



ST STITHIANS COLLEGE

CODE OF CONDUCT: PARENTS

(18 March 2021)

INTRODUCTION

1. At St Stithians College, we are extremely fortunate to have a supportive, friendly and collaborative parent body. Our parents recognise that educating children effectively is a process that involves a partnership between the College, the parents, staff and the wider St Stithians community. As partners in this process, our parents will understand the importance of a good working relationship to ensure a high-class standard of education and to equip students with the necessary skills for adulthood. For these reasons we value and encourage the participation of parents in the life of our school.
2. In order for the integrity of the school to be maintained it is imperative that the values and behaviours outlined in The Saints Charter, the College Rules and College Policies and Procedures (as amended or revised from time to time) are adhered to by all.
3. It is expected that the school and parents work together in a positive partnership in the education of the students. However, there may be occasions when this relationship breaks down. In the instance that a parent may have a grievance against an employee or office-bearer of the College; a Parent grievance procedure has been designed for this purpose and is available on the College website.
4. Likewise, the school may have a grievance against a parent. The procedures in this policy are designed to deal with such circumstances.
5. There are two sets of circumstances which may deem it necessary for the College to follow the procedure set out below:
 - 5.1 The first is when the parent fails to behave according to the values and behaviour as described in The Saints Charter on the College premises, in College related activities and in any other activities that impugn or bring disrepute to the name, standing or reputation of the College, its trustees, officials, representatives, management, staff or students.
 - 5.2 The second deals with instances when the parent is involved in offences or acts of misconduct on the College premises, in College related activities and in any other activities or encounters that involve the College, its trustees, officials, representatives, management, staff or students.
6. The College has the right to amend, revise and add to this Code and to the College Policies, and to subject the parent to a disciplinary process for any infraction in terms of this Code.

7. For convenience, any reference in this Code to:
- 7.1 a “parent” or “parents” is a reference to one or both biological or adoptive parents, or legal guardians, or to anyone who is legally entitled to custody or guardianship of a student at the College, whichever is applicable;
 - 7.2 “College Policies” is a reference to the College Rules; the Saints Charter; the Codes of Conduct and any other policy or procedure, which may be revised or amended from time to time, and which are published on the College website or the Portal;
 - 7.3 “Affiliates” is a reference to the College’s trustees, officials, representatives, management, staff or students.

PRINCIPLES THAT GOVERN PARENT BEHAVIOUR

8. Parents are expected to recognise, respect and conform to the values adhered to by the College, and amongst other things to:
- 8.1 respect and model the caring ethos of the College whenever on College premises or when communicating with the College or School;
 - 8.2 understand that all members of the school community should be treated with respect, dignity and tolerance and set a good example in their own speech, conduct and behaviour;
 - 8.3 seek assistance from the College to resolve any conflictual situations, and desist from confrontational, aggressive or unsafe behaviour;
 - 8.4 play a supportive and collaborative role in all circumstances.

Unacceptable Conduct

9. In order to support a peaceful and safe College or School environment, the College cannot tolerate the following conduct, amongst others, from parents:
- 9.1 Attempts to gain entry into the College premises in contravention of established procedure or without permission;
 - 9.2 Disruptive behaviour which interferes or threatens to interfere with teaching, sports or sports events, school related activities or the general business of the College, either on the College premises or outside of it;
 - 9.3 Use of loud a sound, especially one that is unpleasant or that causes disturbance or offensive language, expletives, derogatory or profane language, or generally demonstrating intolerant or tempestuous conduct;
 - 9.4 Making threats or threatening to harm or injure;
 - 9.5 Damaging or destroying College property or the property of anyone associated with the College;
 - 9.6 Abusive, persistent or threatening emails, texts, written communication or communications on social media platforms;
 - 9.7 Defamatory, offensive or derogatory comments or communications in whatever form;
 - 9.8 Physical aggression;

- 9.9 Being confrontational, disrespectful, intimidatory, discriminatory or victimising or bullying others;
- 9.10 Consumption of alcohol or intoxicating substances on the College premises except at school related events where alcohol is served and permitted by the College;
- 9.11 Use of social media platforms to fuel campaigns or complaints against the College or its Affiliates or to share inappropriate, false, confidential or information that is in breach of legislation on such platforms; and
- 9.12 Any other unacceptable or reprehensible conduct such as drunken and disorderly behaviour, possession and use of illegal substances, theft, fraud, assault, including sexual assault or harassment, immoral behaviour, any form of intimidation, racism, sexism, possession of, and/or use of any weapons, vandalism or destruction of other peoples' property.

