

THE NATIONAL SCHOOL OF THE ARTS

CODE OF CONDUCT

Preamble

The National School of the Arts is in the business of education and training in the academic and Arts arenas. We are committed to offering our learners a holistic educational experience: excellent academic teaching complemented by the best tuition in the Arts.

We are proud of the critical role our school plays in providing a unique opportunity for artistic people to realise their true potential.

We recognise the pivotal role the Arts have to play in the transformation, development, and healing of our land.

We strive to produce leaders who make important contributions to artistic endeavour in South Africa, as well as rendering access to tertiary education and a wide variety of careers

Our school is founded on four cornerstones:

PEOPLE

PASSION

PREPARATION

PROFESSIONALISM

1.1 PEOPLE are the first cornerstone because ours is a school about people.

This means that we:

- **recognise the unique identity and character of each person**
- **identify, nurture, and develop individual talents**
- **build self-confidence and promote individual expression**
- **equip our learners with essential interpersonal skills**

- **facilitate the acquisition of a wide range of critical and lateral thinking skills that are the specific attributes of an arts education**
- **protect the rights, dignity, and self-esteem of each learner, educator, and of every member of the school community**
- **affirm the value of co-operation, communication and collaboration in the creation of art and in the running of our school**
- **foster a spirit of teamwork and the recognition of shared aspirations and goals**
- **empower learners to lead and serve others through leadership programmes and through participation in the school's Representative Council of Learners**
- **acknowledge, promote and celebrate the cultural and artistic heritage of all our learners**
- **actively encourage the involvement and support of all learners, educators, and parents in the life of the school**
- **establish links with Arts organisations, institutions, and agencies to provide practical experience for our learners in their specialist fields**
- **actively contribute to the cultural life of the broader South African community through the high standard of work we produce, through our annual Festival of Fame, and through outreach, charity, and Arts education programmes.**

1.2 PASSION is the second cornerstone because passion is the fuel that drives our school.

This means that people at our school are passionate about

- **our school**
- **the special role it plays**
- **the arts in general**
- **fostering a love of the arts in others**
- **other people and their creative potential**
- **their country and making a contribution**

It also means that people at our school

- **are self-motivated and determined to succeed**
- **inspire and are inspired**
- **feel privileged to pursue their passions**

1.3 PREPARATION is the third cornerstone because creative people need to prepare and be prepared if they are to realise their potential.

This means that we prepare our learners:

- **holistically because talent and potential alone do not bring success in life**
- **to realise their talents and creativity fully**
- **for the demands of the world of work**
- **for live performance, exhibitions of their artworks, and general public scrutiny**
- **to work, interact, and communicate with others**
- **to be leaders**
- **to be organised and self-disciplined**
- **to adapt to the demands of any situation**
- **to be goal-oriented**

through setting an example of preparation and preparedness.

1.4 PROFESSIONALISM is the fourth cornerstone because people who leave school with a professional approach already intact have a decisive advantage in a competitive marketplace.

This means that people at our school:

- **are professional in their approach**
- **are task-oriented**
- **are constructive in their interactions with and criticism of others**

- **maintain a positive image of themselves and their school**
- **keep to deadlines and are punctual**
- **are balanced and objective thinkers**
- **have the staying power to see their tasks through and to cope with adversity**
- **take pride in the image they present to the world**
- **take pride in the presentation of their work and that of others**
- **are aware of how their actions and attitudes can affect and reflect on the whole, and understand that every action has consequences**
- **maintain a professional approach at all school functions, productions, exhibitions and assemblies**
- **take responsibility for the appearance and upkeep of their school buildings, grounds, and facilities**

In other words, we take creative and talented PEOPLE, build on their PASSION and PREPARE them to be PROFESSIONALS!

2. The Four Cornerstones in practice for Learners

The Code of Conduct is not intended to emphasise transgressions or rigid rules and regulations. We believe that what needs to be instilled by the Code is a way of thinking, relating and behaving, which will lead to the achievement of the outcomes detailed in the Preamble.

