

IMPERATIVENESS OF THE USE OF PREFECTS FOR MANAGEMENT OF SECONDARY SCHOOLS: ISSUES, CHALLENGES AND STRATEGIES FOR EFFECTIVENESS

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Abstract

This paper is an examination of how schools can enhance effective management, by using prefects. Specifically, it considers the meaning, roles, and qualities of prefects, as well as the issues and challenges in the use of prefects, such as the appointment of unqualified students as prefects, lack of training and orientation of prefects, abuse of power by prefects, negative perception by fellow students, and not allowing prefects to participate in school management, the inability of prefects to attend classes regularly, non-cooperation of students and teachers with the prefects, dictatorial attitudes of principals and teachers, non-motivation of prefects, among others, are discussed. It recommends strategies, that can make a school enjoy to the fullest, the benefits inherent in the use of prefects, such as ensuring that qualified students are selected and confirmed as prefects in schools, allowing the prefects to attend class lessons, and motivating the prefects that perform diligently at the end of the session, among others,

Keywords: Prefect, management, secondary school, strategy, effectiveness

Introduction

Administrators of schools, whether at the primary, secondary, or tertiary level, are facing a lot of tasks, bordering on the management of human, materials, and financial resources in addition to other external relations issues. It thus implies that school administrators are saddled with enormous tasks and need to be assisted in school management. Also, all the school activities cannot be carried out by the teachers alone, hence the appointment of the prefects to assist in the management process. Being appointed as a prefect provides an opportunity for a student to demonstrate his/her leadership skill, in preparation for the future. Giving a student the responsibility as a prefect prepares him/her for future leadership roles as students' participation in school administration contributes greatly to the efficient and orderly operation of the school, as well as helping to resolve non-academic problems, thus giving the teachers enough time to concentrate on the academic issues. (Ozigi 1983; Nwiria, 1995).

Prefects are also necessary for a school because most decisions in a school affect them. Importantly, adequate involvement of teachers and students represented by prefects in the decision-making process in schools is not only crucial to achieving the implementation of change decisions but is necessary for achieving discipline in schools (Duze, 2007). In essence, involving the students (prefects) in decision-making processes could promote discipline, attendance, less delinquency, and higher academic achievements (Mauri, 2008; Ayeerun, 2021).

Students have a strong social and educational motivation, as well as the demonstration that they can provoke desirable educational change. At times, they serve as spies on teachers, to inform the management whether they are performing their designated roles on students or not.

Prefects in a School Setting: Qualities and Mode of Appointment

The word 'prefect' takes its root from the Latin word 'Praefectus', which means put in charge. In the Free Dictionary (2010), it is described as a student with leadership qualities, selected by the school authority or students, and given certain powers to control and guide others. Prefects can be further described as those learners who are given limited trust-type authority over other learners, and brought on board to assist in the management of fellow students (Arekenya, 2012); those students, selected among other students, to assist in the management of a school, based on the outstanding qualities they possess, to achieve the objectives of the school, and ensure that the school rates high among other schools in society.

Any student who desires to be appointed as a prefect in a school must possess certain exceptional qualities as enumerated by scholars, such as being: cooperative, helpful, well-mannered, trustworthy, responsible, respectful toward teachers, peers, and school authority, in possession of leadership qualities, confidence, initiative, problem-solving skills, willing to take on extra responsibilities, detail-oriented, caring, reliable, a strong leader, an effective communicator, a student of high integrity, prepared to discipline peers, possess sound morals, good interpersonal skills, and organizational skills. mature, empathetic, and patient (www.reference.com); Kyungu (1999). A school prefect must also show a positive attitude, be honest, be able to follow the stipulated dress code, attend classes, be accessible and welcoming, mindful of student issues and affairs (<https://smapse.com>). He/she must be hardworking, humble, regular in school, neat, intelligent, disciplined, obedient, able to do his/her classwork and homework on time, friendly, assertive, display team working skills, resourceful, reliable, punctual, hardworking at all times and accountable (<https://www.acadar.com>); Kirera (2015); United African Students Association, (2018).

