
The Teacher's Handbook

A short information guide
for teachers.

Human Resources Development Department
Directorate for Educational Services



Message by the Director General for Educational Services

The Education Sector in Malta is passing through an important time whereby we are assisting to a number of changes. However these changes require the strengthening of our workforce mainly the teaching profession on two levels: first level those who have been in the teaching profession continue to upgrade their skills to adapt to these changes and implement these changes into the classroom and on second level those who are pursuing their studies as teachers are well prepared to enter the classroom and become the educators of Malta's future society.

Thus, we carry an important role within the Maltese society whereby we are here not only to transmit the acquired knowledge through our studies and continuous professional development, but to form children and youth who will become the future leaders of our country. Through our way of being we pass our beliefs and our attitudes which surely leave an indelible mark on the lives of those who we encounter in our schools in a positive or negative way... hopefully in a positive way!

This publication will always remind us as educators to never stop thinking about new ways how to become better educators whilst always keeping with the parameters of our profession.

Micheline Sciberras

Director General for Educational Services



Introduction

Congratulations on joining the teaching profession.

As a new teacher, you have been entrusted with a position of responsibility within society. To maintain and merit the already established respect, it is essential that you will be aware of your position at all times and conduct yourselves in an appropriate manner.

Every school has its own ethos which is reinforced by a set of shared values. You are expected to share these values and feel proud of being part of the college and school where you have been posted. You should strive to uphold your school's good standards and follow the school's code of practice to ensure uniformity. You should familiarise yourself with the School Development Plan and implement it in your class work.



It is ethical to pass any correspondence to Education Directorates through the Head of School and the Principal as the Head of School is the person responsible for the running of the school.

As a teacher you ought to realise that all pupils must be recognised as individuals. All pupils must be encouraged to develop a moral conscience if they are to fulfil their potential and integrate effectively into society. As such they should never be called names, ridiculed or belittled.

Alfred Mallia

Director, Human Resources Development Department

Teachers' (Code of Ethics) Regulations

It is imperative that you are aware and practice the Teachers' Code of Ethics established by Legal Notice 81 of 1988.

Code of Ethics

1. *The Teacher's responsibilities to the Pupils in his/her care:*
 - 1.1 The teacher shall give foremost consideration to the pupil's well-being.
 - 1.2 The teacher shall direct his/her whole professional effort to assist the pupil to develop his/her whole personality including his/her ability to work.
 - 1.3 The teacher shall foster in his/her pupils honesty, integrity, and consideration for others and shall do nothing, by precept or example, to discredit these qualities.
 - 1.4 The teacher shall act, and shall be seen to act, with justice.
 - 1.5 The teacher shall exercise authority in accordance with the law of the land and with evolving concepts of the pupil's needs and rights.
 - 1.6 The teacher shall recognize that each child is an individual and that children can differ in what is required for the promotion of their education.
 - 1.7 The teacher shall recognize an obligation to assist all pupils under his/her charge to develop their talents suitably and to the fullest extent feasible.
 - 1.8 The teacher shall recognize that s/he should work with parents to promote the welfare of pupils, particularly by consulting and involving parents, whenever this is desirable.

1.9 The teacher shall make reasonable effort to protect the pupil from conditions harmful to learning or to health and safety.

1.10 The teacher shall not intentionally expose the pupils to embarrassment or disparagement.



1.11 The teacher shall not use professional relationships with pupils for private advantage.

1.12 The teacher shall not disclose information about pupils obtained in the course of professional service unless such disclosure serves a compelling professional purpose or is required by law.

2. *The Teacher's Responsibilities to his/her Colleagues and the Teaching Profession*

2.1 The teacher shall respect the professional standing and opinions of his/her colleagues and shall maintain in his/her relations with them the highest standards of professional courtesy.

2.2 The teacher shall be prepared to help in all possible ways junior colleagues and those in training.

2.3 The teacher shall accept the authority of senior professional colleagues while retaining the right to express professional opinion.

2.4 The teacher shall recognize his/her obligation to advance the causes of education and hence the causes of the teaching profession.

