

Student Code of Conduct and Procedures

1. INTRODUCTION

This document sets out the main educational philosophies and principles as well as procedures and rules which govern the school life and activities of both staff and students at St Paul's College. Success is achieved when staff, parents and students cooperate in the learning process. St Paul's College's main purpose is to nurture a spiritual, cultural and intellectual response to our world. This acknowledges that learning best takes place in a positive and caring environment in which each student can be seen as an individual.

We offer an all-round education, believing that this will best prepare students for a rapidly changing world. The main pillars of this education are:

- Academics
- Sport
- Cultural development
- Outreach
- The nurturing and development of a Christ-centred faith.

The school's desired culture is:

- unity of purpose between staff, students and parents;
- life-long learning;
- to instil critical thinking;
- to allow freedom with responsibility;
- nurture spiritual growth;
- develop an awareness of community;
- hard work;
- to celebrate diversity.

We encourage involvement in school life, believing that involved people feel more fulfilled and are more successful. This creates a sense of belonging and connectedness and also builds loyalty to each other and the school. Academics, Sport, the International Youth Award, Cultural and Outreach activities all offer opportunities for involvement. To this end, each student must participate in at least one activity in each of the first two terms and once committed to an activity, may not withdraw without good reason.

Parents and students are directed to other school codes and guidelines that regulate the smooth running of the school. These include the Sports Code of Conduct, the Honours and Awards Guidelines and the Uniform List and Dress Code

2. CODE OF CONDUCT

This code sets out the broad goals and principles, as well as specific rules and disciplinary procedures, which govern the life and activities of the school community. St Paul's College is a centre of learning. We believe that students should be responsible for monitoring their own behaviour. We aim to provide a safe and secure environment for members of the school community. We acknowledge that our students are growing and developing.

2.1 Christian Ethos

As a Catholic school, all students must attend chapel services and Religious Education classes, regardless of their personal denomination or faith.

2.2 Respect and good manners

- Respect and good manners are encouraged and emphasised. Central to this is respecting the individual for whom and what they are. Gender and cultural sensitivity is nurtured.
- Staff and students greet each other respectfully – both formally at the beginning of a lesson and informally in the corridor, on the school grounds and off-campus. Offering a seat to a member of staff or a senior student, and standing aside at a doorway to allow a member of staff or a senior student to enter first, are expected. Visitors are greeted warmly. Appropriate behaviour is expected in the classroom and on the sports field.
- Respect of place and occasion is taught.
- The school community is large and shared by many. Respect of property belonging to others, and to the school, is expected. Graffiti, vandalism and littering demonstrate disrespect and are not tolerated. Skateboards, roller blades etc damage school property and may not be brought onto the property nor may bicycles be ridden on the property.
- While being a useful tool, cell phones can be extremely intrusive and interruptive. Therefore they should be out of sight and not heard during school hours or at school functions. Areas on the campus are set aside for cell phone use during break only. Contravention of this rule will result in the cell phone/ipod etc being confiscated for a week or longer. The school is not able to investigate any alleged cell phone theft. Ipods may not be brought to school, nor may ear pieces be used at any time.

2.3 Academic expectations and requirements

- St Paul's College is renowned for academic rigour. Students are expected to be self-disciplined in all aspects of their work and should respect both the learning environment and the other members of the school community. Teachers are expected to teach accurately, and with passion, providing appropriate support. Prompt marking and monitoring of students' work is a requirement.
- Homework is important and encourages personal discipline. Cycle tests are usually written twice every week. If a student is absent from school on a cycle test day, the school requires a medical certificate. The basic performance requirements for academics are as follows:

Homework - 55%,
Cycle tests - 50%
Examinations - 45%

- Whilst tests and examinations offer an opportunity to measure a student's academic progress, other forms of assessment are also used: open book work, research projects, cross-curricular work, oral presentations, essays, etc.
- If members of staff notice that a student is underperforming, the student could be placed on SATIS (a staff and parents' monitoring system) which allows for lesson by lesson monitoring until an improvement is shown. If necessary, parents will be requested to meet with a member of staff.