The appointment of prefects is one of the annual activities in schools, which is necessary because of the roles they play in achieving effective management of a school. They are appointed annually because most of the appointed prefects in a school, particularly, those in the terminal classes, graduate at the end of a session, thus necessitating the need for their replacement. The selection process varies from one school to another. Some are democratic, in which case, the prefects are selected by fellow students, particularly in Tertiary Institutions. Those who are interested in prefectship positions in the school would make their intentions known to the school authority and they will thereafter be allowed to campaign for votes from other students. The election will be conducted and the students will vote for their choices. This approach implies that democracy thrives in schools because it takes into consideration, the opinion of the entire students.

In some cases, the nomination of prefects is handled by the teachers in a school, based on the delegation of such power to them by the Principal. The committee put in charge of this assignment thus needs to scout around all the students and select those who are outstanding among them, considering some salient qualities earlier highlighted in this paper. The list of students eventually gathered from the pool of students will be matched with the posts already designated by the school management. A prefect will be given a post, based on his/her fitness for the post. For example, a student found to be brilliant and always neat within and outside the school premises can be selected as the health prefect of the school.

Prefects can also be appointed by the principal or head of a school, in collaboration with the teachers. This approach is open to bias because such a headteacher/principal can select his/her favourites among the students as prefects. Another alternative for the selection of prefects is to allow older prefects to recommend those they think can make good prefects among the students in the school (Otieno, 2001). If the prefects are appointed by the principal/head, they become out-rightly unpopular with the students and surrogates of such principal/head.

Concepts of Management, Effective Management and Function

The word 'management' has different interpretations, thus implying that the way a person views it might be different from another. Griffin (2003) saw it as a set of functions, directed at the efficient and effective utilisation of resources, in the pursuit of organisational goals. According to Terry and Franklin (2003), it is the specific process, consisting of the activities of planning, organizing, directing, and controlling, performed to determine and accomplish the stated objectives, with the use of human beings and other resources. Management is a process of delimiting an organization into structural levels, arranging workers and activities into performance units and coordinating resources and production procedures through appropriate leader behaviours to achieve organizational goals. Ibukun (1997). Wehrich and Koontz (1999) defined it further as the process of designing and maintaining an environment in which individuals, working together in groups, efficiently accomplish the selected aims'. It can be deduced from these definitions that effective management is the act of managing an organization appropriately, i.e. the human, materials, and financial resources, in such a way that will enable the organization's objectives achievable. Effective management of a school thus implies that such a school is appropriately managed to achieve the stated objectives. The basic functions of management can be listed as planning, organizing, staffing, directing, and controlling where each function builds on the previous function while the functions work together for the achievement of objectives of an organization.

Roles of Prefects in a School Setting

Prefects play multi-various roles in a school. According to Otieno (2005), they help in carrying out many responsibilities in school, such as: giving direction to fellow students, setting objectives, proposing what should be done to attain the objectives, as well as participating in achieving the objectives. They also assist in the management of a school and the staff at all times, with general discipline of the school (MOE, 1987, cited in Kirera, 2015); supervise students while discharging their duties, maintain order and discipline in schools, and assist in carrying out the daily activities of school (Njenga, 2005); help to supervise students within and outside classroom, check-mate noise-making in class, and carry out extra-curricular activities (Alfred & Thabo, 2019); oversee organization and life of students in the dormitories, as well as ensure that meals are served well and on time (Muli, 2011); help to resolve conflicts among students and promote unity among them (Gorton and Alstan, 2009); give directions to other students and set the pace of activities for them (Mutua, 2008); help to bridge the gap between the administrators and students (Kirera, 2015; Wambulwa, 2004); seek the views of all students, report back students concerns, suggestions and ideas (Gupta, 2018); organise assemblies, help new students settle in school; act as mentors to those students who need support; encourage students to participate in school events, competitions, and fundraising activities; as well as help to create greater links with the community at large (Hui, 2008); help to ensure that the physical facilities in school are maintained and utilized; act as role models to other students, to conduct examinations for the students, ensure that daily routines are adhered to and that orderliness is maintained in the halls of residence, dining hall, and in the field during co-curricular activities (Kikuvi, 2004); ensure that the grievances of students are communicated to the management promptly and that self-discipline is promoted among students at all times (Otieno, 2008); help to maintain orderliness in school at all times (Berger, 2002); help to organise and run co-curricular activities (Otieno, 2001; Gupta, 2018); develop other students and themselves; represent the students in areas of concern (Kyungu, 1999); take charge of late-comers, encourage students to stay in classrooms in between lessons after every lunch break, assist in reinforcing the school code of conduct; and help to report cases of theft, fighting and vandalism to school authority who in turn relay the incidents to the Disciplinary Committee (Fortune, 2019).