2.1 Dress and Appearance

2.1.1 While we recognise the importance of individual character and expression, we also have to maintain a positive and professional image for our school (see especially 1.1 and 1.4 of the Preamble above). The principle is individual expression within certain boundaries. See separate Dress Code for details and regulations.

2.2 Approach to Learning

A disciplined, committed, and proactive approach to work in your specialist subject, and to your academic work is expected (see especially 1.2, 1.3, and 1.4 of the Preamble above). This means that learners are expected to:

- 2.2.1 complete all homework, classwork, projects and tests;**
- 2.2.2 attend all rehearsals and performances in which they are involved;**
- 2.2.3 make a point of attending all productions and exhibitions;**
- 2.2.4 prevent disruption of the learning process and organisation of the school;**
- 2.2.5 to have arrived at school by 07h35 a.m. and to be punctual for all lessons, rehearsals, and performances.**

2.3 General Conduct

Professional conduct (see section 1.4 of the Preamble) is emphasised under this heading and is expected of learners at all times. This means that:

- 2.3.1 learners must be courteous and respectful towards other learners, educators, non-teaching staff, and visitors to the school. This should also extend to the general public (when in the street, at a shop, or using public transportation services) and should be observed at any time that the learner is representing the school;**
- 2.3.2 learners must protect and preserve their own property and that of others, and must never take, tamper with, damage, or deface what does not belong to them. Vandalism of the school's property, or anyone else's property, is strictly prohibited. Learners should avoid bringing items of value to school (such as large sums of money) and should leave these in the secretaries' office if they do. Books, files, portfolios, parts of the school uniform, practical clothing, and any other possessions should be marked with the owner's name;**
- 2.3.3 learners should take pride in the neat appearance of the school grounds, fields and buildings and therefore never litter. They must also observe this rule outside of the school when identifiable as a member of the school. Learners are expected to pick up any litter they encounter out of a desire to maintain the positive image of the school.**
- 2.3.4 learners are asked to co-operate in the following, bearing in mind that we are striving for a school environment in which everyone can benefit:**

- a. **Move quietly in the corridors and on the stairways in an orderly fashion, keeping to the left and avoid playing or running in the school building as this can lead to injury or damage to property. This is professional conduct because it shows awareness of and respect for the work of others in the school building.**
- b. **Going to the tuckshop during or between your school periods is unacceptable, as it wastes your own class-time and can cause you to arrive late and disrupt or delay the learning process for others. Remember that teachers may not send learners to the tuckshop during school-time. You should not be out of class at all during your school periods. Those who have to do research of some kind require a note from the teacher concerned.**
- c. **Avoid going to the tuckshop after the first bell for the end of break. This leads to lateness and the disruption and delay of the learning process for yourself and others. Go directly to your next class.**
- d. **Congregating in the cloakrooms at any time, including breaks, is prohibited. It is inappropriate and unhealthy for people to gather in unhygienic places, and we should all respect the privacy of others. This also leads to lateness and the disruption and delay of the learning process for yourself and others.**
- e. **Avoid eating or drinking in the school building, in classrooms, or in practice venues, because this adds to the workload of teachers and general assistants who have to clean up afterwards and often dirties your own books, files etc.(see 2.3.3).**
- f. **Avoid the foyer and quad (unless you are specifically requested to be there) during break and before and after school because you may disturb the administrative personnel in the offices. Also avoid the area around the hall and staffroom as you may disturb meetings and examination sessions. The staffroom is also out of bounds unless you are requested to be there. The swimming pool area is out of bounds at all times unless a teacher is present.**

2.3.5 Our learners are expected to observe the rules of professional etiquette at all productions and exhibitions:

- a. **Be polite and considerate to all other members of the audience. Remember that we need to set an example to others in this regard because of the nature of our school.**
- b. **Assist people in finding their seats and their way to various facilities.**

- c. **Guests at our performances and exhibitions as well as all adults (including teachers) must be allowed to partake of refreshments served before learners are allowed to do so.**
- d. **Switch off all cellular phones before the performance begins.**
- e. **Learners are expected and encouraged to show their passion and appreciation for what is being performed by their colleagues, but creating a disturbance of any kind during a performance is unacceptable, unprofessional and inconsiderate to performers and other audience members. Express your enthusiasm through applause and cheering. Stamping and whistling excessively are disrespectful and disruptive.**
- f. **Avoid eating or drinking during performances and refrain from bringing food and drink into performance venues.**
- g. **Leaving during a performance is totally unacceptable as this is disruptive and insulting to the performers.**

2.3.6 Unlawful absence from school (truancy or “bunking”) or from class is not condoned. We believe that people who stay away from our school or from class without good reason or permission do not belong in our school, as our learners are professional and dedicated in their approach.

