



RYVA ACADEMY OF LEARNING

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Provisionally accredited by Umalusi, Council for Quality Assurance
in General and Further Education and Training.

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CODE OF CONDUCT FOR THE LEARNERS

1 - RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

In the school context, educators, parents and learners have responsibilities.

To sustain a healthy learning environment, the parties to the education relationship need to acknowledge their respective responsibilities.

It is the parents' responsibility to support the child and educator in the learning process.

Every learner at RyVa Academy of Learning should respect their educators, their fellow-learners and themselves. An environment of mutual respect, tolerance and acceptance of others is promoted.

Educators at RyVa Academy of Learning have the right to insist on respectful behaviour by the school learners.

It is the responsibility of the educator to ensure that there is orderly behaviour in the classroom which is conducive to learning by all and to ensure learners are able to make the best possible contribution to the community when they leave school.

Should the expected norms and standards of behaviour of learners not be met, corrective action will be taken by the school.

1.1. The Rights of the Learner:

- 1 - Everyone has the right to a safe environment free from verbal, emotional and physical bullying;
- 2 - Everyone has the right to work and learn without being disturbed by others;
- 3 - Everyone has the right to be treated courteously and respectfully;
- 4 - Everyone has the right to work and learn in a clean, safe and orderly environment.

1.2. The Responsibilities of the Learner:

- 1 - To attend school on time, ready to learn and take part in school activities;
- 2 - To aim at the highest standards in all aspects of school life;
- 3 - To ensure that all school books and stationery is in the school bags every day;
- 4 - To meet homework and task deadlines;
- 5 - To co-operate with staff and to accept authority and rules of the school;
- 6 - Accept legitimate punishment and disciplinary action taken against them;
- 7 - Behave honestly, responsibly and not endanger the safety and welfare of self and others;
- 8 - To consider and respect the feelings and property of other people at the school;
- 9 - To respect the school grounds buildings, furniture, equipment, books and uniform;
- 10 - Be punctual and observe the timetable of the school;
- 11 - Accept the authority of Educators;
- 12 - Wear the school and sports uniform with pride;
- 13 - Have good hygiene and personal neatness at all times.
- 14 - To support the Ethos, Vision & Mission of the school.

1.3. The Responsibilities of the Educator:

- 1 - To develop each individual learners' academic levels and talents as fully as possible;
- 2 - To teach effectively and to set the highest standards in work and behaviour;
- 3 - To care for and support each learner when at school academically, socially and emotionally;
- 4 - To support the Ethos, Vision & Mission, values, authority and discipline of the school, helping the learners to achieve maturity, self-discipline and self-control;
- 5 - To encourage the development of their children's involvement in the school's cocurricular activities;
- 6 - To show respect for other educators in their daily interaction;
- 7 - To encourage open communication with parents as a basis for close co-operation between all.

1.4. The Responsibility of the Parent:

- 1 - To show by their own example that they support the school to the fullest extent possible;
- 2 - To make sure that their children attend school on time, correctly dressed, prepared and equipped for the day's activities;
- 3 - To take an active, supportive interest ensuring the completion of their children's work, homework, progress and extra-mural activities;
- 4 - To send an absenteeism letter to school at all times explaining why the child has not been attending;
- 5 - To send a medical certificate if the child is absent for 3 days or longer;
- 6 - Attend meeting convened by the school.
- 7 - Relating to bullying:
 - 7.1 - to be alert to signs of unhappiness in your child's life. Any change in attitude, drop in school marks, avoidance of School or social activities and other unusual behaviours may indicate bullying;
 - 7.2 - be aware, in a respectful manner, of social behaviours and the content posted on electronic sites and social media by their children and their peers;
 - 7.3 - be supportive when an incident of bullying in any form and, in particular, of cyber-bullying, is reported as this can be extremely damaging and have lasting effects;
 - 7.4 - encourage your child to keep any evidence of bullying;
 - 7.5 - inform a member of staff if there is any concern about your child being a victim or perpetrator of bullying;
 - 7.6 - not take matters into your own hands by confronting the alleged perpetrator or his/her Parents; and refrain from encouraging your child to retaliate.
- 8 - To inform the school immediately should their contract details change (including telephone numbers, home addresses and email addresses).
- 9 - Ensure that their school fees are paid monthly and are kept up to date.
- 10 - To ensure that their child has good hygiene and personal neatness at all times.

2. DISCIPLINARY MEASURES

The school will not tolerate any behaviour it deems improper from its learners. Learners are expected to behave with dignity and to treat others with respect and dignity.