Apart from the above general roles, each prefect has specific roles in a school. The prefects listed in Table 1 are those the authors consider to be general in all schools but a school can appoint more for other specific posts.

Table 1

Specific Prefects and Roles in a School

N	PREFECT	ROLES
1	Head Boy/Head Girl	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ensures that all students obey the school rules and regulations. - Enforces students' observance of school Time-Table promptly. - Oversees the activities of the other prefects. - Represents the interest of all the students. - Projects a good image of the school within and outside the school premises. - Works with other prefects to maintain discipline in the school. - Holds meetings, to discuss issues that will move the school forward, and make recommendations to the Principal. - Ensures there is no loitering of students around the corridors, during classes, and after light-out in the hostels.
2	Assistant Head Boy/Girl	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Works with the Head Boy/Head Girl in the discharge of their duties. - Carries out the duties of the Head Boy/Head Girl in their absence.
3	Food Prefect/Assistant Food Prefect	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ensures that students obey meal time promptly. - Ensures orderliness in the dining hall while eating meals. - Ensures that late comers to the dining hall are apprehended and penalized by the management. - Ensures that students are properly dressed within the school premises, inside classrooms, and outside the school premises. - Ensures that no food is taken to the hostel and that any student caught is penalized. - Ensures that food is hygienically prepared and served and the quality and quantity of food served to the students are up to the standard.
4	Social	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Liaises with the house mistress and master, or teachers to plan social activities for

	Prefect/Assistant Social Prefect	the school. - Organizes social activities for the students, such as games, praise/songs, dance, drama, cultural dance, and quiz (subject wise/current affairs, spelling) competitions.
5	Health Prefect/Assistant Health Prefect	- Ensures the general cleanliness in and around the hostel (dormitory) as well as the entire school premises. - Ensures that students use the refuse bins appropriately. - Ensures that students pick their clothes from the drying lines every day and that no cloth is left on the ground or the flower beds - Ensures that sick/ill students are taken to the sick bay for treatment and the parents are informed immediately. - Ensures that students are neatly dressed before academic activities and after school hours. - Ensures that students' hair and nails are well-kept.
6	Labour Prefect/Assistant Labour Prefect	- Ensure that all students participate in labour activities – clearing and cultivating the school farm, weeding - Organizes students during labour activities - Allocating morning pieces of work to students - Supervises students in doing their morning pieces of work - Ensure cutting and cleaning of the school field and environment.
7	Sports Prefect	- Ensures that all the students participate in sporting activities. - Organizes students during sporting activities. - Organizes students for participation in the Inter-House Sports Competitions. - Ensures that all the students are appropriately dressed for any sporting event.
8	Chapel Prefect	- Co-ordinates the daily activities within the chapel - Appoints prayer leaders for morning or evening devotions. - Keeping the Chapel clean always.

Source: Compiled by the Authors

Prefects and Performance of Managerial Functions

Prefects are noted as those who help school management to achieve effective management of the school. Specifically, they help to control the pupils/students, supervise, and monitor them while reading during preparatory class and in classrooms, as well as ensure that noise-making is checkmated, either by disciplining those caught or writing their names and submitting the list to the class teacher who is expected to punish them later. Prefects also help to supervise pupils/students during labour activities, such as during farming activities, cutting of grasses and bushes within school premises and sweeping of school premises including the dormitories and classrooms. Any student/pupil found not to have participated in such assignments will be booked and their names submitted to the school authority or outrightly be given prima facia punishment.

