

## **CODE OF CONDUCT**

Good Hope Seminary High School (the School) will seek to ensure that girls are happy and safe, that they will be encouraged to learn to become independent, that they will act in a well-behaved manner and will be well-accepted by others whom they meet at the School. The School will provide regular progress reports to parents and will ensure that parents are contacted timeously if there are issues of concern regarding their daughter/s. The school will also welcome parents into the school to participate in the school's programme, where appropriate.

The Teachers will endeavour to protect the girls and their families by refraining from divulging any information about the girls or their families to anyone other than another member of the School if this is in the interests of the girl's/families' well-being.

Parents should ensure that the school is appropriately briefed if there is information that needs to be communicated to the school about the girl which will contribute to a better understanding of her needs. Parents should treat teachers as professionals and pay careful attention to language, tone and behaviour in their dealings with teachers.

All staff and parents should not engage publically in negative and unconstructive criticism of the school and should rather raise concerns in accordance with the procedures outlined in the Channels of Communication.

Both parents and staff should accept each other as partners in the process of educating the girls and should deal with each other as such.

Parents should understand that the ability of the school to function effectively is entirely dependent on the timeous payment of the fees that are due and undertake to ensure that all such fees are settled on the appropriate dates.

Parents are the primary educators in the lives of their girls; teachers and schools play a complementary role. The school and the teachers can only build on the foundations that parents have laid. Parents play an essential and positive role in the life of the School. Not only are parents' advocates for their girls, they also support the staff and management team through volunteer activities and events.

When parents choose to enrol their daughter at the School they agree to subscribe to its mission, follow its rules and abide by its decisions. However, trust and mutual respect are the most essential underpinnings of an effective working relationship between parents and the school. Furthermore, the manner in which parents and staff conduct themselves with one another has an enormous influence on girls in modelling adult working relationships and these should always be based on civility, honesty and respect. Parents are encouraged to work productively with teachers by staying informed about their daughter and important events in the life of the School, as indicated in the Parent Pupil Handbook.

Although parents may not agree with every decision taken by the School, in most cases, the parent and school will find enough common ground to continue a mutually respectful relationship.

## **1. HOW WE AIM TO ACHIEVE THIS**

### **1.1 POSITIVE REINFORCEMENT**

The principle of positive reinforcement is applied extensively throughout the School. Girls are motivated to do their best through the use of encouragement, recognition and praise. The school will endeavour to develop a sense of purpose and belonging for each girl as these are qualities known to be vital in building self-confidence, mutual respect, and self-esteem. The School remains committed to developing the whole girl academically, physically, socially, and emotionally.

### **1.2 UNACCEPTABLE BEHAVIOUR**

1.2.1 While we accept that testing the boundaries forms a normal part of growing up, we would be doing our girls a grave disservice if we allowed them to develop unacceptable behaviour patterns. It is for this reason that we have set definite parameters of acceptable behaviour. Those who step outside these boundaries will be held to account for their behaviour.

1.2.2 Unacceptable behaviour can be seen as two distinct categories:

- i. Minor infractions such as not doing homework, incessant talking, not listening, disturbing others, lack of manners, breaking school rules, use of bad language, absence from sports practices and matches, etc.
- ii. Major infractions such as continual minor infractions, cheating, plagiarism, theft, gross disobedience, bullying, fighting, cheating, vandalism, truancy, substance abuse, possession of illegal substances, breaking the rules of the land including those mentioned in the South African Schools' Act, 1996 and the Education Laws Amendment Act, 2007, and bringing disrepute to the school.

Most minor infractions will not merit full parental involvement. Should we feel it necessary, however, we would call in the parents to assist us in remedying the situation.

## **2. CONSEQUENCES OF MISBEHAVIOUR**

2.1 Minor offences could be dealt with in any of the following ways:

- Discussing the issue with the girl outside the classroom.
- The teacher concerned will issue an appropriate punishment.
- If a girl disrupts a lesson the teacher may ask the girl to leave the classroom until the issue can be addressed.
- It is preferable that group punishment not be applied.
- Recording the transgression by the relevant teacher and monitored by the relevant Grade Head.
- The use of a behavioural daily report system which monitors a girl's behaviour at school.

- The use of an academic daily report system which monitors a girl's academic progress/delivery at school.
- Communication with parents: Parents will be informed of the transgression and the consequences.
- Parent discussions to resolve the issue.
- Detention

## 2.2 Major offences could be dealt with in any of the following ways:

- Discussing the issue with the girl and the parents.
- The use of a daily report system which monitors a girl's behaviour at school.
- Detention
- Disciplinary meeting
- Disciplinary hearing.
- Community service (relevant to the offence).
- Suspension (Internal or external)
- Expulsion.
- Communication with parents: Parents will be informed of the transgression and the consequences.

