

 <p><i>St Andrew's School</i> <i>for Girls</i></p> <p>S K I L L E D F O R L I F E</p>	<p><b>INTERACTION BETWEEN PARENTS AND ST ANDREW'S STAFF</b></p>
	<p><b>POLICY</b></p>
	<p>VERSION 1.3</p>

## 1. INTRODUCTION

All members of the St Andrew's community have the right to dignity and to be treated in a manner consistent with providing an environment conducive to effective education and learning that supports the St Andrew's philosophy of "Skilled for Life". St Andrew's promotes an environment of trust in which criticism may be both made and received constructively. St Andrew's shall take the appropriate action necessary to ensure that this environment is maintained and fostered and to prevent harm that may be caused by behaviour adverse to this aim.

This policy shall apply to the parents of learners enrolled at St Andrew's and the staff of St Andrew's.

## 2. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to establish the principles governing the interaction between parents and the staff of St Andrew's and the channels of communication to be adhered to in this interaction.

## 3. POLICY STATEMENTS

### **Interaction between members of the St Andrew's community**

- 3.1 All members of the St Andrew's community shall respect the right of students to learn and educators to provide effective education. Behaviour by any educator, administrative staff member or parent that fails to respect these rights shall constitute a breach of this policy.
- 3.2 It is the responsibility of all members of the St Andrew's community to familiarise themselves with and abide by the provisions of all policies, as well as all supporting procedures, standards, and guidelines applicable to them.
- 3.3 Policies, procedures, standards, and guidelines will be published on the St Andrew's website, . They will also be available in physical or electronic form from the personal assistant to the Head, with whom arrangements may be made to obtain copies.
- 3.4 It is the responsibility of all parents and staff employed by St Andrew's to assist the learners to become aware of and abide by the provisions of all St Andrew's policies, procedures standards and guidelines.
- 3.5 Communication between parents and staff of St Andrew's shall follow the channels of communication stipulated in procedures published by St Andrew's from time to time. St Andrew's employees shall endeavour to conform to a '24 hour response' policy. Although the response to the parent's query could vary according to the nature of the query made, St Andrew's employees shall at least acknowledge receipt of the query within 24 hours.
- 3.6 Communication between parents and staff of St Andrew's shall be conducted at a time and in a manner that allows full and proper discussion of the issues under consideration.

- 3.7 Educators, administrative staff and parents shall treat one another with courtesy at all times. Confrontations, particularly public confrontations, unprofessional and/or provocative behaviour between any person within the St Andrew's community, will, by its nature have a negative impact on an environment conducive to effective learning at St Andrew's, and will be viewed in a serious light.
- 3.8 "Bad-mouthing" of St Andrew's, or members of the St Andrew's community by educators, administrative staff and parents may cause both reputational and financial harm to St Andrew's. Members of the St Andrew's community are encouraged to report incidents of "bad mouthing" to the Head or the Board of Governors. This includes incidents of spreading of rumours, gossiping and discussing unhappiness with the incidents related to the school using electronic devices, such as via sms or e-mail or on social networking sites. If any harm is caused to St Andrew's, St Andrew's may take appropriate action against perpetrators of "bad mouthing" including, but not limited to, the recovery of financial damages suffered by St Andrew's.
- 3.9 The undermining of authority or the incitement of a learner to display contempt or disrespect to a parent or any person in authority, by a member of the St Andrew's community shall be regarded in a serious light.
- 3.10 Parents and St Andrew's staff, while encouraged to support St Andrew's, shall conduct themselves in a proper and sporting manner at all times when attending sporting and extra mural activities. All interaction with persons, acting as officials, placed in authority of St Andrew's learners or any learners representing any other school, as well as the learners themselves, shall be conducted properly and discretely. Interference or attempted interference with officials, persons in authority, or the learners shall be regarded in a serious light.
- 3.11 Unless specifically requested to attend, the attendance of parents in the classroom, at extra mural activities (other than inter house or inter school matches or competitions) and at practises is discouraged. Educators or authorised representatives of St Andrew's shall be entitled to request any parent or third party to leave the classroom or activity.
- 3.12 The unauthorised access to, and/or the communication of any information owned by or under the control of St Andrew's, may constitute a breach of confidentiality and/or the right of protection from the unauthorised disclosure of private personal information. Any member of the St Andrew's community aware of such abuse is encouraged to report it to the Head. St Andrew's may take appropriate action against any members of the St Andrew's community in breach of their duty of confidentiality, or privacy of personal information.

### **Parents' obligations to pay school fees**

- 3.13 Timely payment of school fees is critical to the ongoing fiscal well-being of St Andrew's.
- 3.14 On enrolment of a learner the parents of the learner undertake the responsibility to make payment of school fees as and when school fees become due and are expected to abide strictly with the provisions of agreements entered into with St Andrew's in this regard.
- 3.15 In the interests of all of the St Andrew's community, if the payment of school fees is delayed, St Andrew's shall take all commercially and legally reasonable steps to enforce agreements with parents.