Parents are expected to assist the School by confronting their child about their behaviour so as to avoid the development of any future problems.

Various forms of informal and formal disciplinary measures will be applied at the school. No corporal punishment will be applied.

The severity of the punishment will depend upon the seriousness of the infringement of this Code and its principles, as well as any mitigating or aggravating circumstances.

Repeatedly committing the same offence will result in progressively more severe punishment and may call for a formal disciplinary measure. Should the offence be of a very serious nature the school's Head reserves the right to suspend the learner pending a Disciplinary Hearing. As far as is reasonably possible a record will be kept of all infringements of this Code.

2.1. INFORMAL MEASURES COULD BE ONE OR MORE OF THE FOLLOWING:

- 1 - Counselling of the learner by an educator – ie: the situation is discussed with the learner and incorrect behaviour is pointed out and expected behaviour is highlighted;
- 2 - Writing a letter of apology or offering a public apology;
- 3 - Confiscation of the offending material or items;
- 4 - Replacing and property that was tampered with or damaged – this will be levied on the fees account;
- 5 - Marks deducted for work or projects handed in late – as determined by their subject policy.

2.2. FORMAL MEASURES COULD BE ONE OR MORE OF THE FOLLOWING:

- 1 - Parent interview;
- 2 - Requirement for psychological or other remedial counselling at the parents' cost;
- 3 - Suspension from the school – length will depend upon the seriousness of the offence;
- 4 - Disciplinary Hearing;
- 5 - Expulsion.

2.3. LEVEL ONE INFRINGEMENTS

- 1 - Arriving late for school repeatedly. Not adhering to the school's timetable.
- 2 - Infringing the dress code.
- 3 - Disruption of the classroom environment.
- 4 - Dishonesty.
- 5 - Chewing gum.
- 6 - Littering.
- 7 - Bringing cell phones to school.
- 8 - Wearing make-up & nail polish (exceptions are made for special days and concerts).
- 9 - Not wearing the uniform correctly and neatly. In the event of incorrect uniform, the parents will be contacted to ensure that the problem is rectified by a specific date. Hands in pockets are not allowed.
- 10 - Wearing jewellery. Girls may wear studs (gold or silver). Only one stud per ear lobe may be worn and no sleepers. Learners may not wear one earring. Boys may not wear earrings. If found to be wearing incorrect jewellery, it will be confiscated and placed in an envelope for safekeeping until collected by the parent/guardian.
- 11 - Playing dangerous, obscene, insulting or demeaning games, or gambling games.
- 12 - Use of excessive force when playing games or during sports and events.
- 13 - Tampering with possessions or school equipment.

2.4. LEVEL ONE DISCIPLINARY PROCESS

The following infringements which result in informal disciplinary measures will be recorded as far as reasonable possible on the learner's file, but parents will not necessarily be informed. However, should Level 1 infringements be repeatedly committed, parents will be informed. Disciplinary measures may include reprimands, detention, performing tasks to assist the offended person, replacing damaged property, suspension from field trips or sports activities.

2.5. LEVEL TWO INFRINGEMENTS

- 1 - Being absent from school without an acceptable reason.
- 2 - Leaving the school premises without permission.
- 3 - Disrespect for school property or the vandalising school property.
- 4 - Possession of, or smoking cigarettes on the school premises.
- 5 - Offensive language.
- 6 - Tampering with or damaging other people's property.
- 7 - Disrespectful, unacceptable or insolent behaviour towards Educators and Staff.
- 8 - Defamatory statements made of other people.