2.3 Should the bad behaviour persist, a meeting will be set up between the parents and the School to discuss the matter. Parents will be advised during this discussion that should the misbehaviour persist, the girl may be sent home on temporary suspension or suspended internally. Parents will be contacted telephonically to advise them to collect their child and a letter of explanation will be sent.

2.4 We realise that there may often be reasons other than naughtiness that can cause girls to behave unacceptably. These will be taken into consideration when implementing any form of sanction.

2.5 If a girl is found guilty of a major infraction or continues to perpetuate a cycle of misbehaviour, a special meeting of some of the Senior Management Team will be called and a disciplinary meeting/hearing may be held. The girl's case will be looked at and investigated. Any records of previous disciplinary action, records of previously recorded misbehaviour, action plans previously instituted and minutes of previous meetings with the parents may be used at this meeting.

Following this meeting, the Principal/Deputy and the Grade Head may then set up an appointment with the parents to discuss the findings. The findings will be communicated in writing outlining the consequences and sanctions.

## 2.6 Suspension

A suspension, both internal and a full suspension, is a punishment for behaviour that is either so serious that the girl needs to receive a strong reminder never to do it again, or the girl has been warned about it many times but has not corrected the situation.

Should a girl not attend detention without a valid reason, a Saturday detention will be issued. If the girl fails to arrive for the Saturday detention she will be regarded as defiant and a disciplinary meeting will be called with additional consequences.

2.6.1 Full suspension: The girl is not allowed to participate in school activities during the days of full suspension. The girl will be under the parent's supervision at home. The time at home should be used for reflection on her misbehaviour. During this time, the girl must take responsibility for correcting the problem and will write a plan of action to avoid any similar situations. This will be reviewed with the Grade Head and the girl's parents. A full suspension may only be issued by the School Governing Body.

2.6.2 Internal suspension: The girl will be taken out of her usual classroom environment. She will work a full school day under the supervision of the Grade Head, or the Grade Head may delegate to a senior member of staff. She will not be allowed to communicate with her peers at this time and will be excluded from extra-mural activities. All communication is to go through the Grade Head via the Deputy.

In cases of major infractions no girl will be interviewed without a parent or guardian present. Each girl will be informed of their right to not say anything that incriminates them. If a minor incident on investigation becomes a major incident, the teacher will hand over to the Grade Head.

## 2.7 Disciplinary Meeting

A disciplinary meeting is an adapted form of the Disciplinary Hearing as listed below. The school may decide, in the interest of the girl, to hold a Disciplinary Meeting as opposed to a Disciplinary Hearing where the circumstances are such that the matter will be better dealt with as soon as possible or where the evidence is overwhelming and the need for a Disciplinary Hearing with witnesses is unnecessary. The girl will be assisted by her parents.

2.7.1 The parents and the girl will be notified in writing of the charges and the date of the meeting, as well as their rights in the matter.

2.7.2 No legal representation is allowed.

2.7.3 Evidence will be led by a senior member of the School.

2.7.4 The meeting will be chaired by a senior member of staff who has experience in dealing with matters of school discipline.

2.7.5 Following the meeting, the Chair will deliver his/her findings and determine the appropriate punishment.

2.7.6 The parents will have the right to appeal the verdict to the Principal. Any such appeal needs to be lodged in writing with the Principal within seventy two (72) hours of receipt of the verdict. The decision of the Principal will be final.

## 2.8 Disciplinary Hearing

In the event that the school decides to proceed with a disciplinary hearing, the following process will apply:

- 2.8.1 The parents and the girl will be notified in writing of the charges and the date of the hearing, as well as their rights in the matter.
- 2.8.2 The girl will have the right to request assistance from a fellow-girl or a teacher. In any event, the girl's Class Teacher or Grade Head or an appropriate member of staff will be appointed by the school to ensure that the girl is accorded due process. The girl may also call witnesses to give evidence on her behalf where appropriate.
- 2.8.3 Evidence will be led by a senior member of the School staff. Witnesses may be called to support this evidence.
- 2.8.4 The hearing will be chaired by the chairperson of the School's Disciplinary Committee, which is a sub-committee of the School Governing Body (SGB), or an outside person who has experience in dealing with matters of school discipline as designated by the SGB.
- 2.8.5 Following the hearing, the Chair will deliver his/her findings, along with appropriate sanctions, in writing to the parents within 72 hours of the hearing.
- 2.8.6 The parents will have the right to appeal the verdict to the Chairperson of the SGB. Any such appeal needs to be lodged in writing with the SGB within seventy two (72) hours of receipt of the verdict.

