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CODE OF CONDUCT FOR LEARNERS

Introduction

Paulpietersburg Primary School commits itself solemnly to establishing a school climate conducive to optimal education learning procedures. In order to do this it is necessary to establish a practical and easily implanted Disciplinary Policy. This should ensure that the school's curricular and extracurricular instruction program proceeds in an acceptable and orderly manner. The above mentioned Discipline Policy serves as a departure point for the maintenance and cultivation of this school's disciplinary character and also to inculcate self-discipline in the individual learner.

Code of Conduct

The Governing Body of Paulpietersburg Primary School accepts the Code of Conduct for learners after due consultation with learners, parents and educationalists of the school. This code of conduct in the form of a disciplinary policy according to the Schools Act, which was accepted on 15 November 1996, aspires to establish a disciplined and goal orientated school environment which is in turn, dedicated to the improvement and preservation of quality teaching. No specification within the Schools Act of 15 Nov 1996 excludes any learner from the necessity of conforming to the Paulpietersburg code of conduct. This code of conduct contains a carefully constructed process of law, which protects the rights of every learner and any party responsible for disciplinary procedures.

Approach to the implementation of the Disciplinary Policy.

Philosophical Approach

The school regards each and every learner as a unique individual who is entitled to achieve and develop to their full potential. In view of the fact that the above takes place mainly in the presence of an adult educationalist and a peer group of learners it is obviously of utmost importance that such development takes place in orderly, formative and educational climate.

Any form of disruption to this carefully cultivated motivation climate by unseemly behaviour on the part of a learner or learners would therefore put the development required in order to reach full potential at risk. The policy serves as a precaution to ensure that no learner, because of their own irresponsible behaviour, or because of

unacceptable behaviour on the part of other learners, will be unable to develop as a fully integrated personality.

Educational Approach

The Disciplinary Policy will at all times be applied in a spirit of good will, affection and support, this implies the following:

1. Application of the rules regarding learners will be done with sensitivity and understanding.
2. Sympathetic authoritative leadership will be applied at all times because learners have the right to be heard.
3. Acknowledgement of the value of each and every learner as also their individuality and specific growth phase, is always a number one priority, e.g. differentiation between JP and SP learners is necessary. JP learners do not as yet possess the same level of ability with regard to matters on conscience, normative distinction and moral ethical judgement, as do the older learners. A specific code of conduct will also need to be applied to Gr 7 learners who are in the process of rounding off their Primary School Education and preparing to leave the school.
4. A higher level of responsibility will naturally be expected of a Gr 7 learner. The code of conduct which applies to Gr 7 learners encompasses a much stricter application of the school rules and there is also an expectation that they will serve as an example to the junior learners.

Moral and Religious Approach

The Principal and staff of Paulpietersburg believe that every child has been created by a loving God with a specific destiny. Every learner must therefore receive guidance which will enable them to achieve their destiny. Intervention will only take place when it appears that the learner's attitude or actions do not concur with what is expected of them.

Ban on Corporal Punishment

No person at Paulpietersburg Primary School may administer corporal punishment to a learner. Any person or persons guilty of disregarding sub article (1) of the Schools Act, is guilty of a felony which is punishable by law and can result in prosecution for physical abuse.

Main Aim of this Policy

The creation of an orderly environment in which meaningful education can take place, with every learner receiving optimum benefit from the teaching at the school, with the following supportive aims:

1. Good discipline and place of peace and quiet must be created, where every learner must be held accountable for their self-discipline and responsibilities.
2. The chancer and undisciplined learner must be made to accept responsibility for them.
3. We must strive at all times to discourage negative characteristics and encourage, with love and respect, the acquisition of positive qualities.

4. We must acknowledge the learner's right to a disciplined environment and to be heard.
5. We must expect each learner to always do the proper thing.
6. Learners, who manifest serious behavioural problems and influence others to do the same, must be identified, addressed and encouraged to change their behaviour. Should there be no improvement, the learner may be suspended, or even expelled in order to negate their influence on other learners.

Principals and Value: The rights of learners

Democracy

The Bill of Rights in the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, Act no 108 of 1996, enshrines the rights of all people and affirms the democratic values of human dignity, equality and freedom. The school must protect, promote and fulfil the rights identified in the Bill of Rights. All learners and partners at a school have the democratic right to due process and to participate in decision making about matters affecting them at the school. They also have the right to have their views heard about these matters.