PROCESS IN RELATION TO ALL INFRACTIONS:

- 10. Depending on the nature, circumstances and gravity of the conduct, one or more of the following processes may be followed:

Step 1: Meeting With the Parent –

- 10.1 A meeting with the parent to discuss the issue or the incident should be held. If the parent agrees to meet, the following procedures will be implemented:
 - 10.1.1 Explain the details of the issue or the incident that has come to the knowledge of the College, and give the parent an opportunity to explain his or her version;
 - 10.1.2 Obtain as much information as is possible about the incident from all relevant sources, including the parent;
 - 10.1.3 Define the problem rationally, while acknowledging the emotional dimension. (It is important that the parent feels heard);
 - 10.1.4 Invite the parent to suggest possible solutions to the problem in the spirit of collaboration;
 - 10.1.5 If applicable record the proposed solution, and summarise the key aspects of the discussion with the parent in writing, as soon as possible after the meeting, and request the parent to acknowledge receipt thereof;
 - 10.1.6 If a solution is reached, it must be recorded in writing to the parent including any undertakings made about any such future conduct.
 - 10.1.7 If appropriate, and in so far as the rights of others might have been impacted by such conduct, their participation in the resolution of the matter may be necessary.

Step 2: Refusal to Attend Meeting or No Resolution in the Meeting Held

- 10.2 In the event that –
 - 10.2.1 the parent refuses to attend the meeting; or
 - 10.2.2 the meeting does not resolve the issue; or

- 10.2.3 the parent repeats the same or similar conduct;
a written warning may, if appropriate, be issued to the parent.
- 10.3 The written warning may include the following information:
 - 10.3.1 a description of the event and the parent's conduct or behaviour causing concern;
 - 10.3.2 any previous conversations with the parent and any attempts to resolve the situation;
 - 10.3.3 an explanation why the parent's behaviour is in breach of the Saints Charter or constitutes unacceptable conduct, and why a warning is appropriate;
 - 10.3.4 a caution that if the same or similar conduct is repeated, it may warrant further disciplinary action.
 - 10.3.5 The parent will be requested to acknowledge receipt of the written warning within a specified period. Failure to acknowledge receipt will, however, not limit the College's right to take action as contemplated in this policy or any other policy that may have a bearing on the matter.

Step 3: The Formal Hearing

- 10.4 In the event of an allegation of serious misconduct against a parent, the College may proceed directly to a formal hearing, to adjudicate the allegation.
- 10.5 For the purposes of a formal hearing, the parent:
 - 10.5.1 will be given reasonable written notice (at least seven calendar days) of the date, time and venue of the hearing;
 - 10.5.2 will be informed of the allegations of misconduct;
 - 10.5.3 will be given an opportunity to be heard, and to challenge any evidence given against him or her; and generally, about their rights in relation to the hearing, including the right to:
 - 10.5.3.1 be represented by another parent or an acquaintance; and legal representation may only be allowed at the discretion of the chairperson;
 - 10.5.3.2 call witnesses and cross examine witnesses who give evidence on behalf of the College;
 - 10.5.3.3 be informed of the outcome of the hearing;
 - 10.5.3.4 present evidence in mitigation, in appropriate circumstances;
 - 10.5.3.5 be informed of the sanction, if any, against him or her;
 - 10.5.3.6 be notified of the internal appeal process.

Step 4: Communication of Outcome and Follow-Up

- 10.6 Once the hearing has been completed, the Chairperson must carefully consider all of the evidence heard and determine on a balance of probabilities whether the parent is guilty of

the allegations against them, and after evidence in mitigation and or aggravation, the appropriate sanction or measures to be implemented, if any.

- 10.7 Once a decision has been reached, the decision must be properly communicated to the parent together with a notification of the appeal process that the parent may wish to invoke.

Internal Appeal

11. A parent may appeal the outcome of the Formal Hearing in writing on the record of that evidence via the Chairperson to the Rector within 5 days of the outcome of the Formal Hearing.
12. The Rector will appoint an Appeal Chairperson to consider the appeal and to determine the basis upon which and the timelines within which the parties may make submissions in relation thereto. The Appeal Chairperson must determine the appeal within 10 days of the receipt of the submissions, and provide the outcome thereof to the parties.
13. If the parent accepts the outcome of the appeal, and wishes to reach reconciliation, the approach should be made to the Head who will engage with the parent in that regard, and determine whether a reconciliation is appropriate or possible in the circumstances.
14. If the parent is not prepared to comply with the outcome of the appeal, the following further action may be considered.

Possible Further Measures Aimed at the Resolution of Intractable Grievances or Differences

15. The Head may need to seek legal advice, subject to the internal processes of the College. (This would need to have been communicated to the Rector).
16. Depending on the circumstances of the parent's conduct, the impact of such conduct on the rights of others, and the possibility of a reconciliation, if any, the Head may in appropriate circumstances:
 - 16.1 Revoke the right of admission to the school to prevent the parent harassing the staff, students or other parents.

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