- 2.5 The teacher shall recognize his/her obligation to improve his/her effectiveness as a teacher in every possible way.
- 2.6 The teacher shall recognize his/her responsibility for his/her own actions and judgements and s/he shall be prepared to stand by their consequences.
- 2.7 The teacher shall recognize his/her duty to manifest responsibility, individual initiative and integrity in his/her teaching and other professional actions within guidelines laid down for the profession.
- 2.8 The teacher shall not knowingly make a false statement concerning the qualifications and competence of a candidate applying for a position.
- 2.9 The teacher shall not accept gratuity, gift or favour that might impair or appear to influence professional decisions or actions.
- 2.10 The teacher shall not attempt to influence the Minister, the Education Directorates, or an educational board on matters affecting teachers unless so expressly requested by the Minister, Directorates or educational board in his/her official capacity.
- 2.11 It shall not be correct for any senior professional colleague or any teacher to censure other teachers or to criticise their work in the hearing of pupils and/or the general public.
- 2.12 It shall not be correct for any teacher by public statement to bring the profession, his/her school or the department in which s/he works into disrepute.
- 2.13 The teacher shall appreciate that, while as a professional person s/he must accept responsibility for his/her actions, his/her duty shall be to carry out reasonable instructions from senior professional colleagues. The teacher shall have the right to protest against instructions.

2.14 Senior professional colleagues shall give a teacher all support and help that is in their power to make the teacher's work effective, consult and inform him/her on matters affecting his/her work and treat him/her with justice and dignity, not least when it becomes necessary in the interest of pupils and other colleagues to attain greater efficiency and more ethical professional behaviour.

3. *The Teacher's Responsibilities to the Parents of his Pupils and to the Community*

3.1 The teacher shall recognize the right of a parent to consult him/her, through proper channels, on the welfare or progress of a pupil. The teacher shall recognize the right of a parent to be consulted about any matter which concerns the future development of his child.



3.2 The teacher shall do nothing to undermine lawful parental authority, but shall be prepared to give advice which, in his/her professional view is in the best interest of the pupil.

3.3 The teacher shall make every effort to encourage parents to interest themselves actively in the education and welfare of their children.

3.4 The teacher shall act within the community in a manner which enhances the prestige of the profession.

Teacher's Job Description

Overall Purpose of Position

- To teach and educate according to the prescriptions of the National Minimum Curriculum and the directives of the competent authority; and
- To teach and educate pupils according to the educational needs, abilities and attainment of individual students entrusted to his/her care by the Head of School.

Main Responsibilities

1. Plans, prepares and delivers lessons.
2. Teaches according to the educational needs, abilities and attainment of the individual pupils and groups of students.
3. Assigns work, corrects and marks regularly work carried out by his/her students.
4. Assesses, records and reports on the development, progress and attainment and behaviour of his/her students.
5. Provides or contributes to oral and written assignments, reports and references relating to individual students or groups of students.
6. Participates in arrangements within an agreed national framework for the appraisal of the student's performance.
7. Promotes the general progress and well-being of individual students, groups of students or class/es entrusted to him/her.
8. Provides guidance and advice to students on educational and social matters and on their further education and future careers, including information about sources of more expert advice.

9. Communicates, consults and co-operates with other members of the school staff, including those having posts of special responsibility and parents in the interest of pupils.
10. Participates during school time in meetings held in the interest of the students.
11. Reviews and evaluates his/her methods of teaching and learning and the teaching and learning programme/s within the National Minimum Curriculum.
12. Advises and co-operates with the College's Principal, Head of School, Assistant Head, other teachers and Education Officers in the preparations and development of courses of study, teaching material, teaching programmes, methods of teaching and assessment and pastoral care arrangements.
13. Participates in further personal training and professional development as a teacher, including the attendance to in-service education and training courses prescribed by the Education Division authorities and agreed upon with the relevant trade union.
14. Maintains good order and discipline among pupils and safeguards their health and safety at any time and place when students are under his/her care.
15. Participates in staff, group or other meetings for the better organisation and administration of the school, or related to the school curriculum or pastoral care arrangements.



16. Contributes to the professional development of new teachers and student teachers according to arrangements agreed upon with the Head of School.
17. Provides the necessary information and advice and makes the necessary requisitions and arrangements in connection with the teaching of the subject/s assigned to him/her.
18. Ensures the safe custody of equipment normally used by him/her during lessons and sees to its regular servicing and maintenance.
19. Attends school assemblies.
20. Registers the attendance of students under his/her care.
21. Shares in any possible and reasonable way in the proper management, organisation, order and discipline of the school.

