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## CODE OF CONDUCT

### SUMMARY

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- Code of conduct for staff

### GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Woodcrest Academy is made up of diverse cultures and this Code of Conduct seeks to establish and maintain respect and tolerance among all stakeholders.

The Code also aims to develop in each child the characteristics of self-discipline and a striving for maturity. Each learner is expected to conduct themselves in a manner that respects the rights of those around them and promotes the well-being and image of the school.

The school will always involve the parents or guardians when a learner's behaviour becomes a major concern and attempt to resolve the issue constructively.

### LEGAL AUTHORITY

This code of conduct is consistent with the disciplinary proceedings applicable to learners as set out in the South African Schools Act No.84 of 1996.

According to the South African Schools Act:

- Section 8(4) provides that nothing shall exempt a learner from complying with the Code of Conduct of the school.
- An educator at a school shall have the same rights as a parent to control and discipline the learner according to the Code of Conduct when the learner is at school or any school-related activities.

In addition, an independent school has the legal right to deny access to a learner for reasons related to non-payment, short payment, or behavioural issues.

The school is obliged to refer criminal actions to the SAPS.

According to the acts mentioned below, if an educator has reasonable grounds to suspect the presence of a prohibited substance or item as laid out in the code of conduct, they have the legal authority to conduct a search of any learner or their property. During such a search the right to human dignity shall be observed and learners will be searched in private by persons of their own gender in the presence of the Principal or her stand-in.

Relevant acts: Control of Access to Public Premises and Vehicles Act No.53 of 1985; Drugs and Drug Trafficking Act No.140 of 1992; Arms and Ammunitions Act No.75 of 1969; Education Laws Amendment Acts No.24 of 2005 and No.31 of 2007; Government Gazette Notice 1140 of 2008.

### CODE OF CONDUCT FOR PARENTS/GUARDIANS

The ultimate responsibility for learners' behaviour rests with their parents or guardians. It is expected that parents will support the school by ensuring that learners observe all school rules and regulations and accept responsibility for any misbehaviour on their part. Parents are also required to take an active interest in their children's schoolwork and make it possible for the learners to complete assigned homework.

A parent is expected to:

1. Bring to the attention of the school any incidents of bullying, teasing, injury, or incidents of a sexual nature that occur at school so that the school can follow due process. Parents may not act on their own accord in such situations, as there are processes to be followed.
2. Behave with decorum and respect when dealing with staff, educators and learners of the school. Due process will be followed in the event of this not being upheld.
3. Preferably avoid discussing issues about the school or staff in front of their child as this undermines relationships and discipline at school.

## **EMPOWERMENT OF STAFF**

In the absence of a parent, the class teacher takes over the parental role and acts *in loco parentis* during school hours. This means that the class teacher has the same authority as the parent to control and discipline a learner during school activities.

The educator's first priority will be to act in the best interest of the children in their care. At times the class teacher will make judgements on situations, after investigating circumstances and weighing up the situation to their satisfaction. They are best placed to deal with all situations that develop in classrooms and on school fields and to act accordingly. It is vital that they be trusted with this authority and parents support them in their decision-making in order to create harmony and ensure compliance. Should any action taken by a teacher or their designated authority be cause for unhappiness, the parent is requested to communicate with the school principal so that the matter can be dealt with effectively.

- Every educator is responsible for discipline and control of the learners at all times at the school during school hours and at school-related activities. Educators have full authority and responsibility to correct the behaviour of the learners at these times. Warnings will be given to learners either verbally or in writing. Serious misconduct will be referred to the Principal.
- Any corrective measures or disciplinary action will be commensurate with the offence or infraction. Corrective measures may become more severe with subsequent repeated infractions.
- Offences will be recorded in a Record of Behaviour book or chart. The Record of Behaviour will be reviewed regularly, and parents, learners and staff will have the opportunity to make contributions and recommendations regarding the content of the Record of Behaviour. Disciplinary procedures will be followed as stipulated in the Disciplinary Code, which will be discussed if requested with learners and parents. Parents will regularly receive disciplinary reports from the school.
- School staff may not medicate or treat a sick or injured child without the express permission and guidance of the parent or guardian. Staff will make a sick or injured child as comfortable as possible and then seek medical intervention by the parent or guardian, or, if they are unavailable, take the child, **at the expense of the parent or guardian**, to the nearest medical facility.
- Educators are required to teach material in the curriculum that some parents may find sensitive. This material is examinable and must be taught to every child. Educators are sensitive to the different values of certain religions and cultural groups. Such material will be handled with the sensitivity it deserves, bearing in mind these different values. If a parent is concerned, they may contact the class teacher and inform them of their concern so that appropriate measures may be considered.

## **CODE OF CONDUCT FOR LEARNERS**

**It is expected of learners that they always abide by the rules of the school and the classroom.** Learners are expected to abide by all school rules both while at school and while attending school functions at or away from school. Learners may not say or do anything that may discredit themselves or the school.

Any failure to follow these principles will be recorded and appropriate follow up actions will be exercised. Parents will be asked to sign and respond appropriately to any incidents recorded on the learner's **Behaviour Record**. Behaviour modification is the duty of both the parent and the school, but the school is fairly limited in its capacity, and therefore requires the support and actions of parents in order to effect real behaviour change.

Merits and demerits will be issued as part of the discipline programme according to the behavior exhibited. Repeat offences will result in escalation such as detention, hearings, letters of warning placed on learners' files, suspension, or expulsion. A

list of all levels of offence will be made available with the **Behaviour Record**. This list will be age appropriate and will be explained to the class by the class teacher. This list will also be displayed for easy access and as a reminder to the learners.

Every learner will receive copies of the school rules, and participative management will be used to establish the rules for the classroom. The learner will sign acceptance of these rules and the parent will acknowledge that they are aware of the rules that apply to their child whilst at school. The rules will be read and discussed with the learner in their class on the day of their arrival at the school.

### **CODE OF CONDUCT FOR STAFF**

All teachers are registered with the South African Council for Educators (SACE) and as such are expected to adhere to the SACE Code of Conduct. Teacher aides and support staff are expected to treat all stakeholders with respect and dignity.