During sporting events, such as the preparation for the school Inter-House Sports Competition, the game prefects are always drafted to the sports field, to assist in the supervision of the pupils/students. In this case, they ensure that the students keep to the rules of the games and quickly report any case of emergency to the school administrators, for prompt attention. Aside from these, prefects carry out the process of evaluation. They evaluate the plan already made, to ensure that the objectives initially set, are not deviated from; direct and carry out the process of controlling. In some cases, when teachers/staff are holding a meeting, or go for state assignments, prefects are drafted to take charge of the school. They are to ensure that orderliness is maintained in a school and also arrest cases of indiscipline from any student/pupil whatsoever. Prefects are also helpful in the coordination of pupils/students on the assembly ground, either in the morning or afternoon. They assist the teachers on duty in the conduct of the assembly and in checking the neatness and hygiene of the pupils/students.

In boarding schools, prefects help in the coordination of activities in the dormitories, and in particular, the dining hall. They ensure that there is orderliness in the eating pattern of the pupils/students and supervise the cooking of food, sharing of food, as well as the eating of the food by pupils/students and report any discrepancy noticed in the process. In the light of the discussions made, it becomes glaring that prefects perform management functions in a school system.

Issues and Challenges in the Use of Prefects in Schools

Studies have been carried out by researchers/scholars, in an attempt, to establish the challenges that prefects face in schools. For example, in a study on students' leadership roles and challenges in secondary schools in Tanzania, by Yusuph and Abich (2017), which involved the use of 94 participants, amongst these, 70 student leaders, 6 departmental heads, and 18 ordinary teachers obtained from 6 public and private schools in Arusha Region, and the use of purposive and stratified sampling technique, found that missing lessons while attending student matters, failure to complete class assignments on time, lack of enough time to engage in private studies, fear to report on teachers who miss classes/come to class late and lack of leadership training were the challenges that student leaders faced while performing their duties.

Also, a study of the challenges facing student councils in managing discipline in secondary schools in Kenya, which sought responses from respondents, revealed that 77(51.1%) of respondents thought that student councils faced internal challenges, for example, students refusing to take orders from them and being victimised. Some respondents 58(36.6%) agreed that challenges were external; such as: Being reported to school authorities; students refusing to take orders from us; being victimized; being treated as social outcasts; being a target of violence. The study also revealed that prefects face threats from fellow students, school administration does not train prefects, and prefects lose command especially when they do not perform well academically, prefects also have personal-based challenges.

In another study, carried out by Kosgey (2009), it was found that teenage mothers who were re-admitted to school suffered unique problems; emotional, and psychological leading them to truancy. This causes a big challenge to prefects since the problem and the 'world' of a teen mother is unique and not understood by prefects. In the year 2000, Kericho High School students bullied and sent prefects away before assaulting and raping a female teacher (Kigotho, 2000). Nairobi Chronicles (2008) notes that preferential treatment to prefects and rigid hierarchy contribute to bitterness between students and prefects.

NACADA(2008) also observes that drug and substance abuse have high clientele among school-going age. This is a challenge to prefects since they could also be victims, or have to manage a fellow student who is already intoxicated. According to NACADA (2008), the following incidents took place in Kenyan schools first in 1992, 19 girls of St. Kizito Secondary School, Meru County were raped and killed by fellow students (boys) and second in 1999, Nyeri High School students were attacked and killed their prefects.

A study was done by Mugali (2011) on the "Prefect System in Secondary Schools in Kajiado North" It was realised that students were dissatisfied with the prefect system due to the master-servant mentality that it portrays; hence, from the literature reviewed, it can be deduced that the following issues and challenges are prevalent in the use of prefects in schools.

Appointment of Unqualified Students: A major issue that hinders the effective discharge of the duties of a prefect in a school is the selection of unqualified students or those who are less qualified, but are favourites and loyalists of the principal or any of the teachers as prefects. The authors noticed that it is a norm in some schools for the principal to select those who will work with him/her as prefects, without recourse to the teachers and students. Most principals thus believe that they are the 'Alpha and Omega' in their schools, as far as the decision-making is concerned in the schools, and are thus not willing to share their superior power with anyone.