2.3.7 Bullying, intimidation, victimisation, or slandering of any member of the school community or visitor to the school is a most serious offence, since we are a school that protects the rights, self-esteem, and dignity of all people. Fighting of any kind in the school grounds, in the vicinity of the school, or elsewhere in school uniform is prohibited for the same reason, and because it projects a negative image of the school and the learners concerned. Bringing weapons or any other dangerous objects to school is also forbidden.

2.3.8 In line with worldwide and local health authorities, we believe that smoking is injurious to the health of smokers and to the health of non-smokers exposed to smoke. As such, all public areas in the school buildings are designated as non-smoking areas (please note that this includes cloakrooms and change-rooms). We also believe that smoking at school, whether in school uniform or not, or out of school in school uniform or a part thereof, does immense damage to the positive image to the school we should all be striving to build and maintain. Smoking anywhere on the school premises by learners is therefore strictly forbidden, as is

smoking outside of school in school uniform or a part thereof, or in the school's vicinity.

2.3.9 Our primary concern is for the psychological and physical wellbeing of all our learners, and the possession and/or consumption or use of alcohol or drugs is therefore strictly forbidden on the school premises or within the school's vicinity. There is medical evidence that the use of any illegal drug (including marijuana) or of alcohol is damaging to the user. A separate drug policy is in place to ensure that learners are given assistance in dealing with addiction. Drug and alcohol abuse have also been directly and indirectly correlated with the spread of HIV/AIDS. Besides these serious consequences, we believe that the use and abuse of intoxicating substances can hinder learners from achieving their goals and that doing so in uniform does irreparable damage to our school's image.

2.4 Administrative regulations

2.4.1 A register and period control system are in place to control class attendance. Absence from school requires a note from a parent or guardian or a doctor's certificate to be handed in at the secretaries' office. If possible, this should be done in advance or else on the day of return and should be clearly marked with the learner's name and grade. Absence from a class requires written permission from the relevant educator.

2.4.2 Absence from tests or examinations due to ill health requires a doctor's certificate, which must be handed in at the secretaries' office. Any other reason should be discussed with the Principal or Deputy-Principal before the test or examination.

2.4.3 Learners who feel ill during school hours and are unable to continue normal periods must report to the secretaries' office with a note signed by the teacher of the period during which the learner requested permission to leave.

2.4.4 A learner who has to leave for a doctor's or dentist's appointment or other reason must produce a note from the parent or guardian the day before (if possible). This is to be handed to the Principal or Deputy-Principal personally. Where possible, the learner is expected to return to school. If possible, parents and guardians are urged not to make such appointments.

2.4.5 Learners may leave the school grounds during school hours only with the permission of the Principal or Deputy-Principal.

2.4.6 Certain security arrangements are in place for the protection of the school community and property and will be adhered to for the sake of all stakeholders. Learners, educators and parents will be informed of these.

It all comes down to professional conduct in your place of work.

2.5 Disciplinary Procedures

In keeping with the outcomes we wish to achieve as stated in the Preamble, a constructive approach to discipline, emphasising the inculcation of the values set out in the Preamble, has been adopted. This implies that all parties will recognise that there are consequences attached to behaviour, and that condoning inappropriate behaviour is not in the interests of the school, the individuals in it, or the community at large (see especially 1.4 of the Preamble).