Non Discrimination and Equality

No person may unfairly discriminate against a learner. All learners shall enjoy equal treatment before the law and shall receive equal protection and benefits of the law.

Privacy, Respect and Dignity

Every learner has inherent dignity and has the right to have his/her own human dignity respected. That implies mutual respect including respect for one another's convictions and cultural traditions. Every learner also has the right to privacy, which includes the right not to have his/her possession seized.

However, the principal or an educator may search learners based on his/her reasonable suspicion followed by the use of search methods that are reasonable in scope.

Non Violence and the Freedom and Security of a Person

Every learner has the right not to be treated or punished in a cruel, inhuman or degrading manner. Corporal punishment has been abolished. Educators and learners have to learn the importance of mediation and co-operation, to seek and negotiate nonviolent solutions to conflict and differences and to make use of due process of law.

Learners have the right not to be locked up in solitary confinement or detention. The philosophy of the disciplinary system is based on human dignity and on respect and consideration for others and not on fear or assault.

Freedom of Expression and Right to Demonstrate and present Petitions

Freedom of expression is more than freedom of speech. The freedom of expression includes the right to seek, hear, read and wear. The freedom of expression is

extended to form an outward expression as seen in clothing selection and hairstyles. However, learners' rights to enjoy freedom of expression are not absolute. Vulgar words, insubordination and insults are not protected speech. When the expression leads to a material and substantial disruption in school operations, activities or the rights of others, this right can be limited as the disruption of schools is unacceptable.

School Environment

Learners have the right to a clean and safe environment that is conducive to education. Security of property, well cared for school facilities, school furniture and equipment, clean toilet facilities, water and a green environment, absence of harassment in attending classes and writing tests and examinations, all create an atmosphere that is conducive for education and training.

Rights and Responsibilities of Learners

School and Classroom rules

School rules are designed to regulate the general organisation of the school, and relationships between the principal, educators and learners. Classroom rules are designed to give effect specifically to the relationship between educators and learners in the classroom, and may include classroom interactions are management:

1. Learners must be involved in the formulation of school and classroom rules and must conform to such rules.
2. All rules are to be consistent with the overall Code of Conduct, be clear and understandable and make provision for fair warning.
3. Each learner should be provided with a copy of the school rules at the beginning of each school year; younger learners should be informed verbally of school rules.
4. Classroom rules should be posted in the classroom. The consequence for breaking the rules should also be included. The punishment must fit the offense and be graded to make provision for repeated offenses. These rules should make provision for fundamental fairness and fair warning.
5. Learners must be expected to know and to adhere to school and classroom rules. Ignorance of these rules is not an acceptable excuse.

Learning and School Work

Learners must commit themselves to do their school work during classes, complete assigned homework and catch up on work missed because of absence. Disruption of school is unacceptable.

Security and Care of School Property

As the school has been developed for the use of all the learners attending the school, it is the privilege and obligation of every learner to protect and carefully use all the facilities and equipment so that others that comes after them can also enjoy the privilege. The parent or legal guardian of anyone who intentionally misuses, damages or deface any school property should replace it or pay for the property so damaged. Destruction of property is a punishable offense.

School Attendance

The right of learners to basic education places the obligation on them to attend school regularly during school hours. Should a learner be absent his/her parent or legal guardian must notify the school to explain the absence.

Learners have the responsibility to learn and develop their full potential i.e. academic, occupational, social, sport, spiritual, art and cultural potential. They should actively participate in the learning process and decision making and have the opportunity to talk about their problems.

Learners can expect educators to maintain a high standard of professional ethics and to be present to teach their classes, assist them with their learning difficulties, and report on their progress and to look after their well-being. There should be a relationship of mutual trust and respect between learners and educators. Victimisation of the one by the other is unacceptable.

Responsibilities of Parents with Respect to the Code of Conduct

The ultimate responsibility for learners' behaviour rests with their parents or guardians. It is expected that parents will:

1. Support the school, and require learners to observe all school rules and regulations and accept responsibility for any misbehaviour on their part.
2. Take an active interest in their children's schoolwork and make it possible for the children to complete assigned homework.
3. Attend meetings that the Governing Body convenes for them.

Parents have the right to take legal action against any educator, learner or person who unlawfully violates the constitutional right of their children by e.g. corporal punishment, injury to a child, etc.