Lack of Training and Orientation According to Bennet (2001), orientation is a kind of training, meant to support new entrants to learn about their roles or tasks, be introduced to their co-workers, and settle in their work situation. Otieno and Ambwere (2000) opined that there is a need to select, train, and equip prefects with skills, to manage themselves, fellow students, time, school duties, and their studies. In a study, meant to improve the performance of prefects in Wulugu Senior High School, carried out by Kombian (2018), it was also found that orientation plays a pivotal role in prefects' performance, commitment, and discipline. Despite the importance of orientation, prefects appointed are not often given due orientation in some schools except for mere introduction in most cases. (Yusuph & Abich, 2017). This often leads to stress and confusion when faced with challenging responsibilities.

Abuse of Power: Although prefects have the power vested in them to perform their roles in a school but abuse of such power is noticeable in some cases. Most Prefects themselves as ‘thin gods’ in schools. At times, some prefects extort money from students and collect other students’ properties or seize them unnecessarily, due to the privileged position they occupy. Some are fond of meting harsh/excessive punishment on students, particularly, the junior ones, to prove their worth. There are also those prefects who are fond of sending the junior students on illicit and unnecessary errands within and outside school premises, and threaten them with punishment should they dare inform the teachers or school administrators. In the past, one of the authors also experienced a situation where a prefect mandated a particular student to be watching his clothes and fetching buckets of water, as well as carrying his plate of food from the dining hall when it was time to eat. It took the intervention of the management of the school to rescue the student from the overzealous prefect after the complaints by the parents. In some schools, male prefects struggle among themselves to date female students, even when such female students are not positively disposed to such a relationship. All these attitudes go a long way to earning a school a negative image in the public and are capable of encouraging students dropping out of school.

Negative Perception by Fellow Students: Students perceive the prefects as their enemies and are thus fond of doing everything possible to avoid them. As soon as prefects emerge in a school, they become the enemies of fellow students who often show caution while discussing in a gathering where they are present, for fear that such prefects will report them to the school administrators. The fact that prefects handle disciplinary issues in schools and give information about welfare does set them against the students. Kyungu (1999), Kibe (2005) and Hui, (2008) confirmed this, having asserted that prefects are labelled as enemies; unpopular, and spies. There is thus a negative prefect-student relationship in schools, which is detrimental to the achievement of the school’s objectives. Prefects are enemies to the indisciplined students but friends to the disciplined and focused ones. Kirera (2015) found that prefects were involved in conflict resolution and promoting cohesion among students, to ensure a peaceful learning environment.

Not Being Allowed to Participate in School Management: There is nothing that can discourage prefects in a school other than non-transparency by school administrators and teachers. Apart from the fact that this will create a sense of belonging in them, it will make them feel important in school. A situation where the prefects are not carried along on the decisions in the school because of a lack of effective leadership would make them feel sad and discouraged.

The Threat to Life: Prefects are usually targets during student riots (Mutio, 2013). The findings of the study of the challenges faced by prefects in managing students’ discipline in secondary schools in Buuri Sub-County, Kenya, carried out by Kirera (2015) confirmed that prefects face threats from fellow students and school administrators. Because prefects are empowered to administer punishments to their colleagues, their lives are usually endangered (Yusuph & Abich, 2004). After the closing period, particularly in the day school and schools in the rural areas, some overzealous students do take delight in laying an ambush for prefects who are fond of punishing them. Some students are also fond of reporting prefects to their parents/guardians at home, who in turn are fond of harassing and abusing such prefects in schools. A study, carried out by NACADA (2008), also revealed that four prefects were killed at Nyeri High School by fellow students and their properties were destroyed. Another report indicates that in 2008, there were 300 cases of school unrest across the country where prefects and students were lost, properties were destroyed, as well as school programs were disrupted.