2.4 School Uniform and Appearance

- Our students should look smart, tidy, respectful and business-like in their college uniforms and sports-wear. Taking pride in their appearance matters – both for themselves and for the college. Specific uniform requirements are detailed on the **“Uniform List and Dress Code”**. All students are to be in possession of **all** school uniform items and may not determine that some items are not necessary.
- When representing the school, full school uniform, including the school blazer is required. School blazers are worn to and from school during the Second term.
- The school reserves the right to request a student to change his/her hair style if it is considered inappropriate on the grounds of untidiness or because the hair style is inappropriate to the school uniform. Students and parents are referred to the photographs modeling the expected hair styles and appropriate uniform.
- Specific for girls: long hair (also long plaits) must be tied back; beads in braids and clips may be blue, black and transparent; the fringe should be above the eyebrow; hair styles should look neat, natural and well maintained; no make-up is permitted; clear nail varnish may be used.
- Specific to boys: hairstyles should look neat, length off the ears, above the collar and above the eye brow. Boys should be clean shaven without sideburns. Gel can be used to keep hair neat and inoffensive to the school uniform.
- Jewellery. Only girls may wear small studs and sleepers in gold, or silver in the lobe of each ear – only one piercing per ear. No other piercings are permitted.
- Repeated school uniform regulation infringements will result in the student being sent home until he or she has conformed to the required dress code. Parents are responsible for ensuring the correct dress and hair code is in place prior to their child's arrival at school.
- On arrival at or departure from any school related function the appropriate uniform/sports kit must be worn

2.5 Alcohol and drugs

No substances classified as drugs (defined in this document) are permitted on the campus. The school may invite the Namibian Police to carry out random drug checks when deemed necessary and take such further action as deemed necessary.

2.6 Behaviour after school hours and in the wider community

Students' behaviour after school hours and in the wider community has a direct bearing on the whole St Paul's community. Off-campus behaviour is expected to be within the parameters of the values of St Paul's. Off-campus behaviour that brings the school's reputation into question will be investigated and acted upon according to the level of the offence.

2.7 School Functions

Attendance at whole school functions, or at functions which the school management determine, is compulsory. Such events include Prize Givings, assemblies, sport events etc.

A more detailed list of specific breach of discipline is included in the section to follow.

3. DISCIPLINARY CATEGORIES

Action will be taken against a student who behaves in an inappropriate manner or who fails to comply with the usual methods of discipline described below. Each case will be seen and judged according to the context of the event and the history of the student/s involved. At times decisions are taken that safe-guard the educational and personal rights of other students and the staff.

Level 1 offences

These are minor offences. Level 1 offences include but are not limited to the following:

Chewing gum at school; throwing objects in class; failing to bring appropriate material to the classroom; talking excessively in the classroom; eating or drinking in the classroom; incomplete homework; making obscene gestures; violating the school dress code or grooming policy; lack of punctuality; littering; leaving class without permission; sleeping in class; failing to return circular/school letter forms to the school; talking during assemblies or Chapel services.

Consequences of minor offences:

The following actions may be taken:

- (a) A discussion with the student to ascertain whether there is an underlying reason for such behaviour.
- (b) Break detention or school detention.
- (c) School service.

Level 2 offences

These are more serious offences that require the attention of school management and will usually be discussed with parents or guardians. Level 2 offences include but are not limited to the following:

Cheating or copying another person's work; misbehaving on a school bus or at a school function; continually disruptive behaviour at school (on the grounds or in a classroom); abusive or aggressive behaviour or language; bullying (subjecting a student to indignity, humiliation, intimidation, physical abuse, social or other ostracism, shame or disgrace – this can also be seen as a Level 3 offence depending on the circumstance); using profane or vulgar language; leaving the school grounds without permission; bunking school or school activities; repeated detentions; forging a signature; throwing dangerous objects or actions that can cause bodily injury or damage to property; tampering with other people's possessions; disrespect/irreverence shown in Chapel or to religious education; being in possession of tobacco and/or smoking on the school premises or at a school activity; repetition of Level 1 offences.

