

Rules About Rules

Rules can be good or bad; they can promote either mindfulness or mindlessness. Rules, however, are essential and inevitable in organizations in spite of the fact that they often lead to unanticipated consequences and complications. Good rules are flexible, educate, and enable behavior consistent with goals. Bad rules are rigid, create dependence, hinder, and are routinely used to punish. In sum, rules are necessary for efficient administration of schools, but rules should not be cast in stone. They should enable and facilitate rather than hinder and impede (Hoy & Miskel, 2013). Consider the following administrative guides for the use of rules:

Ten Rules for Effective Use of Rules in Organizations

1. There are exceptions to the most rules: Recognize them.
2. There are times when the rules don't work: Suspend them.
3. Some rules encourage mindlessness: Avoid them.
4. Some rules support mindfulness: Develop them.
5. Many rules become unnecessary: Eliminate them.
6. Some rules enable positive outcomes: Create them.
7. Some rules create dependence: Beware of them.
8. Some rules encourage a playful approach: Invent them.
9. Rules set precedents: If the precedents are bad, change the rules.
10. Rules are best to guide but not to dictate.

Absolute Rule: With this exception, there are no absolute rules.

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