Not Being Allowed to Attend Classes Regularly: The authors noticed that prefects are not usually allowed to attend classes regularly, but rather sent on different kinds of assignments within and outside school, by the principal and teachers. When prefects are supposed to be on their seats receiving lessons in classes, they are always on their feet, attending to non-academic issues. At times, prefects are usually sent for by the principal/head of school or teacher, or called out of the classroom while receiving a lesson, to attend to emergency/crucial issue, while they have limited time to attend to class assignments, and to engage in private studies (Yusuph & Abich, 2017). Attention to classroom lessons and in general, academics is therefore very low for prefects in schools which could eventually result in their poor academic performance in examinations, thus demoralizing and disgracing such prefects to lose command except for those who are exceptionally brilliant.

Okumbe (2007) summed these with the assertion that prefects suffer from a negative student attitude toward learning, inadequate time for reading, heavy reading load, and lack of learning materials.

Uncooperative Attitudes of Students and Teachers: It is one thing for a prefect to be appointed but it is another for such a prefect to enjoy the respect of fellow students and staff in the school. The authors noticed that a prefect imposed on a school by the school administrators will be rebuffed by fellow students. In such a situation, the commands given by such prefects will always be disobeyed by the students. Where a prefect's physique is also small, other students who have a big physique/stature may wish to take advantage of this to disobey him/her anytime an instruction is given.

Dictatorial Attitude of Principal and Teachers: The principal has supreme authority over the staff and students in a school, being the Accounting Officer of the school. Appointment as prefect gives certain rights to the prefect, particularly to the students. Some principals and teachers will not allow prefects to perform but rather take orders or commands from them always. In such cases, the prefects are merely errand boys/girls to the principals and teachers who make use of them to satisfy their selfish interests. Teachers also make use of prefects for unwholesome activities, while many among them are fond of abdicating their responsibilities to the prefects. Any prefect who dares to challenge the authority of a principal or teacher can be relieved of his/her post with condemnation and ridicule by such teachers and principals. Most prefects are, therefore, mere appendages of principals and teachers in schools.

Non-Motivation by School Administrators: The importance of motivation in the drive towards achieving high and sustainable productivity in an organization, cannot be overemphasized (Kalimullah et al. (2010), cited in Ige (2020). A study of the relationship between school incentives and the effectiveness of student councils in Kenyan secondary schools, carried out by Stephen, Jack, & Peter (2020), also found a strong positive relationship between school incentives and the effectiveness of student councils. The authors noticed that the level of motivation of prefects in most schools is very low. Unfortunately, prefects are not capacitated to discharge their duties (Kirera, 2015). According to Okumbe (2007), prefects do suffer from negative student attitudes towards learning, inadequate time for reading, heavy reading load, and lack of learning materials, yet they are expected to be role models.

Difficulty in Reporting Teachers who Display Dereliction of Duty or Misbehave: Apart from keeping an eye on the students, to reporting any case of misbehaviour to the school authority so that appropriate disciplinary action can be taken, prefects are supposed to keep an eye on the teachers and report any observation found to be inimical to their academic progress in school. At times, teachers may fail to come to class for lesson delivery or even report very late to the class. Unfortunately, prefects do hesitate to report such teachers, for fear of not only being punished but not being a subject of witch-hunting within and outside the school. This was confirmed by Yusuph and Abich (2017), who found in a study carried out to understand the role and challenges of students' leadership in secondary schools in Tanzania, having found among other challenges, the fear to report on teachers who miss classes/come to class late.

Lack of Co-operation Among Prefects: There is a saying that a house that is divided against itself will not stand the test of time. Ideally, prefects are supposed to relate cordially within and outside the school, so that each prefect can achieve his/her objective(s) while collective objectives in the school can also be achieved. There are however cases of disagreement among prefects, capable of undermining the discharge of their duties.

Victimization by School Administrators: Prefects are supposed to operate cordially with the school administrators, to be able to achieve the school's objectives. If however, the principal is not on good terms with any of the staff or prefects, this will lead to isolation or even condemnation by the principal who will not see anything good in such a prefect.

