful information not only for members of the school community but also for members of the public employers of labour, researchers and government.
- e. To save the school from unnecessary embarrassment as well as legal tussle.
- f. To aid administrative decision making and efficiency in the school; especially in allocating classes to students and teachers.
- g. To enable the teacher know something about his students, though he will be in a better position to assist him academically, morally, socially etc. It provide information to whoever will need it.

Anyaogu (2016), added the following as the importance of keeping school records.

- a. Record keeping is useful for proper planning, budgeting, purchasing and maintenance.
- b. It enables the school to monitor the behavior and general performance of each student.
- c. It provides information about students scholarship achievements to parents guidance counselors and higher institutions in determining students suitability for admissions:
- d. Record keeping helps the school administrators to compile useful facts and figures to request for staff, facilities, space and equipments.
- e. It enables for proper planning and settlement of legal matters
- f. It provides information to school inspectors and supervisors to make concrete suggestions in order to meet government rules and regulations.

From the foregoing, it can be deducted that records keeping is the hub on which the wheel of all other administrative activities rotates. Records can be used in the immediate future. It can also be used for futuristic use. Whichever way, it should be noted that the general purpose and importance record keeping performs is to provide information for usage.

### **Challenges Of Keeping Records In Secondary**

Record keeping is not without some challenges. That is to say that there are certain constraints that militate against keeping records.

According to Unachukwu (2014), record keeping is constrained by the following.

**a. Hasty record keeping**

Some teachers keep records in advance. This could be as a result of time constraints or working ahead of the time frame. For instance, teachers fill the weekly diary in advance of the topic. Also some teachers write lesson notes in advance of the week the topic will be taught.

**b. Lack of Orientation**

There is no proper education and orientation for newly employed teachers on how to keep records and their purposes. For instance, some teachers could hardly work the percentage attendance of students on weekly basis.

**c. Lack of Effective Supervision**

Some school managers (Principals and Head teachers) can hardly find time to go through certain statutory records. In some cases, lesson notes are not signed. There is no proper supervision of records which would make teachers to be up and doing in keeping those records.

**d. Pressure of the teaching profession**

Teaching Profession is full of challenges and pressure. It is a profession that demands the attention of the teacher every movement of the day. If the teacher is not teaching in the classroom; he/she is writing lesson note. If he is not writing, he/she is marking assignments tests and examination scripts. These could press him down that he could not find time to keep all the statutory records.

**e. Lack of Materials and Equipments**

Keeping records are easier when those records are provided by the Ministry of Education. It has been observed that the Ministry of officials do not provide these records to school as a result of their non-availability in the Ministry. The Ministry either provides them weeks after the resumption of schools in a term. This poses a danger to proper record keeping.

**f. Lack of Supervision/Inspection**

The Inspectorate Department is responsible for maintaining standards in all secondary schools (Private and public). In most cases, officials of the Ministry

could not go round the schools to see how these statutory records are kept in schools. This could be attributed to lack of vehicles and dearth of personnel.

### **Recommendations/Suggestions**

In the fact of many challenges confronting proper record, keeping the following suggestions are preferred.

- a. Teachers and other non-academic staff of schools should be given orientation on how best to keep records in our secondary schools. There should also be refresher courses for the old staff on the modern technique of keeping records.
- b. School heads and principals should be alive to their responsibility by finding time to oversee and supervise school records. Through this diligence, they would find errors in the records and call the staff to order or teach him/her. Principals are ought to be experienced in keeping records.
- c. The Ministry of Education should make materials for record keeping available on time. Their records should not get to schools very late as to delay their keeping or recording early.
- d. The Ministry of Education should also employ more inspectors and Supervisors who could go to schools to see how records are kept and whether stipulated guidelines are followed in keeping them. Also, the Ministry should acquire more vehicles to go to all the schools. When this is done, principals and other staff will be in their toes.
- e. Principals and Ministry officials should emphasis that record keeping should not be done in advance.

Records about week one should be kept in week one and not keeping records of week one in week three. It does not ensure proper supervision.

### **Conclusion**

Record keeping is a very important aspect of school administration. Hence, the importance of keeping statutory records has been highlighted in this paper. Every aspect of managing a secondary school is all about keeping these statutory records. Non-compliance to the guidelines and rules of keeping them could attract sanctions from the Ministry of Education or even the school manager. Therefore, every effort should be geared towards their proper keeping.

Keeping statutory records is not without any challenges. School principals and the Ministry of education officials especially the inspectorate Department should

ensure that the materials for their proper keep is supplied on time before the beginning of each term. There should also be regular orientation and enlightenment for all the staff on how to keep them. The staff should be guided properly on how to use those records too. This is because their accurate upkeep could make or mar the standards of secondary education.

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