#### 4. CAUTIONARY PROCEDURES

- 4.1 St Andrew's learners who contravene its policies, procedures or standards shall be subject to the disciplinary procedures provided for in the Acceptable Conduct Policy.
- 4.2 St Andrew's employees who contravene St Andrew's policies, procedures or standards shall be subject to the disciplinary procedures adopted by the school and agreed to as terms of their employment by St Andrew's.
- 4.3 Parents of St Andrew's learners who contravene St Andrew's policies, procedures or standards or acts in any manner that negatively impacts on an environment conducive to effective learning at St Andrew's, shall be subject to the following cautionary procedures.

##### **Consultation**

- 4.4 A parent who contravenes the provisions of this policy or acts in a manner that negatively impacts on an environment conducive to effective learning at St Andrew's may be requested by the Headmistress or a person appointed by the Headmistress to attend a meeting to discuss the contravention.

##### **Written caution**

- 4.5 Should the conduct of the parent be sufficiently serious, or if the parent repeatedly contravenes the provisions of this policy, or acts in a manner that negatively impacts on the environment conducive to effective learning at St Andrew's, the Headmistress or appointed other, may address a written warning to the parent requesting that the parent desists from such behaviour.
- 4.6 A written caution shall provide that the parent acknowledges the letter within a specified period, allow for consultation relating to the parents' conduct to take place and state what action may be taken by St Andrew's if the negative conduct persists.

##### **Cautionary hearing**

- 4.7 If the parent fails to respond to the written caution or despite the written caution persists with the negative conduct, the Headmistress, or appointed other, may require a cautionary hearing.
- 4.8 Notice of not less than seven days notice, from the delivery of the Notice of Cautionary Hearing shall be given to the parent. The notice shall set out the purpose of the hearing, the time and venue of the hearing and a copy of the procedures for a cautionary hearing.
- 4.9 A cautionary hearing may proceed despite the absence of the parent provided the Headmistress or appointed other, is satisfied that notice of the hearing has been properly provided to the parent.
- 4.10 The Headmistress shall appoint three senior persons from St Andrew's to preside over the cautionary hearing one of whom may be the Headmistress.

- 4.11 A cautionary hearing is internal to St Andrew's and neither the parent nor St Andrew's shall be permitted to have legal representation at the hearing.
- 4.12 A written record of the proceedings shall be made and retained by St Andrew's.
- 4.13 Within forty-eight hours of the hearing the Headmistress, or appointed other, shall address a letter to the parent informing the parent of the findings of the persons appointed to preside over the hearing.

## Appeal

- 4.14 If a parent is aggrieved by a decision of the persons appointed to preside over the cautionary hearing the parent shall be entitled with seven days of receipt of the decision, to appeal, in writing to the Head against the decision.
- 4.15 The appeal shall briefly state the reason that the parent is aggrieved.
- 4.16 The Head shall consider the written record and, if she deems it necessary, consult with one or all of the persons appointed to preside over the cautionary hearing.
- 4.17 The Head shall, within seven days of receipt of the notice of appeal, meet with the parent to discuss the parent's appeal.
- 4.18 The Head shall, if she feels it necessary, refer any points of dispute to any of the persons appointed to preside over the cautionary hearing.
- 4.19 The Head shall, within forty eight hours, of meeting with the parent,
- confirm the decision of the disciplinary hearing;
  - refer the matter back to the disciplinary committee to reconsider any issue in dispute or reconsider their decision; or
  - direct any amendments to the sanctions imposed.
- 4.20 Written notice of the Head's decision shall be provided to the parent and a copy shall be retained with all records of the proceedings.
- 4.21 The decision by the Head given on the appeal by the parent shall be final.

## 5. GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES

- 5.1 If communication in the normal course and in accordance with the procedures provided from time to time by St Andrew's, has failed to resolve an issue communicated to a educator or a member of St Andrew's staff and a parent remains aggrieved, the parent shall complete a "Grievance Form for Parents", and address it to the Headmistress. Forms are available from the Executive Head's personal assistant.
- 5.2 The Headmistress shall investigate the Grievance complained of and either request the parent to attend a consultation, with a view to resolving the issue complained of, or advise the parent of the action taken to remedy the grievance complained of.
- 5.3 The parent shall be invited to the consultation or informed of the action taken within seven days of receipt of the parents Grievance Form.

## 6. RELATED POLICIES, STANDARDS, PROCEDURES AND GUIDELINES

### 6.1 Staff Code of Conduct Policy.

## 7. GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Unless inconsistent with the context, the expressions set out in this policy will have the meanings assigned to them in the glossary of terms applicable to all policies, procedures, standards and guidelines adopted and published by St Andrew's. The Glossary of terms shall be available on the St Andrew's website, [www.standrews.co.za](http://www.standrews.co.za) , or from the personal assistant to the Head, in either physical or electronic form.