Discipline

Discipline must be maintained in the school and the classroom to ensure that the education of learners proceeds without disruptive behaviour and offenses. Its goal is to teach and lead learners to self-discipline.

The disciplinary process must be expeditious, fair, just corrective, consistent and educative. Where possible the parent should be informed and involved in the correction of the learner's behaviour. Learners should be protected from abuse by adults or other learners.

Restraint is the act of controlling the actions of learners when such actions may inflict harm to others or to the learner, or violate the rights of other learners or educators. Educators may use reasonable measures where necessary to prevent a learner from harming him/herself or others.

The South African Schools Act, 1996, empowers school authorities to discipline learners, but it is beyond the law to delegate this authority to fellow learners.

Learners are partners with other members of the school and are not in charge of the school.

Every educator is responsible for discipline at all times at the school and at school related activities. Educators have full authority and responsibility to correct the behaviour of learners whenever such correction is necessary at the school. Serious misconduct must be created at schools to handle disciplinary problems to reduce the load of the principal.

Any corrective measures or disciplinary action must be commensurate with the offense/infraction. Corrective measures may become more severe with subsequent repeated infractions. Suspension or expulsion may follow. Learners should not think that they cannot be suspended or expelled simply because it is their first offense or infraction of a rule or policy, but such decision should be taken by the right authority.

In cases where a learner cannot adjust to the school and where his/her behaviour is objectionable in that it violates the rights of others, he/she will be referred to the principal. Through consultations with his/her educators and the site of learning base team in consultation with the parents or guardians every effort should be made to assist him/her to adjust. This will include referral to the education support services for treatment. If all these efforts fail, the principal will refer the matter to the Governing Body, which may make a decision in the best interest of the learner and the other learners at the school.

Punishment

Punishment is a corrective measure or a penalty inflicted on an offender who has to suffer the consequences of misconduct in order to maintain the orderly society of the school.

Corporal punishment shall not be administered.

Prevention, proactive advice counselling, penalties and corrective measures
In case minor offenses corrective measures may be applied. These measures could include one or more of the following:

1. Verbal warning or written reprimand by an educator or principal.
2. Supervised schoolwork that will contribute to the learner's progress at school, the improvement of the school environment, provided that the parents are timeously informed and the security of the child is assured.
3. Performing tasks that would assist the offended person.
4. Agreed affordable compensation.
5. Replacement of damaged property.
6. Suspension from some school activities, e.g. sport, cultural activities.
7. Detention

Suspension should only be considered after every effort has been made to correct the behaviour of the learner.

Offenses that may lead to suspension

Provincial regulations must be consulted in the compilation of a list of offenses which may lead to suspension of a learner. Offenses that may lead to such suspension include, but are not limited to the following:

1. Conduct which endangers the safety and violates the rights of others.
2. Possession, threat or use of a dangerous weapon.
3. Possession, use, transmission or visible evidence of narcotic or unauthorised drugs, alcohol or intoxicants of any kind.
4. Fighting, assault or battery.
5. Immoral behaviour or profanity.
6. Falsely identifying one.
7. Harmful graffiti, hate speech, sexism, racism
8. Theft or possession of stolen property including test or examination papers prior to the writing of tests or examinations.
9. Unlawful action, vandalism, or destroying or defacing school property.
10. Disrespect, objectionable behaviour and verbal abuse directed at educators or other school employees or learners.
11. Repeated violations of school rules or the Code of Conduct.
12. Criminal and oppressive behaviour such as rape and gender based harassment.
13. Victimisation, bullying and intimidation of other learners.
14. Infringement of examination rules.
15. Knowingly and wilfully supplying false information or falsifying documentation to gain an unfair advantage at school.

Suspension and Expulsion

A governing body may, after a fair hearing, suspend any learner who has been found guilty of contravening stipulations of the Code of Conduct.

1. For a period of one week.
2. For a reasonable period not exceeding one week, pending a decision by the HOD on the recommendation of the Governing Body as to whether or not the learner is to be expelled from the school.

A learner who has been expelled, or his/her parent, may appeal against the decision of the HOD to the member of the Executive Council, within seven days of the decision so to expel him/her.

In case of a disciplinary transfer, the HOD must find a school for a learner until the learner is beyond compulsory school going age, as the right of to a basic education cannot be violated.

All decisions leading to suspension or expulsion must take cognisance of applicable laws e.g. a learner whose parent is unable to pay the school fees determined by the governing body may not be suspended from classes or expelled from the school.