- 9 - Continued incomplete or poor presentation of work after warnings.
- 10 - Late assignment submissions. Educators must inform learners when the due date for submissions of a task is and is to ensure that this is written both on the classroom's homework notice board as well as in the learner's homework notebook. Should work not be submitted on time, the learner will receive a zero mark for the particular assignment.
- 11 - Absenteeism for tests/examinations. Failure to be at school for the set time to write a test or examination, without the submission of a valid medical certificate, will result in a zero mark being recorded. Should a medical certificate be presented, the learner will have an 'absent' mark recorded and final totals will be appropriately adjusted.
- 12 - Plagiarism. Teachers need to assess the work of pupils to determine their understanding and progress being made. With technological advancement it is possible for a pupil to download information from the internet and submit such as his/ her own effort. This will constitute plagiarism. Plagiarised work can be in typed or written form or even presented as an oral piece. Should a pupil commit plagiarism, zero will be awarded for the work. Depending upon the timeframe the pupil may be given the opportunity to submit another task – their own work – but marks will be deducted for the initial plagiarism.
- 13 - Being in possession of dangerous articles or toys that can cause injury.
- 14 - Bullying, fighting or misbehaving (if a minor incident).
For the purposes of this Policy, bullying is defined as:
"any form of aggressive behaviour or harassment by an individual or a group, repeated over time, which intentionally hurts another individual or group either physically or emotionally and is generally based on an imbalance in power. Bullying can be physical or non-physical in nature"
- 14.1 - Physical bullying includes but is not limited to: punching, kicking, tripping, pushing, taking and/or the damaging of possessions, threatening someone, extortion or preventing someone from leaving or entering an area or space.
- 14.2 - Non-physical bullying includes but is not limited to: provocative behaviour, which includes, but is not limited to, making rude gestures and pulling faces, producing offensive graffiti, being aggressive in your opinions, and wearing discriminatory clothing/badges/items.
- 14.3 - Verbal bullying includes, but is not limited to, name-calling, making fun of another person, being repeatedly critical, prolonged unkind teasing, making threats, spreading rumours and lies about another person, and making racist, sexist or homophobic comments.
- 14.4 - Relational bullying includes, but is not limited to, spreading rumours and gossiping, the breaking of confidences and the deliberate splitting of a friendship or friendships and/or stealing of friend/s to with an intention to isolate and hurt a person.
- 14.5 - Sexual harassment, which includes, but is not limited to, the spreading of sexual gossip, the spreading of gossip about "crushes" and similar, making sexual innuendos and jokes or making derogatory comments about someone's appearance.
- 14.6 - Cyber-Bullying, which includes, but is not limited to, the sending of cruel or threatening messages via text, e-mail, instant messaging or other forms of social media; posting nasty pictures or messages about others or making unkind comments about another person in text or instant messages, in e-mails, in chat rooms or on social media; taking explicit photographs and sending them on to others; "stealing" someone's identity and/or pretending to be that person; and refusing to allow somebody to leave an instant messaging group by endlessly "re-adding" them.

2.6. LEVEL TWO DISCIPLINARY PROCESS

The following infringements are recorded as far as is reasonable possible on the learner's file and the parents are informed in certain instances. Disciplinary measures may include reprimands, detention, performing tasks to assist the offended person, replacing damaged property, suspension from field trips or sports activities.

2.6.1 - Relating to bullying:

- * Scholars can verbally report bullying to any member of staff.
- * Parents can verbally or in writing report bullying to any member of staff.
- * Any evidence of bullying that is received by a staff member should be provided to the Head who must keep same for record purposes.
- * All reports of bullying will be taken seriously, will be investigated thoroughly.
- * The reporting of bullying will be encouraged as the right thing to do.
- * Confidentiality will be upheld and respected insofar as is possible.
- * When an incident of bullying or suspected bullying is reported, the school will respond in a manner that is appropriate to the incident. Depending on the circumstances and nature of the incident, the following steps will usually be taken:
 - * a member of school leadership will meet with the victim to establish what has taken place, to ensure that the victim understands and is comfortable with the action that the school will take in dealing with the matter, and to ensure that the victim will not be placed at further risk;
 - * the victim's parents will be contacted and informed of the situation, and kept updated with the school's actions and approach. If it is felt that the victim is in need of further support or counselling, this will be recommended to parents;
 - * a member of school leadership will then meet with the alleged perpetrator of the bullying incident to hear their side of the situation, and to ensure that the bullying behaviour stops immediately. Depending on the type of incident, parents may be called. If there is negative comeback from the perpetrator to the victim following this, parents will be called in to a meeting with a member of school leadership. If it is felt that the alleged perpetrator needs some sort of intervention, psychological or otherwise, this will be recommended to parents;
 - * in the event that the accounts given by the victim and the alleged perpetrator are substantially different, investigating staff will usually bring both learners into an interview together for mediation by an independent third party, (with or without parents) or will investigate further by interviewing witnesses to the alleged incidents;
 - * the incidents will be recorded in each scholar's records;
 - * if the perpetrator repeats his/her behaviour, the school will be obliged to take more stringent steps to curb this. In the event of repeated bullying behaviour that is felt to endanger one or more scholars in the school, the perpetrator may be asked to leave the school in accordance with the Code of Conduct; and
 - * in incidents which involve cyber-bullying, whether these occur on or off the school property, the school reserves the right to take the same action as for other incidents of bullying.

