

METHODS OF RECORD KEEPING, STORAGE, RETRIEVAL AND  
UTILIZATION IN SCHOOLS

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**Introduction**

Schools are becoming increasingly complex in terms of staff and pupil population, programmes and activities as well as increasing needs for accurate planning and improved outputs. Expectedly, therefore, there is an increasing need for improved methods of keeping school records, storing and retrieving them, as a basis for utilizing them for effective school administration.

School records are books and files containing essential information on pupils, school personnel, facilities and programmes (Ijaiya, 1991). Such records are usually kept in the school's office with the head teachers, the class teachers, counsellors or the administrative staff. However, it is the responsibility of the school heads to ensure that vital school records are accurately kept. Hence, it is important that they have sound knowledge of records keeping, storage, retrieval and utilization of the information emanating from the records kept in their schools. Many records are kept in the school, some required by law, while some are not. These records include:

- Time Table
- The Admission Register
- The Attendance Register
- The Log Book
- Syllabus/ Scheme of work! Weekly Record of work
- Visitors' Book
- Punishment Book
- Pupil's Report Card/ Sheet
- Health Record Book
- Staff Records

- School Cash Register
- Record of School Equipment/Material
- Minutes Book for Meetings
- Marks Book
- Past Question Papers
- etc

School records, according to Durosaro (2002), are important tools for effective planning and administration of a school. Generally, school records serve many purposes. Some of these purposes, according to Ozigi (1977) and Ijaiya (1991) include assisting:

- pupils to know their progress and plan for their future (report sheet),
- parents and employers of labour with particular information about performance and general behaviour of their children or prospective employees, respectively. (report sheet, punishment book),
- ex-pupils to get reference reports and recommendations for jobs or further studies (progress reports),
- a new school head to know what previously obtained in the school, thereby maintaining continuity in the general educational process (log book, minutes book, inspection reports etc),
- teachers in ensuring effective teaching and learning in the school (scheme of work, note of lesson, past question papers etc),
- school heads, teachers and counsellors in staking appropriate decisions on administrative and academic matters.

### **Record keeping, Storage and Retrieval**

There are two basic methods of storing and retrieving records in schools.

These methods are manual and electronic.

1. Manual storage system involves keeping school records in written form in the following formats (Shehu, 2007):

I. Files

II. Shelves/cupboards

III. Cabinets/drawers

Information on students and other school personnel such as teachers and non-teaching staff, school facilities and programmes can be written or graphically presented on paper such as books, reports, ledgers etc and kept in files on shelves or locked cabinets in the office.

2. Electronic Storage system involves the use of electronic devices in storing school data either in written or graphic form. They have very large memories for storing information. Such devices include:

I. Handsets

II. Personal Computers (Desktops, laptops, Notebooks! Palmtops etc)

III. Microfilms

Handsets can be programmed to store important information on school personnel and events, and set to reminder.

The new Blackberry handsets are design to help executives plan computer hard disc has very large memory for storing data. Likewise removable memories such as diskette (almost obsolete), compact disc (CD) and flash drives can be used as backups to store relevant data for future use.

Microfilms- important events and School activities can be record into tapes/films and stored for future viewing/projection.

Retrieval follows the same pattern as the 5rage system it could be manual or electronic.

Manually stored data are retrieved from files, cabinets and shelves by going through the papers filed either alphabetically or numerically.

Electronically stored data are retrieved by logging into the system to open the document. The data are then viewed/ accessed, used and saved back or deleted as required. The information could be printed out on paper.

Recorded tapes can be viewed or projected using appropriate projector.

It should be noted that the use of computers and other electronic devices makes school data better stored and processed to information that can be retrieved to assist the school in taking effective decisions. Graphical representations are also more accurately and easily programmed into the computer. Retrieval of stored information is equally easier for both individual and group use.

## Utilization of School Records

Records keeping in school is not an end in itself, rather, it is a means to an end. Information kept in records is retrieved for taking decisions on specific areas of school administration. The uses of some important school records are highlighted as follows:

### 1. The Time Table

This gives a summary of the programmes and activities of a school in relation to time, places and people involved.

Day	8.20- 8.50	8.50 – 9.20	9.20 – 9.50	9.50 – 10.00	10.00 – 10.30	10.30 – 11.00	11.00 – 11.30	11.30 – 12.00	12.00 – 12.30	12.30 – 1.00	
MON	English	English	Short break	Maths	Maths	H.E	Yor	Long break	Pry. Sc.		
TUE											
WED											
THUR											
FRI											

Figure 1: A typical Time Table

### Uses of Time Table

- Indicates all subjects offered by the school and the frequency with which each is taught.
- Prevents waste of time.
- Enables each teacher to come prepared for every lesson.
- Enables pupils to form habits of ordered and regular work
- Prevents or eliminates friction or conflict among teachers.
- Provides for efficient utilization of the classroom.

### 2. The Log Book

This is an historical record of events in the life of the school. The head teacher normally keeps it, and under lock and key.

Date	Event	Signature
20/09/2002	School opened for new session	
1/6/2003	Mr. Aina posted to the school as principal to replace Mr. Ola	
6/10/2005	School Cowbell Essay competition	
7/12/2007	Mrs. Alade, Commissioner of Education visited the school	

Figure 2: Log Book

**Uses of Log Book**

- Supplies vital information to a newly posted school head about the school.
- It could be useful to historians interested in the historical development of the school.

**3. The Admission Register**

This is a record of the detailed information of every pupil admitted into a school. Such information includes data of the pupils and their parents. A typical Admission Register is given in figure 3.