Consequences of Level 2 offences:

The student may appear before the school manager or the school principal who may take one or more of the following actions:

- (a) The parent or guardian may be contacted.
- (b) Break detention or School detention.
- (c) School service
- (d) A written warning (possibly a final written warning).
- (e) A suspension or In-house suspension.

Level 3 offences

These are serious offences. The school principal will automatically become involved with the matter and parents or guardians will be informed. Level 3 offences include but are not limited to the following:

- 3.1 Breaking the law or the Namibian Constitution; contravening the rights of an individual.
- 3.2 Rape.
- 3.3 Sexual harassment or abuse.
- 3.4 Possessing drugs or being under the influence of drugs, being in possession of any controlled substance or dangerous drug (as defined by Namibian law, including but not limited to dagga, any narcotic drug, hallucinogen, stimulant, depressant, amphetamine, or barbiturate); possessing any other intoxicant, or mood-changing, mind-altering, or behaviour-altering drugs; Possessing alcohol or being under the influence of alcohol on the school premises or at a school activity, strong suspicion of habitual use (abuse) or regular use of medication, drugs or alcohol at school or at school events;
- 3.5 Being in possession of a weapon at school or at a school-related activity. Weapons include: knives of any size, including pocket knives (a knife is defined as a bladed hand instrument of any size that is capable of inflicting serious bodily injury or death by cutting or stabbing a person with the instrument); fireworks of any kind; chains; firearm silencer; all firearms, including air guns; cross-bows, or conventional bows; blow-pipes; traditional weapons such as pangas, assegais or "knob-kirries"; martial art weapons.
- 3.6 Issuing a bomb threat or arson (attempted or actual)

- 3.7 Bullying, fighting, assault (intentionally, knowingly, or recklessly causing bodily injury to another; intentionally or knowingly threatening other with imminent bodily injury; intentionally or knowingly causing physical contact with another when the student knows or should reasonably believe that the other will regard the contact as offensive or provocative.
- 3.8 The dangerous use of a vehicle on the school property; or driving without a licence.
- 3.9 Theft; attempted theft
- 3.10 Sale of stolen property
- 3.11 Vandalism;
- 3.12 Forgery of falsification of school documents and reports
- 3.13 Being in possession of pornographic material on the school premises,
- 3.14 Videoing/filming activity at school using any recording equipment or cell phone that is violent, obscene, pornographic or undignified with the purpose of humiliation or wider distribution in the electronic or printed media
- 3.15 Posting on the internet or other electronic, interactive or printed media violent, obscene, pornographic, undignified or humiliating material pertaining to any member of staff or student of St Paul's College, or any material that brings the name of the school into disrepute.
- 3.16 Bringing the name of the school into disrepute through on-campus or off-campus behaviour.
- 3.17 Repetition of Level 1 and/or Level 2 offences

Consequences of Level 3 offences:

The school principal may take one or more of the following actions.

- (a) School service/Detention/s
- (b) Written final warning
- (c) Suspension
- (d) Expulsion. No verbal or written warning is required prior to expulsion in the case of a Level 3 offence.

It must be noted that the above offences are not exclusive and also that repetition of an offence or offences may result in more serious action.

4. DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURES

Level 1 offences

The misconduct is dealt with by the teacher (or the SMC member), usually at the time that the behaviour is witnessed. Students have the right to be treated fairly and may appeal against a punishment. The student should first try to solve the problem with the teacher (or SMC member) concerned. Should the matter not be resolved in a reasonable manner, he or she may appeal to the relevant Head of Grade or Head of school or the Guidance Counselor. Some matters may be referred to a manager or senior staff member.

Levels 2 and 3 offences

Serious matters are reported to the appropriate manager or the school Principal. The school Principal may appoint an Initiator to investigate the case and collect information, and present the case to the Principal/Manager.