2.7. LEVEL THREE INFRINGEMENTS

- 1 - Stealing or attempted theft.
- 2 - Repeatedly committing the same offence which has resulted in at least three informal disciplinary measures.
- 3 - Serious bullying – verbal, emotional or physical.
- 4 - Fighting, violence, abusive and intimidating behaviour.
- 5 - Repeatedly impeding on the rights of other learners to be educated by disrupting the classroom environment.
- 6 - Cheating during examinations or tests. When an invigilator is satisfied that a candidate has shown sufficient cause to be disqualified, the following procedure is to be adopted:
 - 6.1 - The educator/invigilator will confiscate all incriminating material as well as the script;
 - 6.2 - The answer book of any other candidate from whom assistance has been obtained should not be removed unless that candidate also shows sufficient cause to warrant disqualification;
 - 6.3 - Inform the candidate that the incident will be reported to the school Head;
 - 6.4 - Report the matter in writing immediately to the school Head together with the incriminating Material;

- 6.5 - If evidence of copying is found, then the learner will receive zero for all work done up to the time that he/she was found to be cheating;
- 6.6 - A copy of the report and a letter will be placed on the learner's file and the parent notified;
- 6.7 - Should this behaviour be repeated it may result in a Disciplinary Hearing.
- 7 - Any transgression involving the law.
- 8 - Racism.
- 9 - Indecent public behaviour and/or sexual impropriety.
- 10 - Unacceptable substance (alcohol/drugs) on school premises.
- 11 - Continued disruptive behaviour during lessons so as to disturb others from learning.
- 10 - Possession of offensive or pornographic material.
- 12 - Obscene language and/or gestures.
- 13 - Possession of dangerous objects; any explosive material or device; any firearm or gas weapon or any article, weapon or instrument which can be used to cause bodily harm to a person or damage any property, or to render a person temporarily paralysed or unconscious at any official educational, cultural or social activity of the school within or outside the school premises.
- 14 - Any other act of insubordination or misconduct that, in the opinion of the Head, reasonably constitutes serious misconduct.

2.8. LEVEL THREE DISCIPLINARY PROCESS

The following procedure will apply where infringements require formal disciplinary measures.

- 1 - In order to gather information and decide upon the specific disciplinary steps to be taken the alleged misconduct will be investigated by the Phase Head/School's Head upon receiving the notice of such alleged misconduct. At this stage, before the validity and details of the alleged misconduct have been established, the school will not necessarily advise the parents/guardians of such an investigation. If there has been misconduct which requires further steps to be taken, parents will be informed.
- 2 - Depending upon the seriousness of the alleged misconduct, the school's Head may suspend the learner pending a full investigation.
- 3 - The parents will be phoned for a meeting at which the situation will be explained to them and the learner. Parents will be requested that the learner leaves the school premises immediately and may only return upon being informed.
- 4 - Such suspension may not last longer than two school days unless the misconduct proves to be of such a serious nature that there will be a Disciplinary Hearing and a possibility of expulsion.
- 5 - Should, following an investigation, the infringement be confirmed but not regarded to be of such a nature that the suspension continues, or the learner faces a Disciplinary Hearing:
 - 5.1 - A meeting will be convened with the learner, parents/guardians, Phase Head/School's Head, where the corrective measures will be explained.
 - 5.2 - The learner may return to school.
- 6 - Should, following the investigation, the infringement be confirmed, and it is regarded to be of a serious nature that expulsion could follow, then:
 - 6.1 - The school's Head may decide that the suspension be extended until such time as the Disciplinary Hearing takes place;
 - 6.2 - A notification of a Disciplinary Hearing will be issued to the learner and the parents/guardians by the Head. This shall be handed over to the learner and parents personally or else forwarded by registered mail to the parents' or guardians' last known residential address. A copy of this notification will be kept in the learner's portfolio;
 - 6.3 - The parents/guardians must, where possible, receive such notification at least 48 hours (two working days) in advance;
 - 6.4 - This notification will state:
 - * The time, date and venue of the Disciplinary Hearing;
 - * Sufficient information so that the learner and parents will be fully informed of the alleged misconduct and the seriousness thereof;