## **SCHOOL RULES AND REQUIREMENTS**

### **3. ATTENDANCE**

- 3.1 Regular attendance is especially important during the high school years. Girls are learning personal responsibility and organisational skills as well as subject matter, and absences make it difficult for girls to stay up to date with their work. The School works to provide a challenging and motivating programme that will encourage girls to be at school every day. It is very important to inform the School when a girl is unable to attend. A note must be sent with the girl on the day she returns to school.
- 3.2 Girls who are feeling ill during school hours must report to their Grade Head. If necessary, parents will be phoned to collect their daughter from the secretary's office, after the girl has completed a Permission Slip for Learners School/Sick Leave form. Once the form has been completed, the Grade Head will sign that the girl may go home. Only then may the parents collect the girl. Due to the dangers of abuse and dependence, medication is not administered at school. Should this be unavoidable, medication should be clearly labelled with the girl's name and handed to the office and will be administered in strict accordance with the doctor's prescription and parent's permission.
- 3.3 Girls, who require emergency/occasional medicines for headaches, asthma, etc., should supply the school with the relevant dosage, instructions and contact details of the medical professionals involved. No prescribed medication will be given to girls without written permission of the parent.
- 3.4 Appointments with doctors, dentists and orthodontists should be made after school hours. If it is absolutely unavoidable that there is an appointment during school time, the school must be informed in writing in advance.

- 3.5 Under no circumstances should driving lessons be booked during school time. Both learner's and driver's tests should be booked during the holidays.
- 3.6 Any change of home or work address or telephone number must be given to the school in writing. This is essential in case of emergency.
- 3.7 All girls are expected to be seated in class timeously with the proper materials at the start of school and after breaks. This increases academic performance due to increased engaged time for all girls while minimising disruption in the classroom due to late arrivals. It is a demonstration of respect and appreciation for the learning process, self, teachers, and fellow girls.
- 3.8 The School is a closed campus. Girls cannot leave the school grounds during school hours without permission. If a girl is leaving with a parent, the parent must come in to the school to fetch their daughter, and she must be checked out with the school secretary after completing the Early Dismissal Form. If someone other than a parent is picking the girl up, written permission from the parent is required.
- 3.9 Note: if a teacher does not give permission for a girl to leave school because they are doing an assessment, the girl will not be given permission to leave the school until the assessment has been completed.

#### **HOMEWORK FOR ABSENCES**

- 4.1 If a girl is absent due to illness or some other justifiable cause for one or two days, the girl should make all reasonable attempts to find out what work has been done during her absence. As far as is possible, the girl should attempt to have this work, together with the relevant homework, completed by the time she returns to school. A letter from the parents outlining the cause for absenteeism must be submitted to the Class Teacher on the first day back at school.
- 4.2 If a girl is absent on the day that a formal summative assessment is to be conducted, or on a day in which any other CASS work has to be completed or handed in, a medical certificate must be forwarded to the Class Teacher on the first day of absence. If a medical certificate is not submitted, the girl may be awarded zero marks for the assessment piece, and no extension date may be set for the girl to hand in the assessment. If a medical certificate is submitted, the girl will be given an opportunity to complete the same or a similar assessment. A letter from the parents explaining a girl's absence on a day of assessment is unacceptable, a medical certificate must be submitted.
- 4.3 If a girl is absent for three or more consecutive days, the girl will be expected to catch up all relevant class- and homework as soon as possible after returning to school. While teachers will assist the girl to catch up as far as possible, the ultimate responsibility to catch up rests on the girl herself.
- 4.4 If a girl is aware that she will be absent for any period of time (including the start and end of term), she must collect the relevant form from her Grade Head and submit it to all her teachers well before she is absent. The teachers concerned will then fill in all

relevant work and assessments that will be missed during this time on the form. The completed form is then to be signed by the parents, and resubmitted to the Grade Head. Failure to follow this procedure may result in zero marks being awarded for any assessments during the period of absence. Again, teachers will assist the girl to catch up as far as possible, but the ultimate responsibility to catch up rests on the girl herself.

## **CLASSROOM RULES**

Each teacher establishes and enforces standards for the girls under his/her supervision in accordance with the Expectations of Behaviour policy. These classroom rules are reasonable and consistent with the general welfare, philosophy, and purposes of the School.

Teachers are to record any behavioural issues in the Daily Incident Book, and positive comments, and submit them to the relevant Grade Head. Even though the relevant teacher will do the punishing, a record must still be kept by Grade Heads to keep a track of behavioural patterns and to take steps to rectify any problems.

## **CONDUCT ON SCHOOL TRIPS/ACTIVITIES**

Girls are held responsible for their conduct while attending or participating in school related activities. During this time, girls are subject to all regulations of the school and will be governed accordingly. Girls may be sent home for serious disciplinary reasons, with the necessary follow-up.