4.1 Investigation process

- a) A member of staff will be appointed as an Initiator to investigate any allegations of serious misconduct.
- b) All interviews with possible culprits and witnesses will be conducted confidentially. A second member of staff will be present for any interviews in cases where the alleged breach amounts to serious misconduct.
- c) The School may suspend a student during the course of the investigation.
- d) All involved in acts of misconducts will be expected to tell the truth. Any deceit may be considered an aggravating factor in the determination of punishment, if guilt is established. A student may decline to answer questions on the grounds that the answer may be self-incriminating.
- e) Any notes taken by the Initiator and/or a witness present during the investigation will be for the personal use of the Initiator only. They will not form part of an official record of any proceedings.
- f) Students may be asked to make written statements, which will be signed and dated. Such statements may be used later in any procedures that follow the investigation. Any person who makes a statement as provided for in this paragraph shall be entitled to read it before signing it and shall be given a personal copy to keep. A student may decline to make a statement.
- g) Once the matter has been investigated as fully as possible, the Initiator will refer the matter to the Principal who will discuss the matter with the Parents and/or may refer the matter to a Disciplinary Hearing Committee.

The committee **may** consist of: the Principal, Deputy Principal, and two from the following, a Head of Grade, the School Counsellor, Head of Grade 8-9, or Head of Grade 10-12 or a school Manager. It should be noted that parents/guardians can be consulted on the make up of the committee based on the principle of fairness and preventing a case of undue influence or a loss of credibility in the process.

4.2 Disciplinary Hearings

Introduction

- (a) Depending on the seriousness of the alleged offence, considerations of fairness to all concerned and the interests of investigation, the Principal may suspend the student from all school activities pending the outcome of the hearing.
- (b) Factors that will be considered in the convening and outcome of a disciplinary hearing are:
 - i. The Student's best interest must be considered at all times. This must be tempered by the responsibility of the Chairperson of the hearing to the rest of the school community;
 - ii. The strictest confidentiality must be adhered to, as most hearings will be dealing with minors. In this regard the school undertakes to inform only those staff and management as is necessary for the continued smooth functioning of the school. The amount of information to be given to other members of the school community is left to the Principal's discretion.
 - iii. The Chairperson of the hearing must be impartial. The Chairperson cannot be involved in any way in the investigation of the alleged offence. If the Chairperson's interests are, or might be seen to be, compromised in any way, this is a ground for recusal or disqualification.
- (c) As this is an internal matter, legal representation is not a right, but may be allowed at the discretion of the Chairperson of the hearing. If the defendant requests legal representation, the school will also be entitled to have legal representation. The

costs for legal representation, including the costs occasioned by the school in this respect, must be borne by the defendant.