S/No	Surname	Other Names	Sex	Date of birth	Date of adm.	State of origin	LGA	Name of parent	Add of Parents	Date left							Reason for leaving
											Pry 1	Pry 2	Pry 3	Pry 4	Pry 5	Pry 6	

**Uses of the Admission Register**

- Provides up-to-date information on pupils admitted into the school population, family background etc.
- Can be of use in the settlement of legal controversies and claims.
- Supplies information about pupil’s progress or otherwise.

**4. The Attendance Register**

This is a book for recording the presence or absence of pupils in a school, on daily basis. This record is kept by the class teacher and marked twice a day- morning and afternoon.

Figure 4: The Attendance Register.

Number of Session.....  
 Average Attendance.....  
 Total Attendance.....

**Uses of The Attendance Register**

- It ensures that pupils come to classes to receive teachers’ instructions.
- It could generate information revealing the level of parents’ support, requiring guidance and counselling services.
- The summary of attendance could be used as a measure of punctuality in the effective domain of the pupil’s progress report.

S/No	Surname	Other names	Sex	Handicap	Age	Admission No.	Week Ending					Week Ending							
							M	T	W	T	F	M	T	W	T	F			

Figure 4: The Attendance Register.

Number of Session.....

Average Attendance.....

Total Attendance.....

**Uses of the Attendance Register**

- It ensures that pupils come to classes to receive teachers’ instructions.
- It could generate information revealing the level of parents’ support, requiring guidance and counselling services.
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**5. Pupils’ Report Card/Sheet**

This is a record showing the pupils’ academic performance in each subject, behavioural and skill ratings for the term/year.

Name..... Class..... Year .....

ACADEMIC						AFFECTIVE AND PSYCHOMOTOR														
Subject	1 <sup>st</sup>	2 <sup>nd</sup>	3 <sup>rd</sup>	Summary					Remarks	Ratings										
	CA	CA	CA																	
	5	4	3	2	1															
English																			Punctuality	
Mathematics																			Honesty	
Religious																			Cleanliness	
Instruction																				
Soc. Std																			Communication skills	
Pry. Sc.																			Sporting skills	

Class teacher's comments:.....

Head teacher's comments/signature: .....

### **Figure 5: Terminal Report Card**

#### **Uses of Pupils' Report Card/Sheet**

- May determine pupil's progression to the next class and transition to the next level.
- Shows pupil's academic areas of strengths and weaknesses as a basis for counseling on future career.
- Reveals pupil's moral and skill development for counseling and giving necessary guidance.

#### **6. Punishment Book**

This is a record of pupils with disciplinary problems indicating the offences committed, punishment meted out and by whom.

Date	Pupil's Name	Sex	Age	Class	Offence	Punishment	By Whom

Figure 6: Punishment Book

#### **Uses of Punishment Book**

- It reveals the tone of the school.
- It protects pupils from unreasonable punishment from teachers, as it discourages teachers from unguided use of punishment.
- It protects teachers from undue criticism from parents.
- Serves as a reference to check on past behaviour of pupils.

#### **7. Visitors' Book**

This is a record of visitors to the school. It indicates their names and addresses, date of visit, purpose of visit, their remarks and signature.

Date	Name of Visitor	Address	Purpose of visit	Remark	Signature

Figure 7: Visitors' Book

#### Uses of Visitors' Book

- It shows the level of interest shown by the community in the school.
- Contact addresses of important community members could be got when necessary.
- Remarks of visitors could form the basis of improvement on school personnel and programmes.

#### Problems Associated with Record Keeping in schools

As important as information from school records are to effective administration of schools, effective record keeping in schools have many problems. Some of these problems include:

- i. Untimely supply of records.
- ii. Inadequate or lack of thorough supervision by the head teacher (resulting in unnecessary delegation to pupils etc).
- iii. Inadequate knowledge of record keepers on the use of information from records.
- iv. Destruction of poorly kept records by termites, flood or storm.

This usually occurs as a result of keeping such records in wooden cupboards or on bare floors.

- v. Retrieval problems such as corruption of files by computer virus leading to distortion or complete erasure of stored data.
- vi. Corruption of data by human beings due to deliberate alteration or erasure.
- vii. Undue access to confidential information on staff, students and facilities.



## Suggestions for Improved Record Keeping in Schools

Supply of necessary records to schools should be given the priority it deserves. School heads should ensure that these records are supplied on time even if it means using internally generated funds for their timely purchase.

The onus is on the head teacher to ensure that record keepers are conversant with the procedures for keeping and utilizing information retrieved from kept records. The head teacher could do this in form of workshop or during routine supervision.

Every school should be supplied with complete computer systems and their peripherals. To ensure proper functioning of these systems, back-up power supply like Uninterrupted Power Supply (UPS) and a generating set should be provided.

Antivirus system should be installed in every computer system and updated from time to time.

Unauthorized access to confidential information such as personnel data and examination results could be prevented by keeping them under cabinets with locks (if manually kept). For computerized records, passwords should be used that would allow selective access. Every head teacher should have a "Data Board" containing summary of data on staff, pupils and activities in the school. Information on such a board could include student enrolment by sex, by class and for the whole school, staff strength by sex, qualifications, important recent events etc. With this, the head teacher would be able to retrieve accurate and current information without having to flip through papers.

In the long run, there should be a progressive movement towards computer-based management information system (MIS) at all the levels of education in Nigeria, starting from the foundation (primary schools) level.

## **Conclusion**

In this information age, an uninformed or imprecise school head is as good as dead. To be able to capture, store, retrieve and use information speedily and appropriately for school effectiveness and efficiency, every school requires an effective Management Information System (MIS). The MIS should be both manual and computer-based with the long-term learning towards computer-based MIS operations in Nigeria schools. This is one important way Nigeria can become relevant in this era of globalization in all sectors of the world economy.

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