



UCT ONLINE
HIGH SCHOOL

POLICIES

GUARDIAN CODE OF CONDUCT



in collaboration with

VALENTURE INSTITUTE



OVERVIEW

Purpose	The purpose of the Guardian Code of Conduct is to safeguard the partnership between UCT Online High School and Guardians by eliminating unacceptable conduct and encouraging Guardians to adhere to the school policies at all times when carrying out their duties.
Custodian	Principal; Deputy Principal; Registrar
Approval Authority	Principal and Deputy Principal UCT Online High School
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Key Stakeholders	Guardian Forum



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1. Introduction

1. UCT Online High School values collaboration with our Guardian body. We recognise that education is our shared responsibility and as such, it is a process that must involve intentional partnerships between the school and Guardians.
2. As partners, we recognise the importance of a good working relationship in ensuring that our learners receive an educational experience that will equip them with the skills and knowledge to excel in school and ultimately in life. The participation of our Guardians in the life of our school is not only valued but is also encouraged.
3. In order to maintain the integrity of the school and to safeguard our partnership with Guardians, it is imperative that all uphold the values of UCT Online High School and adhere to the rules and regulations outlined in the school's policies.
4. It is expected that the school and guardians will work together in a positive partnership to continuously improve the experience that learners have at UCT Online High School.

2. Purpose of the Code of Conduct

The purpose of this Guardian Code of Conduct is to:

- 2.1. Eliminate unacceptable conduct and encourage Guardians to adhere to the school policies at all times when carrying out their duties;
- 2.2. Facilitate a culture of zero tolerance for unethical and unacceptable behaviour in the school amongst guardians;
- 2.3. Hold guardians who act in contravention of the school policies to account;



- 2.4. Create consistency and uniformity on how the school will handle a grievance against a guardian and the procedures to be followed in addressing such grievance.

3. Definitions

Any reference in this Code to:

- 4.1. a **“Guardian”** or **“Guardians”** refers to one or both biological or adoptive guardians or legal guardians, or to anyone who is legally entitled to custody or guardianship of a learner at the School, whichever is applicable;
- 4.2. **“School Policies”** refer to the Student Handbook, the Student Code of Conduct, the privacy policy, social media policy, the anti-discrimination policy; and any other policy or procedure, which may be revised or amended from time to time, and which are published on the School website;
- 4.3. **“Affiliates”** refers to the School’s partners, officials, representatives, management, staff or learners.
- 4.4. In order for the integrity of the school to be maintained it is imperative that the values and behaviours outlined in the Learner Handbook, the Learner Code of Conduct, the privacy policy, social media policy, the anti-discrimination policy and any other policy or procedure, are upheld. These policies may be revised or amended from time to time, and published on the School website.



4. Grievance Procedures

Although It is expected that the school and guardians will work together in a positive partnership in the education of the learners, there may be occasions when this relationship breaks down. In the instance that a guardian may have a grievance against an employee or office-bearer of the School. Guardians are asked to follow the procedure set out below to lodge their grievance:

- 4.1. Notify your child's Support Coach in writing of the grievance. If the grievance is against the Support Coach, it should be reported, in writing, to the Student Experience Lead for Student Success. You can request the contact details of the Student Experience Lead from the Support Coach.
- 4.2. The grievance should clearly set out the facts of the incident, the name of the employee/office bearer complained of, the date and time of the incident and any available evidence to prove that indeed the incident occurred. Evidence may include but is not limited to, witnesses, emails, recordings, etc.
- 4.3. Upon receipt of the grievance, the Support Coach/Student Experience Lead may, within 5 days, arrange a meeting with the guardian to get clarity and/or more information about the incident.
- 4.4. The Support Coach/Student Experience Lead must then convene a meeting where both parties are invited to attend. The purpose of this meeting is to discuss the complaint and find an amicable solution. Both parties, starting with the complainant (guardian) will be given an opportunity to state their versions and suggestions on how this issue may be resolved.
- 4.5. Should communication break down and no resolution to the grievance is arrived at, the guardian may then submit a grievance report to the School Principal.



- 4.6. The School Principal must consider and decide on the grievance within 5 school days. Communicate the decision in writing to the guardian. The School Principal's decision is final.

Likewise, the school may have a grievance against a guardian. The procedures in this policy are designed to deal with such circumstances.

There are two instances where it may be necessary for the School to follow the procedure set out below:

- 4.7. The first is when the guardian fails to behave according to the values and behaviour as described in the Learner Handbook, the Learner Code of Conduct, the privacy policy, social media policy, the anti-discrimination policy; and any other policy or procedure, which may be revised or amended from time to time, and which are published on the School website; or when a guardian is involved in any activity that impugns or brings disrepute to the name, standing or reputation of the School, its partners, officials, representatives, management, staff or learners.
- 4.8. The second deals with instances when the guardian is involved in offences or acts of misconduct in school-related activities and in any other activities or encounters that involve the school, its partners, officials, representatives, management, staff or learners.
- 4.9. The School has the right to amend, revise and add to this Code and to the School Policies and subject the Guardian to a disciplinary process for any infraction in terms of this Code.