4.3 Procedures of a formal disciplinary hearing

- a) The hearing will be conducted in English. If the student(s) or his/her/their Parents require any translation or interpretation they may provide it at their own expense.
- b) The Investigator will inform the student(s) and the student's Parents in writing of the complaints against the Learner.
- c) Details of the time and venue of the hearing will also be provided. All arrangements will be made on reasonable notice, to allow all parties to prepare for the hearing.
- d) The hearing will be convened within seven working days of the alleged offence having been reported to the Principal or Management member, unless there are circumstances that make this impossible, in which case the hearing shall be convened as soon as is practically possible in the circumstances at the discretion of the Principal.
- e) Every student has the right to the presence of one or both Parents. If this is impossible, the Parent(s) may request in writing that another adult be present in their place. Their absence, unless with good cause (at the sole discretion of the Chairperson), will not be allowed to delay the hearing unnecessarily.
- f) The Principal will chair the hearing, or if the Principal excuses him/herself or is disqualified by reason of a conflict of interest in the matter or has been involved in any way in the investigation of the alleged offence, a Management member/Outsider/Board member/a Senior official may officiate. The Chairperson may request the help of no more than two other college staff members or management to assist him/her during the hearing. The decisions taken are those of the Chairperson. Other members are present to assist the Chairperson to make a decision both to the guilt and appropriate sanction of the learner.
- g) At the start of the hearing, the Chairperson will ask the Initiator to present the complaints. This will involve stating what School Rules are alleged to have been broken and specify the act or omission in question. The written notice of the hearing will be tabled.
- h) The student(s) will then be asked by the Chairperson to plead "guilty" or "not guilty" to the charges.
- i) The student or their representative may then state the defence (if any) and furnish such information as s/he may consider helpful to the hearing in clarification of the student's case.
- j) If a "guilty" plea is entered, the hearing will proceed as follows:
 - i. The student will be asked by the Chairperson to state in his/her/their own words why they are guilty of misconduct;
 - ii. The Initiator and/or Chairperson may question the student(s) to ensure the full facts of the matter have come to light;
 - iii. The Chairperson will then determine whether or not the student(s) is guilty of the alleged misconduct;
 - iv. If the finding is one of "guilty" the hearing will then proceed to hear evidence in aggravation and mitigation.
- k) If a "not guilty" plea is entered, the hearing will proceed as follows:
 - i. The Initiator will present the evidence of the alleged act of misconduct.
 - ii. The Initiator may call witnesses and present documentary or other physical evidence to substantiate the allegation against the student(s).
 - iii. The student(s) or student's representative (if any) will be given an opportunity to cross-examine each witness. A Parent may assist the student(s).

- iv. The student(s) will then be given an opportunity to present evidence in person and/or through witnesses and present documentary or other physical evidence in support of the student's case.
 - v. After each of the students and any witnesses have testified they may in turn be cross-examined by the Initiator.
- l) The Chairperson of the hearing may question any person giving evidence at any time for the purposes of obtaining clarity on any matter.
 - m) The Chairperson may also request any other witnesses not called by either party, to give evidence after both the Initiator and the student(s) have presented their evidence and witnesses.
 - n) Factors that could be considered include the level of remorse shown by the student(s), whether or not the student was co-operative or deceitful in uncovering the truth of the matter, previous record, relevant precedents and/or any other personal, psychological, medical and/or family circumstances.
 - o) Once the evidence has been heard, the Chairperson will make a finding as to the guilt or innocence of the student(s).
 - p) The Hearing may be adjourned for no more than 3 working days to enable the Chairperson to make a finding.
 - q) The findings will be reduced to writing by the Chairperson and communicated to the student and their parent/guardian(s) as soon as is practicable.
 - r) These procedures do not in any way limit the rights a student and his/her Parents enjoy under the Constitution of Namibia.
 - s) Any person who is aggrieved by the outcome of a hearing in which her or his rights were affected may appeal to the Board within 2 working days of receipt of a ruling by the hearing.

4.5 Appeal process

Appeals to the Board shall be in writing and shall state:

- the full names of all the parties to the hearing;
 - the disciplinary complaint;
 - the facts and the grounds of the appeal.
- a) The appeal shall enclose a copy of the ruling or finding made by the Chairperson of the first instance.
 - b) All appeals shall be decided on the record of the hearing of the first instance.
 - c) A party wishing to bring new evidence to the appeal shall be required to explain why that evidence was not available at the hearing of the first instance and the Board may decide to admit or decline to admit such new evidence.
 - d) Legal representation may be permitted by the Board, with due regard to the complexities of the matter.
 - e) In the case of an appeal, an appeal committee is made up of three members of the Board of Governors, one of whom will be either the Chairman or the vice-chairman of the Board. Either the School Principal or his deputy will attend the appeal hearing. The student and his or her guardians or parents will be called upon to present their case. Should a vote be called for by the Chairman or the vice chairman of the Board of Governors, then only the three Board members may vote and if applicable, set aside or revise the original decision.

The decision of the Board of Governors shall be final and binding on all parties.