Due Process

The South African Act makes provision for due process including a fair hearing before a learner may be suspended from the school by the governing body. Due process guarantees a learner a fair hearing before a learner may be suspended for a period of one week or be expelled from the school by HOD.

Any learner alleged to have violated any rule that require suspension or expulsion, must be brought to the principal. The principal shall hear the evidence and then decide on the action to be taken. Such action must include that the principal must inform the parents in writing of the proposed action and arrange for a fair hearing by a small disciplinary committee consisting of members designated by the governing body. This tribunal must not be intimidating to the learner. In the case of very young learners special arrangements must be made for the hearing and the parents or guardians could represent the learners.

The disciplinary committee so appointed must conduct the hearing in accordance with the provincial regulations laid down by the member or the Executive Council.

For the hearing the learner must:

1. Be informed of and understand the charges of which written notice should be given at least five days before the time also indication the date, time and place of the hearing.
2. Receive such particulars on the charges as he/she may be entitled to according to law, fir he/she so requests.
3. Get the opportunity to be heard and tell his/her side of the story and to present the relevant facts.
4. Not be prohibited from being represented by legal counsel, in which case written explanation of the charges must be given, or, in less serious cases the learner may be represented by a member of the LRC, parent guardian or educator.
5. Be heard by an impartial person(s).
6. Be treated with dignity during the process.
7. Be informed in writing of the decision of the governing body on whether or not he/she is guilty of misconduct and the penalty to be imposed in the case of suspension or expulsion.
8. Have the right to appeal to the MEC if he/she is aggrieved by decision of the governing body.

The Governing Body must keep a record of the proceedings of the hearing, and

- may inform, in writing, the HOD of its decision to suspend a learner
- must inform the HOD within 24 hours of its recommendation for expulsion of the learner.

Subject to any provincial law a learner may only be expelled by the HOD.

Serious Misconduct and the Law

Serious misconduct which may include offences according to the law must be investigated by the police and referred to the court if necessary. Serious misconduct must be handled in terms of the government notice and regulations promulgated by the member of Executive Council in the Provincial Gazette of the province concerned.

Should a governing body have difficulty to interpret these guidelines they must please contact the HOD of the province in which their school is situated.

Disciplinary Action: Detention

Transgression

1. Late for school
2. Homework:
 - i. Not done
 - ii. Not complete / untidy
 - iii. Forgot books
 - iv. Copying
 - v. Not signed
 - vi. Signature forged
3. Disturbance in Class:
 - i. Shouting out answers
 - ii. Insolent behaviour
 - iii. Walking around in class
 - iv. Eating in class
 - v. Disturbing the class
 - vi. Speaking other languages not English
 - vii. Not listening to the teacher
4. Poor Conduct:
 - i. Insolent
 - ii. Provocative
 - iii. Being rude
 - iv. Rude language
 - v. Fighting
 - vi. Telling lies
 - vii. Use of toilets
 - viii. Listening
 - ix. Poor conduct in assembly
5. Theft
6. No sick note
7. Appearance:
 - i. Wearing jewellery
 - ii. Unusual hairstyles

- iii. Incorrect school uniform
 - iv. Untidy
 - v. Wearing make-up or nail polish
8. Vandalism:
- i. School
 - ii. Other
 - iii. Own
9. Pornography:
- i. Video
 - ii. Literature
10. Misuse:
- i. Smoking
 - ii. Alcohol
11. Veranda Behaviour:
- i. Not walking in line
 - ii. Not quiet
 - iii. Running
12. Correct Sports Wear:
- i. Forgot sport clothes
 - ii. Incorrect sport clothes
13. Detention Letter:
- i. Not signed
 - ii. Not back at school
 - iii. Didn't show up for detention
14. After School:
- i. Conduct
 - ii. Appearance

Our educational mission is to instruct and lead our learners through their academic, spiritual, cultural and sport activities in such a manner so as to assist them in their development towards reaching a balanced maturity.

We will strive to achieve this in a disciplined atmosphere of Christian tolerance in which individuals can realise their full potential thus enabling them to be integrated in a democratic multi-racial society.

Achieving such a goal is not possible without the whole hearted co-operation of all members of Paulpietersburg Primary School. School rules exist to protect you and the quality of your education.

Teach them and willingly adhere to them so that we can continue to be proud of Paulpietersburg Primary School.