## **CHEATING OR PLAGIARISM (See Plagiarism Policy)**

The School honesty and academic integrity as high ideals. Girls are expected to adhere to honesty, trustworthiness, and personal integrity at all times. Cheating, plagiarism or any form of academic deceit will not be tolerated. Girls who are found to be cheating or providing assistance to someone who is cheating will be given a zero on the project or test and the Principal will be notified. Cheating or plagiarism is regarded as a major infringement at the School and will be treated accordingly. Repeated or serious instances of academic deceit could result in expulsion. A record of offences will be kept by the Head of Discipline. See the Plagiarism Policy.

## **DRESS**

Good Hope Seminary is committed to creating an environment that is conducive to learning and positive social interactions. All girls must ensure that their dress and grooming is clean and in keeping with the school dress code, which is to wear the uniform with pride and in the correct manner. The uniform is not a fashion statement and should not be worn in such a manner. No jewellery, tattoos or piercings, other than one hole in the bottom of the lobe of the ear, are allowed.

Correct uniform must be worn during the school day and at all functions attended by girls as representatives of the School in the appropriate manner.

## **EXTRA-MURAL ACTIVITIES**

Sportsmanship is expected, especially when competing against other schools. A goal for school girls is to explore many extra-mural options in a non-threatening manner while exhibiting socially accepted and sportsmanlike behaviour.

When a girl has voluntarily joined an extra-mural school activity, that girl must fulfil her obligations towards that activity, unless exemption has been granted by the Principal.

## **PROFANITY, VULGARITY AND OBSCENE GESTURES AND DRAWINGS**

Profanity involves using inappropriate language or directing vulgar language or obscene gestures or offensive gestures and drawings towards another individual or group. The school views this type of behaviour, as totally unacceptable and disciplinary action will be taken.

## **PUBLIC DISPLAYS OF AFFECTION**

Public displays of affection should always be discrete and as a sign of respect for one's self as well as for others. Any display of public affection must comply with the laws of the country. While in school uniform girls are representatives of Good Hope Seminary High School and must ensure that their displays of affection uphold the good name of the school. We encourage girls to exercise restraint whilst in school uniform.

## **SAFETY GUIDELINES**

The School strives to provide a supportive and safe environment to promote learning. Girls' personal safety is of prime importance in the daily use of our facilities. General safety rules include:

- no climbing to areas not intended for girls.
- using appropriate safety equipment in laboratory-type classes.
- using physical fitness equipment under the supervision of a staff member.
- during construction or renovations, girls are not allowed in the area of work.
- No sitting on balcony walls.
- No entering the swimming pool area without a staff member supervising.

Safety drills will be held to practice for fire or security emergencies. At the sound of an alarm, girls will evacuate the buildings to predetermined positions. Safety procedures are displayed in all classrooms.

## **SMOKING AND SUBSTANCE ABUSE (See Substance Abuse Policy)**

The possession or use of tobacco or other stimulants or alcoholic beverages by girls is forbidden on any part of the school grounds or in the immediate vicinity of the school. The School is a non-smoking campus. This includes roadways and open areas surrounding the School. The consequence for smoking, the possession of tobacco products, or the possession or use of alcohol may be suspension. The possession or use of illegal drugs of



any kind (stimulants, inhalants, or depressants) on school grounds or at any school-sponsored event is spelt out in the Substance Abuse Policy which all girls sign on registration at the School. The School reserves the right to carry out random substance abuse testing on a regular basis.

1. Procedure for:

- Girls found/seen smoking (and those girls in their company): To be reported to the relevant Grade Coordinator. The Grade Coordinator will then liaise with the Deputy Principal, who will institute disciplinary procedures in accordance with the Code of Conduct and the School Rules.

2. Girls found with cigarettes, matches, lighters in their possession.

- Letter sent to parents informing them of the situation.
- Writing out of anti-smoking literature in foyer at tea/lunch breaks for a period of time as specified in the letter.
- If the Deputy Principal feels that it is justified, disciplinary procedures will be applied.

## **SOCIAL GUIDELINES**

Although the school cannot set rules to govern a girl's behaviour in her home, the following suggestions provide for appropriate social standards:

- Parents are advised to be at home when girls entertain their friends. They are also advised to be available during a party and should be aware of its progress until it ends.
- The school does not condone the use of alcoholic beverages, drugs, and tobacco by its girls.
- The school does not condone loud, rude, inconsiderate public behaviour which could influence public perceptions of the school negatively.

Parents should be aware that they may not supply/serve alcohol to girls under the age of 18 or you may be subjected to a criminal fine.

## **VANDALISM**

If a girl damages, breaks, writes on, or maliciously ruins something, she will pay for it. Vandalism will result in disciplinary measures being taken.

## **VISITORS**

Normally, a girl will not be allowed to have any visitors at school. Any visitors, including former girls must have permission from the Principal to visit the school. Visitors will not be given permission to attend classes.

## **VEHICLES**

A girl may not drive or park a motorized vehicle on the school grounds without written permission of the Principal.