4.5.1 Principal's request to withdraw Learner from the School

(At the Principal's discretion, such a meeting can take place prior to or after a hearing)

- a. If the punishment contemplated is expulsion from the School, the Principal may request an interview with the Parents. The purpose of the interview is to determine by consensus between the School and the Parents whether or not the School is the best environment for the student, given the incident and considering the rest of the student's record at the College.
- b. The Principal may ask, or the Parents may request, that the student be removed from the School. If the Head and the Parents agree, the Parents will then confirm in writing that they intend to remove the student from School. The Principal will acknowledge this request in writing to the Parents. In this situation, the School will take all reasonable steps to assist the student and Parents to find a place for the student at another school.
- c. If the Parents do not wish to remove the child as requested above, the School may initiate a disciplinary hearing.
- d. In any interview discussions with Parents, the Principal will have another member of staff (administrative or academic) present, and such member of staff shall keep written minutes of the interview.

5. NOTES AND PROCEDURES RELEVANT FOR PARENTS

5.1 Absenteeism

- If your child is ill: Parents are to inform the school by 07:30 am if their child will not attend school. A doctor's note is required if absent for two days or if a cycle test/examination is missed.
- Class Physical Education is compulsory unless a doctor's note is provided.
- If your child will miss school or any school function deemed to be compulsory (e.g. Commencement Mass, Speech Night, Sport fixtures, etc.) a written request, in good time, is required. Failure to do so could lead to disciplinary steps being taken against your child.
- In the case of being absent without permission for the end of term the student's report will be withheld until such time that an acceptable explanatory letter is received.

5.2 Payment of school fees

All fees are payable in advance – either monthly or annually. Any query regarding fee payment can be directed to the Bursar. If school fees fall into arrears in excess of one month, your child may not attend school until the account has been brought up to date. In addition, progress reports will not be issued until school fees are settled. Non-payment of fees over a two month period will lead to parents incurring the cost of the collection of fees by the school's attorney.

5.3 Serious disciplinary cases involving external legal advice

In the case of a student being involved in a disciplinary issue in which the school requires external legal advice and therefore costs to the school, and in the instance the student being found guilty, the cost of the legal advice and legal assistance will be paid by the parents/guardian in full. Furthermore, in an instance like this where legal advice and assistance is requested by the school, all correspondence and communication will be via the school's attorney.

5.4 Channels of Communication

In the case of a grievance or a concern held by a parent the following procedure is encouraged:

- Address the matter directly with the relevant staff member – either academic or administrative.

- Thereafter, the Head of Grade, then the Head of School (Grade 8-9 or Grade 10-12), then the Principal can be approached if the matter is not satisfactorily addressed.
- Matters of a more general nature (rather than only a personal issue) can be raised at the PTFA but only if first discussed with the principal and, if necessary, the chairperson. The matter should be placed, in good time, on the meeting's agenda.
- If all avenues have been addressed and the matter is of such a serious nature then the Chairman of the Board can be contacted in writing. All correspondence must be copied to the principal.

6. DEFINITIONS

- Initiator
A person who investigates a disciplinary matter and presents the case for the school during a hearing.
- SMC (Student Management Council)
The student-elected body which has authority to carry out discipline on behalf of the school. (Please see SMC Constitution).
- Break detention
To be in isolation during school break. May be applied for one to five days. Students are given 5 minutes to go to the bathroom, and to eat their break snack.
- School detention
Takes place on Friday afternoons from 14:00 to 16:00 pm under staff supervision. Academic work and/or other school services are carried out.
- School service
A measure with service being rendered to the school or other appropriate organisation. Usually takes place from 07.00-13:00 and 14:30 to 17:00 on a school day. May be applied for one to five days.
- In-house suspension
The student is suspended from class but does manual labour on the school grounds. The student may also be placed in isolation and given tasks to complete. May be applied for one to five days.
- PTFA
Parents, Teachers and Friends Association (a separate constitution governs this body's role)
- Suspension
The suspended student is required to remain at home under the care of the guardians or parents. No participation in school events is permitted. No contact with St Paul's or fellow students is permitted. May be applied for one to five days.

Ratified by the Board of Governors' meeting of 19th April 2010