Lesson Preparation

While preparing lessons it would be good to consider the following points:

- What added value are you giving to the level of the pupil's educational achievement?
- How can you create ways of adding value to the pupils' education?
- How do you intend to test what has been achieved?
- What are your remedial plans?

Effective Classroom Style

In developing your style, it might help you to consider the following points:

- try to be as well-organised and efficient as you can;

- show by your manner that you are looking forward to teaching the class and that you do not expect any problems;
- make clear to the class what is expected and valued;;
- praise good work;
- review the balance between your positive and negative comments about pupils' work and behaviour;
- always be vigilant – never ignore misbehaviour or it will get worse;
- use bold gestures and positive facial expressions to reinforce your style of teaching;
- a calm, relaxed facial expression is characteristic of an effective teacher;
- resist any temptation to use physical contact as a means of controlling disobedience or unruly pupils;
- be sure to control your anger by dealing with pupils in a positive and assertive manner.



Homework and Study

Regular, effective homework is an essential part of school work for all pupils. The type and amount of homework that a teacher issues will vary from class to class. However it is essential to ensure that the homework given is compatible with your school's homework policy. Homework should consolidate the work done at school.

School Activities

By getting involved in the school's activities you will be contributing to the whole school issues rather than just curricular one. School activities will give you the opportunity to develop relationships with other members of staff and with students across the whole schools. These relationships have a beneficial effect on your teaching through the mutual respect and trust gained from participating in an activity.

Dress Code

As a person whom pupils look up to, you should dress as befits the dignity of your profession. You are expected to present an example to your pupils through the way you dress.

Absences

If you are unable to attend to your duties due to illness, you are to keep your school informed on a daily basis 30 minutes before school starts. A medical certificate (NI 46) is to be drawn up by your doctor on the first day of illness. You should send the original on the same day of issue to the Department of Social Security, Valletta or left at any District Office. You have to fill in the reverse side of the original certificate and countersigned by the doctor only if the certified period is for more than three (3) days. The copy is to be handed personally to the school administration on the day when you resume duty and fill in the absence form.

The medical certificate (NI 46) is to be issued weekly if you are to remain ill for a long spell. The reverse side of the original certificate is to be filled in and the certificates are to be sent by post to your school.

Staff Handbooks

A generic handbook compiling all circulars and procedures concerning schools can be accessed through the website of the Education Ministry – www.education.gov.mt (under Policies). Besides, colleges and schools might have their own internal procedures. It is important that you familiarise yourself with such procedures since they would give you a clear picture on all aspects of school life and school policies.

Accountability

As a teacher you are expected to:

- be punctual and give a full day's work;
- be prepared for all lessons;
- keep all students occupied and interested;
- mark all work constructively;
- monitor students' progress and keep an accurate record of it;
- Access the Ministry of Education website (www.education.gov.mt) and other relevant websites regularly as this keeps you informed about latest developments taking place.

Public Service Management Code

The PSMC brings together all the standing regulations, circulars and policies in HR management within the Public Service. You should refer to the PSMC whenever you require guidance about HR management.

Data Protection

All information and any other material holding information about students shall remain the property of the employer when these are taken out of the school/workplace for homeworking; henceforth the employee is bound by all policies and regulations related to such matters as applied in the school and shall take all the measures normally taken in the school/workplace to secure such information and materials.

Staff Support Service

A support service for teachers is being offered to those teachers that are:

- finding difficulties related to managing behaviour in class;
- having personal emotional difficulties that affect their performance in class;
- encountering hardship in integrating in the school system;
- passing through difficult times due to events that have happened in school which are leaving a negative impact on their life;
- in need of advice on administrative issues.

Usually, the service is offered in the form of one-to-one sessions. Any personal and non-personal information divulged during the sessions with the counsellor will be kept under strict confidentiality unless consent is given by the person receiving the service. No information will be used for reporting issues neither verbally nor in writing.

Conclusion

The above is not meant to be exhaustive. These are a few thoughts to get you started. It is hoped that your experience as a teacher will be an enjoyable and productive one, for you and for the students in your charge.