

Terminology relating to Ethics and Values

Ethical behaviour

Each time the Council or other governing body of an educational institution meets, it is charged with doing what is best for all involved. In this regard, there must be rules that dictate the conduct of governors or board members, especially when it comes to ethical behaviour/performance and the promotion of good values. Hyden and Court (2002) offer a series of basic principles that reflect an emerging global consensus about what constitutes good governance.

- **Participation** refers to the degree of involvement in decisions and actions by those affected by, or with an interest in, the results of the decisions or action.
- **Fairness** refers to the degree to which the rules apply to everyone in society regardless of status.
- **Transparency** refers to the degree to which decisions made by public officials are clear and open to scrutiny by citizens or their representatives.
- **Decency** refers to the degree to which the formation and stewardship of rules are undertaken without humiliation of or harm to stakeholders.
- **Accountability** refers to the degree to which public officials elected as well as appointed are responsible for their actions and responsive to public demands.
- **Efficiency** refers to the degree to which rules facilitate speedy and timely decisions making.

Values

These principles resonate with the six values seen to underpin education in general. These values were identified by a Working Group under the guidance of Professor Wilmot James in 2000 and are seen as underpinning the education system as a whole. (For further reading on this matter, go to www.education.gov.za and look at the Reports that were published in 2000. The Working Group Report is called *Values, Education and Democracy*.)

- **Equity** can be seen as fairness and justice but with an emphasis on redress, equal opportunity and open access in most cases.
- **Tolerance** includes the value of 'ubuntu', with tolerance being defined by the working group as 'a deeper and more meaningful' concept of mutual understanding, reciprocal altruism and the active appreciation of the value of human difference.
- **Openness** means transparency, accessibility and approachability. Honesty and frankness are also associated with openness. If openness is promoted so is democracy, and greater participation is encouraged.

- **Accountability** is a value concerned with the ability to explain your behaviour/ performance to someone; with accountability comes responsibility and excellence. It is a word that is often linked with democracy.
- **Social honour** relates to a sense of being South African. It is about balancing individual and community needs.
- **Multilingualism** is understood to lead to a deeper communication and understanding and a deeper cultural confidence. It creates a pathway to democracy and democratic values.