

## **INTRODUCTION**

The Code of conduct in accordance with the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (Act 108 of 1996) and the South African Schools' Act (Amended, Act 84 of 1996), means to uphold and protect the rights of all learners to ensure safety and security for individuals and groups.

This handbook is intended to serve as a guide to help students and their families come to know iiCottage's programs and opportunities as well as to set forth basic expectations and agreements. Please take the time to familiarize yourself with the contents. We are hopeful that the handbook will answer many questions you may have about academics, security, discipline, school rules, safety and other topics.

Please understand that no set of rules or guidelines can cover every conceivable situation that might arise at a school. The rules, policies and procedures set forth in this handbook are intended to apply under normal circumstances. However, from time to time, there may be situations that require immediate or nonstandard responses. This handbook does not limit the authority of iiCottage to deviate from the normal rules and procedures set forth in this handbook, and to deal with individual circumstances as they arise in the manner deemed most appropriate by the school taking into consideration the best interests of the institution, its faculty, employees, students or overall school community.

The policies may also be revised or updated periodically, even during the school year. You will be advised of any changes as they are made either electronically (email) or by mail. Any student or parent with a question about any handbook policy or statement should feel free to speak with the Principal of Policies, procedures and finances.

The code is applicable to all learners in and outside of school hours for as long as the learner is enrolled in iiCottage. No Act exempts a student from complying to the general code of conduct and forthwith shall be expected to obey the authority of the educators.

The Code of conduct is set forth to provide an ideal and sustaining environment for all learners to thrive. The school wishes to nurture an attitude of self-discipline, exemplary behaviour and maturity that ensures every student can develop to their greatest potential in an environment free of fear, prejudice and stifle.



## **Behavior of Learners**

Any learner may not be guilty of

- Neglect of duty in respecting others, their property, person, religion, culture or personal safety.
- Using language that might be considered rude, or threatens the moral and ethical standards of individuals or the group as a whole
- Theft, including fellow learner's possession or school equipment
- Vandalism or destruction of property
- Bullying and racism, including assault, whether verbal or physical and intimidation of learners or staff
- Any breach of law which could lead to a confrontation with the South African justice system.
- Using substances that are illegal in accordance with the law of South Africa, including drugs, alcohol, or cigarettes
- Of being in possession of any of the following:
  - o Matches, lighters or cigarettes
  - o Alcohol, drugs or prohibited narcotic substances for which the learner does not possess a viable medical reason
  - o Pornographic videos, reading material or photos
  - o Dangerous weapons such as knives, fire-arms, crackers or toys that might cause harm to others or endanger their safety
  - o Any material that might be considered racist, sexist, xenophobic or may amount to hate-mongering of any kind

## **School and Class attendance**

Parents/guardians, learners and educators are jointly responsible for ensuring learners attend school.

School hours:

- School starts at 08:00 for all learners
- School comes out at 13:15 for learners (Mon - Thursday) and 12:30 on Fridays
- Some changes to school times might be made and will be communicated with learners and parent/guardians at a regular basis
- School gates will open at 07:00 with supervision
- School pick-up times are 13:15 – 13:50 for weekdays other than Fridays and on Fridays from 12:30 – 13:00
- No supervision will be given to learners after these times and parents will be held responsible for learners being left after the posted times or before 07:00 in the mornings
- Students are not allowed to leave the school grounds during school hours



#### Special circumstances (Early leave/late stay)

- Learners that need to remain at school longer or need to be dropped off earlier can do so with a special permit after speaking to the Principal for student affairs and governance.
- This does not pertain to every day and only will be valid from time to time
- Learners that need to leave school early for certain situations will also need a special permit and a letter that states that they have the appropriate permission to do so
  - o Authorization should be sought with the principal for student affairs and governance at least three days before the date in which the learner needs to leave earlier
  - o A form needs to be filled out and will be available per request or on the website and needs to be emailed to the principal
  - o Only a parent/guardian is allowed to sign the forms
  - o Additional information might be requested

#### Sick leave

- Absenteeism for medical reasons need to be covered by a note from a parent/guardian
- Sick leave lasting more than two(2) days needs to be accompanied by a sick note from a medical professional
- Learners who become ill need to report to the teacher in charge of sessions. From here the necessary arrangements will be made.
- Absence during formal examinations, tests or tasks need to be covered by a medical note from a professional

#### Attendance

- Attendance will be noted each day on a data management system
- Attendance is noted at 08:05 at the latest. Students are expected to be sitting with their laptops/tablets already switched on by this time
- Students who arrive between 08:05 – 08:20 will be marked as late
- Students who arrive later than 08:20 will be marked absent
- Attendance registers will be available per request

#### Classroom conduct

Every learner is expected to:

1. Be punctual – late coming disrupts the classroom and classroom activities
2. Be prepared; Please ensure that you have all the appropriate stationery with you.
  - a. Laptop/tablets are required – Please bring a charger with you
  - b. Earphones are needed in order to ensure other students are not disrupted by your activities
  - c. Cell phones are not allowed with students during class times. All phones will be switched off and locked up, at the own risk, until recesses or after school
  - d. Extra materials might be requested for certain projects and will be communicated to the learners and parents/guardians as needed.