- * That the learner and parent/guardians have to attend the Disciplinary Hearing and that their non-attendance may prejudice the child's case as the Hearing will be held in their absence and a decision made without their involvement;
- 6.5 - Save in exceptional circumstances, legal representation at a Disciplinary Hearing is not permitted. Application for such representation is made to the Head and may be granted at their discretion.
- 7 - The Disciplinary committee will be constituted of at least two members, one being the Head, and the other being a teacher, and or SGB member. Other representatives nominated by the school may be included.
- 8 - The Disciplinary Hearing will be chaired by the Head who will be responsible for managing the hearing process and after consultation with other members of the committee, will decide on the guilt or innocence of the learner in respect of the allegations made.
- 9 - The findings of the Head should be based on evidence presented at the enquiry.
- 10 - No finding of misconduct should be made for which prior notice was not given.
- 11 - A decision is made on the action to be taken after consideration of the mitigating and/or aggravating factors.
- 12 - Whenever it appears to the Disciplinary committee that the disciplinary proceedings may put any witness under the age of 18 under undue mental stress or suffering if he or she testifies at the hearing, the committee may, if practicable, appoint a competent person as an intermediary in order to enable the witness to give his or her evidence through that intermediary.
- 13 - To ensure that the Disciplinary Hearing is properly conducted:
 - 13.1 - Ensure that the notes are taken and/or that the proceeding are voice recorded;
 - 13.2 - State the allegations for which the Disciplinary Hearing had been convened;
 - 13.3 - Allow evidence to be led;
 - 13.4 - Allow witnesses to testify;
 - 13.5 - Allow parents and learner to question such evidence;
 - 13.6 - Should an intermediary have been appointed, an examination or cross-examination of the witness must not take place in any manner other than through the intermediary;
 - 13.7 - Allow the parents and learner to state their own case;
 - 13.8 - Ensure that all parties are treated with the necessary respect and dignity.
- 14 - After completion of the Disciplinary Hearing, the Chairperson of the Disciplinary Hearing/Head has to inform the learner and the parents of the outcome of the Hearing as well as the disciplinary steps to be taken and the reasons for such in writing.
- 15 - Inform the learner and the parents of their right to appeal against the decision.
- 16 - An appeal may be made for the following reasons:
 - 16.1 - The disciplinary procedure was not properly followed;
 - 16.2 - The final decision on guilt was considered unfair;
 - 16.3 - The decision regarding the action to be taken is considered to be inappropriate;
 - 16.4 - Mitigating factors were not properly considered;
 - 16.5 - The Chairperson of the Disciplinary Hearing/Head was considered to have been biased or subjective;
 - 16.6 - The learner was not given a fair opportunity to present his/her case;
 - 16.7 - New and relevant evidence has come to light – the reason for it not being presented at the Disciplinary Hearing has to be stated clearly.
- 17 - Should the learner and parents wish to appeal against the outcome of extended suspension or expulsion, they may do so within five working days after receiving the written outcome of the Disciplinary Hearing.
- 18 - The appeal is made in writing to the Chairperson of the Disciplinary Hearing/Head.
- 19 - The Chairperson of the Disciplinary Hearing/Head will constitute an Appeal Committee consisting of at least two members who may be members of the teaching staff who were not part of the initial Disciplinary Hearing or an SGB member.
- 20 - The detailed reasons for the appeal have to be submitted in writing.

- 21 - At the Appeal Committee meeting the outcome of the Disciplinary Hearing will be interviewed and it will not be a "Re-hearing".
- 22 - Should the Chairperson of the Appeal Committee/Head decide that there are grounds for such a re-hearing they may do so.
- 23 - If a learner has been suspended pending the completion of the Hearing process, the submission of the Appeal will not affect the suspension which will remain in place until the Appeal has also been concluded.
- 24 - When a decision has been made by the Chairperson of the Appeal Committee/Head, after consideration of the matters raised in the Appeal, a written recommendation will be made to the Chairperson of the Disciplinary Hearing/Head. A copy of this will be given to the parents/guardians. This written recommendation is to be done within five working days.
- 25 - The outcome of the Appeal Committee is the final step in the school disciplinary process and marks the end of the internal disciplinary measures.

2.9. THE SCHOOL'S RIGHT TO ACT

RyVa Academy of Learning retains the right to act in applicable situations according to the Regulations Relating to Safety Measures at Independent Schools as published in the Government Gazette No: 26663 on 20 August 2004. These regulations deal inter alia with, violence, drugs, and trespassing on School premises.

The School reserves the right to take disciplinary action against any member of the school community (teachers, parents and pupils) who does not abide by this Code of Conduct.

2.10. REVISION OF CODE OF CONDUCT

RyVa Academy of Learning reserves the right to revise the Code of Conduct from time to time. Copies of the revised Code of Conduct will be available on request from the School.