2.5.1 Offences leading to disciplinary action

2.5.1.1 General misconduct:

- a. neglect of schoolwork;**
- b. lateness;**
- c. poor class attendance;**
- d. truancy;**
- e. misbehaviour impacting on the school's image;**
- f. misbehaviour during assemblies, functions, productions, and exhibitions;**
- g. inappropriate or sloppy dress;**
- h. littering;**
- i. ignoring or violating security arrangements;**
- j. behaviour that demonstrates a lack of respect for others and for self.**

2.5.1.2 Disciplinary procedure for general misconduct

- a. Student representatives, educators, the Principal and the Deputy-Principal have the right to reprimand learners and inform them of the punishments for future transgressions.**
- b. In the case of schoolwork-related problems, educators may and should first take steps of their own to deal with these. These steps may include detention, extra**

work in the applicable area, contacting the learner's parents through the Grade Tutor and referring the learner to the school guidance personnel.

- c. Educators and student representatives should report general misconduct to the Grade Tutor of the appropriate grade.**
- d. The Grade Tutor may then take the following disciplinary action:**
 - I) officially reprimand and warn the learner and contact the learners parents;**
 - II) place the learner on daily report;**
 - III) place the learner on detention, which may involve the imposition of physical tasks or some form of community service;**
 - IV) withhold certain special privileges.**
- e. Learners who persist with general misconduct become guilty of serious misconduct (see 2.5.1.3) and will be handed over to the Principal or Deputy-Principal for more serious action.**

2.5.1.3 Serious misconduct:

- a. drug and alcohol abuse;**
- b. violence, the bringing of weapons to school, vandalism, and theft;**
- c. bullying, intimidation and other aggressive behaviour;**
- d. smoking;**
- e. serious misbehaviour at school assemblies, functions, productions, and exhibitions;**
- f. the possession and distribution of inappropriate materials;**
- g. disruption of the learning process and organisation of the school;**
- h. victimisation or slandering of educators, learners, and staff members;**

- i. repeated violation of the Code of Conduct or associated rules.**

2.5.1.4 Disciplinary procedure for serious misconduct

- a. All serious misconduct must be reported directly to the Principal or Deputy-Principal by educators or student representatives;**
- b. Disciplinary action will be taken at the discretion of the Principal or Deputy-Principal. Parents will be notified in the case of serious misconduct. Learners will be given the opportunity to explain their behaviour and also to have their parents present during questioning by the Principal. Disciplinary action taken by the Principal may include:**
 - I) placing the learner on contract with the school, with the signed approval of the learner's parents, to give the learner the opportunity to rectify his or her behaviour;**
 - II) suspension of the learner for breaking his or her contract with the school or for any serious misconduct, after a fair hearing, and with the approval of the School Governing Body. The period of suspension may not exceed one week.**
 - III) the expulsion of the learner in the event of serious misbehaviour, particularly after having been given the opportunity to rectify his or her behaviour. The learner will be suspended from the school after such a decision is taken by a legally-constituted disciplinary committee (described below), pending ratification of the decision by the Gauteng Department of Education.**
- c. The disciplinary committee must consist of three members and be constituted as follows: the chairperson must be a parent or community member of the School Governing Body, and the two other members must be members of the School Governing Body or eligible for election to this body (excluding the Principal, learners, and any person who has personal knowledge of the matters being disputed). Grade 12 members of the school's Representative Council of Learners may observe these proceedings.**
- d. The School Governing Body must ensure that learners are granted a fair hearing. This means that the accused person understands the allegations against him or her, and is given a fair opportunity to respond to those allegations. The**

disciplinary committee should weigh the evidence carefully and make its decision without malice or prejudice against any person. The committee may not discriminate directly or indirectly against the accused on the basis of race, gender, birth or religion.

2.6 The Role and Responsibilities of the Representative Council of Learners

The establishment of a Representative Council of Learners (RCL) is required by law. This body of learners is nominated and elected exclusively by the learners of our school. Learners are expected to take the election of their leaders seriously, and to support and assist these leaders in the carrying out of their responsibilities.