3. Be respectful;
  - a. To each other, especially being mindful that all learners have a right to receive an education free from fear of harm, intimidation or conduct that belittles or discriminates against learners, their culture or race
  - b. To the educators in charge of the classes – Educators are here to ensure all learners receive quality education and support in an environment that is free from hate-speech, cultural insensitivity and discrimination on any basis
4. Be responsible – for your own behavior, environment and conduct
5. Be inclusive and supportive – to other students, cultures and grades

### **Courtesy and behavior**

- All learners will respect the authority of educators
- Learners will respect the property and safety of other students as well as the school property and environment
- Any act that belittles, demeans or humiliates other students/staff members are prohibited
- Language that is seen as discriminatory, racist, sexist or derogatory in any way to another student is prohibited
- Students are responsible for keeping their benches clean
- Use recycling bins as indicated
- Students are encouraged to participate in programmes, projects and class discussions
- All students will obey the instructions of staff
- Treat everyone as you, yourself want to be treated
- Yelling, cussing, whistling and horseplay is forbidden in classrooms
- Eating, drinking and chewing gum in classrooms are prohibited
- Water bottles, containing water, are allowed in classes. You are not allowed to play with these

### **Valuables and personal property**

1. The school will not be held responsible for theft of or damage to personal belongings on school premises, for example cellphones, bags, books, clothing, bicycles, etc.
2. Learners should not bring cell-phones, large sums of money or other valuables to school. (See cell-phone policy)
3. Learners may not bring computer games, iPods, or similar electronic devices to school. Laptops and tablets are allowed as the primary source of educational resources
4. Arrangements should be made with the teacher in charge of extra mural activities for safekeeping of valuables during those times.

### **School property, roads and grounds**

1. Breakage of any school property must be reported immediately to a teacher or to one of the secretaries.
2. All school property is to be treated with respect.
3. The school buildings and grounds are out of bounds out of normal school hours unless they are being used for extra-mural activities under the supervision of an educator. Trespassers run the risk of prosecution.

### **CONTROL AND DISCIPLINE OF LEARNERS**

#### **1. General**

- 1.1 Disciplinary measures may be taken against a learner who contravenes the Code of Conduct.
- 1.2 In terms of the code of conduct an educator has the same rights as a parent to control and discipline a learner who attends the school, during any class, school function, school outing or school related activity.
- 1.3 Every educator is responsible for discipline at all times at school and at school related activities. Educators have the full authority and the responsibility to correct the behavior of learners whenever such correction is necessary at school. Corrective measures may become more severe with repeated infractions.
- 1.4 In line with the principles and spirit of the code of conduct the management and educators have the right to announce rules verbally on an ad-hoc basis or otherwise, as necessitated by circumstances. The final decision with regards to such rules will rest with management.

#### **2. Disciplinary procedure and punishment**

- 2.1 A distinction is drawn between minor offences, serious offences (which may lead to suspension and/or expulsion) and academic offences.
- 2.2 In case of minor offences, corrective measures as envisaged in par. 13 may be applied. These measures could include one or more of the following, but not limited thereto: a verbal warning from or a written reprimand by, an educator or a principal; supervised school work that will contribute to the learner's progress at school or the improvement of the school environment, provided that the parents are timeously informed and the security of the child is assured; performing tasks that would assist the offended person; agreed affordable compensation; replacement of damaged property; and suspension from some school activities, that are seen to be privileges.



### **3. Detention**

- 3.1 Educators may put learners on detention for smaller transgressions.
- 3.2 The principal of student affairs will complete the detention letter and give it to the learner to take home.
- 3.3 Detention usually takes place on a Friday from 13:45 to 15:45.
- 3.4 Saturday detention will take place from 08:00 – 11:00.
- 3.6 Detention for repeated or serious misconduct or repeated academic negligence may be extended to Saturdays and may include physical labour or tasks.

### **4. Serious offenses, which may also be described as serious misconduct**

Will be dealt with in the following manner:

- 4.1 The headmaster and educators concerned will investigate the incident and ensure that, according to the Act, it can be classified as a serious offence and that the learner is the guilty party.
- 4.2 If the principals decide that the matter is serious and the learner concerned is guilty, then a special meeting is planned with the governing body to discuss the incident.
- 4.3 Parents of the learner will be informed in writing of the offence, and of the date when the meeting of the governing body will take place. A minimum period of five working days' notice of the meeting is required. Parents may request to move the date forward.
- 4.4 The governing body or its delegated disciplinary committee must follow the following procedure during the meeting:
  - the alleged offense and circumstances surrounding the incident must be carefully investigated;
  - The audi alteram partem-rule (hear the other side) must apply;
  - the opportunity must be given to the members of the governing body and the parents and/or the legal representative of the learner concerned, to question the accusers concerning the incident;
  - persons who complained or provided testimonies must leave the meeting after they have expressed their viewpoints;
  - only members of the governing body who are not personally involved in the matter, must be allowed to take part in the decision-making process at the end of the meeting;
  - the procedure, discussion and outcome must be detailed thoroughly in the minutes.
  - In the event of a hung jury, the chairperson has the deciding vote; if the outcome of the corrective action is suspension, the parents must be informed immediately in writing;
- 5. If, after disciplinary proceedings, a learner is found guilty of serious misconduct, the governing body may impose the punishment prescribed in paragraph 2.2 and may in addition suspend the learner either for a period of not more than seven (7) school days, or for a reasonable period not exceeding one week



6. Offences that may lead to such suspension (or even expulsion) include, but are not limited, to the following:

- 6.1 conduct which endangers the safety and violates the rights of others;
- 6.2 possession, use, transmission, or visible evidence of, narcotic or unauthorized drugs, alcohol, or intoxicants of any kind;
- 6.3 fighting, assault or battery;
- 6.4 immoral behavior or profanity;
- 6.5 defying the authority of the educators;
- 6.6 harmful graffiti, hate speech, sexism, racism;
- 6.7 theft or possession of stolen property including test or examination papers prior to the writing of those tests or examinations;
- 6.8 unlawful action, vandalism, or destroying or defacing school property;
- 6.9 disrespect, objectionable behavior and verbal abuse directed at educators or other school employees or learners;
- 6.10 repeated violations of school rules or the Code of Conduct;
- 6.11 criminal and oppressive behavior such as rape and gender-based harassment;
- 6.12 victimization, bullying and intimidation of other learners;
- 6.13 infringement of examination rules; and
- 6.14 knowingly and willfully supplying false information, or falsifying documentation, to gain an unfair advantage at school.

7. A learner will be expelled if he or she commits any of the following offences, even if it is a first offence, unless there are exceptional circumstances which warrant the imposition of a lesser punishment:

- 7.1 Theft.
- 7.2 Bomb threats.
- 7.3 Assault of a serious nature or an assault committed with a dangerous weapon or object.
- 7.4 The possession of any object which could serve as a dangerous weapon.
- 7.5 Sexual offenses.
- 7.6 The possession and/or dealing in, or providing of, and/or testing positive for, illegal substances. A positive test will be sufficient evidence.
- 7.7 The possession or detonating of fireworks or anything else that can have a traumatic effect on any person.

## **8. Plea Bargaining**

In terms of the Criminal Procedure Act, (Section 105A, Act 51 of 1977), the prosecuting authority and an accused may enter into a plea- and sentence agreement. It is basically a plea-bargaining system where the accused is prepared to plead guilty, admits the relevant allegations and enters into a sentence agreement with the State. The written agreement is then presented to the court who must ensure that it was entered into freely, voluntarily and without undue influence.

If the court is satisfied that the accused admits that the allegation in the charge is valid and that he or she is guilty, the accused is then convicted; secondly, if the court is satisfied that the sentence agreement is just, it is then confirmed by the court.

No evidence is led and this procedure expedites the finalization of cases. A similar procedure will be followed in instances where the learner concerned pleads guilty, the parents co-operate and expulsion is not considered. The plea- and sentence agreement will have to be ratified by the School Governing Body or delegated person(s), before it is enforced.

## **9. Loco Parentis**

9.1 The school is compelled to refer behavior that constitutes a criminal offence to the SAP services for further action.

9.2 If a learner's behavior is a threat to him- or herself or other learners, the school reserves the right to take the necessary steps to find treatment of an alternative placement for the learner.

9.3 The school reserves the right to refer a learner for counselling if his or her behavior is deemed socially unacceptable.

9.4 Search:

If the principal or an educator has reasonable suspicion, supported by sufficient information, to suspect the harboring of any of the following, he or she has the legal authority to conduct a search of any learner, or of the property in possession of the learner, for a dangerous weapon, firearm, drugs, or harmful dangerous substance, stolen property, or pornographic material brought onto the school property. (A search may be performed in terms of the following Acts of general application:

- Control of Access to Public Premises and Vehicles Act, 1985, Act No. 53 of 1985;
- Drugs and Drug Trafficking Act 140 of 1992; Arms and Ammunition Act, 1969, Act. No. 75 of 1969;
- Education Laws Amendment Act no. 24 of 2005 and
- no. 31 of 2007; and Government Gazette Notice 1140 of 2008.

During a search, the right to human dignity shall be observed and learners shall be searched in private by persons of their own gender, in the presence of at least one other person. A record shall be kept of the search proceedings and the outcome.

All the stipulations pertaining to disciplinary proceedings applicable to learners as set out in the South African School's Act (no. 84 of 1996), as amended, are incorporated and included in this Code of Conduct.