General Rules

1. Respect both yourself and others.
2. Have the courage to tell the truth at all times.
3. Respect the property of other people.

4. Speak politely. Do not use bad language.
5. Do not damage or disfigure property, including writing on desks or wall. School books must be cared for.
6. Do not chew gum.
7. Keep your classroom neat at all times, as well as the school buildings and grounds.
8. Show a respectful attitude towards all prefects who are appointed to assist staff.
9. No bullying or disrespectful behaviour will be tolerated.
10. Bicycles, roller skates and skateboards may not be ridden on the school premises.
11. Never use, or have in your possession, tobacco, alcohol, drugs or dangerous weapons.

Specific School Rules

School Attendance

1. School attendance is compulsory.
2. Learners who have been absent due to a contagious disease must produce a medical certificate on return to school.
3. In all other cases of absenteeism, parents must give a written explanation.
4. Where possible, medical appointments or interviews, for learners should be made for after school.

School Times

1. Learners must be punctual and adhere to the school times, as stipulated by the School Governing Body.
2. No learner may leave the school premises during the school day without the permission of the Principal

In the Classroom

1. Learners must strive towards a positive attitude to their school work. Homework must be done daily and to the best of their ability. Homework books must be signed daily.
2. Learners must respect the interests of their peers and their actions should not be detrimental to the interests of the rest of the class. Learners must actively support the learning process.
3. The relationship between educators and learners must reflect their mutual trust, regard and loyalty. The learners must subject themselves to the authority of the educator whilst the educator will respect the learner's dignity.

Outside the Classroom

1. Lining up and moving along the verandas and passages must be done quietly and in an orderly manner. Learners must walk in single file on the left.
2. No running or playing will be allowed on verandas or in toilets.
3. Learners must give way to, and greet adults respectfully.

4. Learners must enter and exit the hall in an orderly fashion.
5. Learners must only use areas allocated to them. Certain areas may, from time to time, be declared out of bounds and no learner may enter such an area.
6. Learners must refrain from aggressive or abusive behaviour. Any form of intimidation, bullying, victimisation, physical or verbal abuse is unacceptable.

Appearance of Learners

1. It is compulsory to wear the official school uniform. Learners must be neat and tidy.
2. Boys and girls may wear watches. Girls may also wear silver or gold studs or "sleeper" earrings. Only one pair of earrings may be worn at a time. Girls may wear a signet ring.
3. Fingernails must be kept clean and short. No nail polish may be worn.
4. Hair must be clean and neatly kept. Hair may not be bleached or coloured.
5. Should a girl have long hair, she must have it tied up with blue or black ribbons, clips or Alice bands.
6. Whenever learners wear their school uniform after school hours, they must wear the complete uniform.

Sport / Physical Education

1. School policy requires all learners to participate in physical education classes during school hours.
2. Learners who need to be excused from physical education during school hours must bring a note, written by such a learner's parent/guardian stating reasons.
3. Practices and matches must be regularly attended so that a team member does not let his/her team or coach down.
4. Learners will only be permitted to participate in extra-mural sport if the correct sports uniform is worn.
5. Learners must behave as good hosts towards all visitors. When on the sport field we always offer our best, but play according to the rules of the game.

Cell Phones

1. Learners are not allowed to bring cell phones to school.
2. Cell phones that are in possession of the learner must be handed in at the office.

Disciplinary Action

1. To ensure a harmonious atmosphere, all school rules must be strictly adhered to. Action will be taken against all transgressors.
2. Any disciplinary action will be taken in a fair manner. Learners will be given the opportunity to defend their actions.
3. Learners must accept responsibility for their own behaviour.

Disciplinary Code

1. Offences are graded and demerits given by the staff. These will be recorded. If a learner accumulates 5 or more demerits, he/she will be ordered to attend a detention class on Friday afternoons.
2. Parents will be informed in writing and given full particulars. After 3 detentions, parents will be summoned to attend an interview with the relevant educator and the HOD.

This detention system must be supported by all educators, parents and learners of Paulpietersburg Primary School.

When a learner has three detentions a term, parents will have a meeting with the principal to discuss the child's behaviour. If the child shows no progress an explanation will be given to the tribunal. The due process policy will then take action.

This **Code of Conduct** is discussed and accepted by the Governing Body of Paulpietersburg Primary School.

PPB Primary School