2.6.1 Rights and obligations of the RCL:

- a. A right and an obligation to represent at all levels, provided they are mandated or they are acting within their boundaries.**
- b. A right to have access to information pertaining to the school and an obligation to inform learners on matters related to its work as well as to deal strictly with sensitive information.**
- c. A right to use the school's facilities provided that proper consultation is followed and an obligation to take care of the school's property.**
- d. A right to have an office where possible.**
- e. A right to acquire and administer funds (under the supervision of a staff member) and an obligation to be transparent about this, to administer these funds properly and to account for them.**
- f. A right to participate in the activities of the School Governing Body and an obligation to do so as and when called upon to do so by the School Governing Body.**
- g. A right to convene meetings among themselves, with learners, teachers, parents, and other stakeholders and an obligation to attend these meetings.**
- h. A right, in consultation with other stakeholders, to organise activities aimed at developing learners academically, for fundraising, or for the entertainment of the learners and an obligation to work with other stakeholders to do so.**

- i. Senior (Grade 12 and NSC) RCL members have the right to reprimand other learners and ask them to change negative behaviours, as well as to report such learners to the Grade Tutors, the Principal or Deputy-Principal. All RCL members are obliged to uphold the Code of Conduct like other learners and to take action where the Code is not being upheld. The Code of Conduct exists for the wellbeing and development of all learners, and upholding it therefore is representing the interests of the learners.**
- j. A right to question and/or challenge the status quo and an obligation to do so actively and constructively.**
- k. A right to have access to education authorities outside the school, should a need arise.**

2.6.2 Functions of the RCL:

- a. to build unity among the learners at the school;**
- b. to address the needs of the learners in the school;**
- c. to keep learners informed about school events;**
- d. to organise and mobilise learners for various school projects and functions;**
- e. to encourage good relationships within the school between learners and educators, and between learners and non-teaching members of staff;**
- f. to establish, for the benefit of the learners, fruitful links with RCL bodies in other schools, and youth organisations.**

We believe that being involved with the school's RCL is of enormous value in preparing learners with leadership potential for the demands of such positions in adult life (see section 1.3 and 1.4 of the Preamble). A separate policy document is in place for the running of the RCL.

3. The Four Cornerstones in practice for Educators

An educator is a professional who

- has a specific education or training,**
- has an expert knowledge of his or her field,**

- **performs a crucial social function,**
- **enjoys autonomy in performing his or her job,**
- **takes responsibility and is accountable for his or her work**

The Preamble forms the basis of the Code of Conduct for learners, and, since the above-mentioned outcomes are held to be common for both learners and educators, must inform the Code of Conduct for educators. It is recognised that the achievement of these outcomes depends on the active participation and commitment of all parties (learners, educators, the School Governing Body, and parents or guardians).

However, the ultimate success or failure of our Code of Conduct is decided in the day-to-day interactions and contact between educators and learners. Educators, therefore, have the most important role to play because it is to them primarily that our learners will look for leadership, guidance, expertise, support, and compassion in the pursuit of the goals we have set for our school.

This section of the document provides a framework in which educators can work in order to:

- **achieve the objectives of our school**
- **build a common teaching and learning philosophy (without undermining individual styles and preferences)**
- **ensure that cognisance is taken of developments in South African education**
- **maintain a level of consistency when working with learners and other stakeholders**
- **maintain a high standard of work**
- **maintain a high standard of professionalism**
- **assist each other in keeping discipline**
- **build a happier and healthier work environment and professional relationships**

Please read the following in conjunction with the corresponding sections of the Preamble.

3.1 The ‘People’ Cornerstone in practice

Educators must ensure that they:

- **are learner-centred in their approach**
- **actively seek to empower learners with skills and develop their talents**
- **actively seek to assist and encourage learners in working on their weaknesses**
- **take an interest in the work learners produce**
- **offer praise freely and truthfully to learners**
- **offer balanced, constructive criticism, where necessary, to learners**
- **recognise the necessity of focussing on behaviour rather than people when dealing with discipline problems**
- **seek willing co-operation rather than enforced compliance from learners**
- **actively protect and promote the self-image and self-esteem of learners**
- **communicate clearly with learners, and ensure that channels of communication are always open for learners, parents, and other stakeholders**
- **are sensitive to the diverse backgrounds and cultures of the learners, and create opportunities to explore these**
- **emphasise the development of interpersonal and group skills**
- **participate in the running of extra-mural and other school development activities**
- **actively support and encourage members of the RCL in the carrying out of their duties**
- **strive to build positive relationships with other educators and non-teaching staff**
- **wherever possible, share knowledge and experience with colleagues**