Strategies for Improving Prefects' Effectiveness in Schools

Some strategies can be adopted to tackle the aforementioned issues and challenges and thus make the use of prefects to be enjoyed holistically in schools.

Thorough Selection Process: School administrators must ensure that qualified students are selected and confirmed as prefects in the schools. Favouritism and nepotism should be avoided while selecting prefects for a school. It is important to note that academic ability should not be the main criteria for the appointment of a student as a prefect but the traits of each student should be considered, to be able to discharge the duties associated with each post. To ensure that better and more qualified students are selected and appointed as prefects, school administrators should constitute a committee to handle their selection. Such a committee should be led by a teacher of high integrity and given the freedom to operate to ensure that only qualified students are appointed as prefects.

Proper Orientation and Cooperation: The authority of a school should also ensure that the prefects are given proper training/orientation, to be able to perform their duties in the right way. At the beginning of each session, school administrators can invite experienced scholars in the society, to train the prefects on leadership and other aspects of school management, as well as on how to acquire knowledge on the roles being performed in the school. Also, school Administrators and Teachers should ensure maximum cooperation with prefects concerning transparency in decision-making processes and any other change in the school to assist the prefects in the discharge of their duties.

Effective Monitoring and Supervision: School administrators must allow the prefects to attend their class lessons. It is important to let the prefects realize that their selection and appointment do not imply that they are above the law, i.e. they cannot behave the way they like. This is why it is also important for teachers and school administrators to keep watch on them, to ascertain the level of their commitment, performance, and in particular, the way they behave in school. School administrators should however not hesitate to remove or reprimand any prefect found wanting in the discharge of his/her duties.

Roles and Responsibilities Clarification: Teachers and School administrators should note that the prefects have been appointed to complement their efforts and not to take over their responsibilities. School administrators should thus monitor their teachers thoroughly, to ensure that they discharge their duties rather than abandoning them for the prefects. Any teacher found to be indulging in such an attitude should be sanctioned.

Performance Appraisal and Motivation: School administrators should endeavour to review the activities of the prefects periodically which will help to detect those who are performing well and those who are underperforming, as well as those who are not performing. School administrators should motivate the prefects that perform diligently at the end of the session, to encourage them to do more and even improve on their activities. School administrators should avoid the 'use and dump approach' in school, and endeavour to motivate the prefects at the end of a session. Such motivation could be in the form of an award of prizes to the best prefect, praise, and commendation on the Assembly Ground or giving of letter of commendation to them at the end of the session. These will encourage them towards improved performance while discharging their duties.

Counselling Services: School administrators should fortify the Guidance-Counselling Unit in their respective schools so that they can continue to deal with some of the cases of indiscipline and other students' issues as well as complement the efforts of the prefects. The government should endeavour to recruit more Guidance Counsellors and post them to schools where there are none and organize regular seminars and workshops for the Guidance Counsellors so that they can be updated in their profession and apply the knowledge towards the achievement of improved service delivery in their relationship with the students.

Avoiding the overburden of prefects with school assignments: School administrators should ensure that prefects are not overburdened with the school's assignments. They should ensure that teachers perform their roles and duties in school rather than abdicate these to the prefects. There should be proper monitoring of the teachers to ensure that they are alive to their responsibilities. When prefects are inside the classroom receiving lessons, school administrators or teachers should allow such prefects to attend the lesson completely rather than terminating it abruptly.

Regular Meeting Between Staff and Prefects: There should be a regular meeting between staff and prefects where issues relating to students' discipline and academic development will be resolved. Prefects should also build a good working relationship with fellow students.

Conclusion

Prefects can play important roles in the management of a school if allowed to perform. The role of prefects in the management of a school cannot be overlooked because they serve as the mouthpiece of the students and how effective management of the school can be achieved. The roles include supervision of students and academic activities, monitoring of students on discipline, and mediating between students, School Administrators and staff, among others. To be able to play these roles effectively, the issues and challenges serving as obstacles must be tackled. It is hoped therefore, that if the recommended strategies are adopted by school administrators, it will enhance the performance of the school prefects which in turn will also enhance the overall effective management of schools.

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