3.2 The 'Passion' Cornerstone in practice

Educators should consciously strive to:

- **demonstrate enthusiasm for their learning areas and the work of the learners under their tuition in these areas**
- **demonstrate enthusiasm for the unique character and role of the school**
- **express interest in and enthusiasm for the Arts, and especially for the work of the learners in their specialist Arts fields**
- **contribute to building a healthy school spirit**

3.3 The 'Preparation' Cornerstone in practice

Educators must

- **prepare learners in every possible and relevant way in their particular learning areas**
- **keep up to date with developments in their learning areas and the fields of employment for which their learning areas provide specific preparation**
- **always be prepared, thereby highlighting the value of preparation for learners and lessening possible discipline problems**
- **strive to incorporate material that will be relevant to learners in their everyday lives and in the world of work**
- **emphasise the importance of self-discipline, organisation and adaptability, primarily through the example set by educators themselves**
- **identify and develop leadership potential where it exists**
- **set goals for themselves and assist learners in doing so**
- **wherever possible, incorporate critical life skills into their teaching**

3.4 The 'Professionalism' Cornerstone in practice

Educators are expected to be professional role models:

- **in their general approach**
- **in their every interaction with learners and parents**

- **in their interactions with colleagues and non-teaching staff**

3.4.1 Administrative Issues

Educators are expected to

- **arrive at school ten minutes before the starting time (07h20 am)**
- **report to the Principal or Deputy-Principal, if late or absent**
- **obtain permission to leave school premises during school hours**
- **perform their break, detention, and invigilation duties and to be punctual in arriving for these**
- **attend all assemblies and meetings unless specifically requested or allowed not to do so**

3.4.2 Classroom Management

Educators must

- **ensure that learners are kept busy at all times**
- **not allow learners to go to the cloakrooms or tuckshop during lessons**
- **be punctual for their classes**
- **avoid dismissing their classes early**
- **avoid keeping their classes behind after a period has ended**
- **avoid leaving their classes alone**
- **request a 'late slip' or a letter from learners who arrive late and not allow them in unless one is presented**
- **take roll-call every period in order to control absenteeism and "bunking"**
- **ensure that learners are present and that they work during substitution periods**

3.4.3 Discipline Issues

Educators must

- **ensure that they follow the Code of Conduct with regard to rules (see Section 2 above) and discipline procedures (see 2.5 above, specifically)**
- **ensure that they bear in mind the outcomes stated under ‘People’ (section 1.1) in the Preamble**
- **be consistent in their disciplinary practices**
- **play their part in daily discipline, by, for example, ensuring that the Dress and Appearance section of the Code is adhered to (see 2.1 above)**
- **be explicit about their expectations of learners, and about the consequences of misconduct in terms of the Code of Conduct**
- **avoid sending learners out of the classroom as punishment**
- **never threaten learners, as doing so is unnecessary if the consequences of misconduct as defined by the Code of Conduct have been communicated to learners, is often futile, and can be destructive to the educator/learner relationship**
- **identify the learners guilty of misconduct and never punish a class collectively**
- **expect co-operation, and not continue until instructions are obeyed**
- **actively support, assist, and never undermine the disciplinary actions of other educators or of student representatives**

3.4.5 General Professionalism

Educators should

- **familiarise themselves with the regulations governing professional conduct among colleagues as outlined in South African labour law.**
- **maintain trust and confidentiality as not doing so is unprofessional in the extreme**
- **maintain a positive and professional image of themselves**
- **willingly share responsibility in the day-to-day running of the school**

- **do their part in controlling litter and generally looking after the appearance of the school**
- **do their part in controlling and supporting assemblies**
- **perceive themselves as, and act as, ambassadors for the school at functions, productions, and exhibitions**
- **actively encourage adherence to the Code of Conduct**

It all comes down to professionalism in your workplace, and “leading by example.”