5. Principles that govern Guardian Behaviour

Guardians are expected to recognise, respect and conform to the values of the School, and amongst other things, to:

- 5.1. Respect and model the caring ethos of the School whenever engaging with the School or its representatives.
- 5.2. Understand that all members of the school community should be treated with respect, dignity and tolerance and set a good example in their own speech, conduct and behaviour;
- 5.3. Seek assistance from the School to resolve any conflictual situations, and desist from confrontational, aggressive or unsafe behaviour;
- 5.4. Play a supportive and collaborative role in all circumstances.

6. Unacceptable conduct

In order to support a peaceful and safe School or School environment, the School cannot tolerate the following conduct, amongst others, from guardians:

- 6.1. Disruptive behaviour which interferes or threatens to interfere with teaching and learning, including but not limited to: interference in live teaching sessions; school-related activities and events or the general business of the School;
- 6.2. Use of offensive language, expletives, derogatory or profane language, or generally demonstrating intolerant or tempestuous conduct;
- 6.3. Making threats or threatening to harm or injure;



- 6.4. Sharing of proprietary material, content or materials developed and owned by Valenture Institute with people and/or institutions not affiliated with Valenture Institute without obtaining permission;
- 6.5. Abusive, persistent or threatening emails, texts, written communication or communications on social media platforms;
- 6.6. Defamatory, offensive or derogatory comments or communications in whatever form;
- 6.7. Physical aggression;
- 6.8. Being confrontational, disrespectful, intimidatory, discriminatory or victimising, or bullying others;
- 6.9. Consumption of alcohol or intoxicating substances in any School-related events except where alcohol is served and permitted by the School;
- 6.10. Use of social media platforms to fuel campaigns or complaints against the School or its Affiliates or to share inappropriate, false, unverified, confidential information that is in breach of legislation on such platforms; and
- 6.11. Any other unacceptable or reprehensible conduct such as drunken and disorderly behaviour, possession and use of illegal substances, theft, fraud, assault, including sexual assault or harassment, immoral behaviour, any form of intimidation, racism, sexism, possession of, and/or use of any weapons, vandalism or destruction of other peoples' property.

7. The process relating to all infractions



7.1. Step 1: Meeting with the Guardian

Depending on the nature, circumstances and gravity of the conduct, one or more of the following processes may be followed:

A meeting with the Guardian to discuss the issue or the incident should be held. During the meeting, the following procedures will be implemented:

- 7.1.1. Explain the details of the issue or the incident that has come to the knowledge of the School, and give the guardian an opportunity to explain his or her version;
- 7.1.2. Obtain as much information as possible about the incident from all relevant sources, including the Guardian;
- 7.1.3. Define the problem rationally, while acknowledging the emotional dimension.
- 7.1.4. Invite the guardian to suggest possible solutions to the problem in the spirit of collaboration;
- 7.1.5. If applicable, record the proposed solution, and summarise the key aspects of the discussion with the Guardian in writing, as soon as possible after the meeting, and request the guardian to acknowledge receipt thereof;
- 7.1.6. If a solution is reached, it must be recorded in writing to the Guardian including any undertakings made about any such future conduct.
- 7.1.7. If appropriate, and insofar as the rights of others might have been impacted by such conduct, their participation in the resolution of the matter may be necessary.



7.2. Step 2: Refusal to attend a meeting or no resolution in the meeting held

In the event that:

- 7.2.1. The Guardian refuses to attend the meeting; or
- 7.2.2. The Guardian repeats the same or similar conduct;

A written warning may, after the Guardian has been given an opportunity to provide, in writing, an explanation for his/her failure to attend and/or repeating the same conduct, and in the event that the explanation provided is unsatisfactory, be issued.

The written warning may include the following information:

- 7.2.3. The Guardian repeats the same or similar conduct;
- 7.2.4. a description of the event and the Guardian's conduct or behaviour causing concern;
- 7.2.5. any previous conversations with the Guardian and any attempts to resolve the situation;
- 7.2.6. an explanation of why the Guardian's behaviour is in breach of the Learner Handbook, the learner Code of Conduct, the privacy policy, social media policy, the anti-discrimination policy; and any other policy or procedure, which may be revised or amended from time to time, and which are published on the School website; or constitutes unacceptable conduct, and why a warning is appropriate;
- 7.2.7. a caution that if the same or similar conduct is repeated, it may warrant further disciplinary action.



7.2.8. The Guardian will be requested to acknowledge receipt of the written warning within a specified period. Failure to acknowledge receipt will, however, not limit the School's right to take action as contemplated in this policy or any other policy that may have a bearing on the matter.

7.3. Formal Disciplinary Hearing (last resort for minor misconduct)

In the event that a guardian refuses to attend the Formal Hearing meeting as described in steps 2 above, the school will have no choice but to institute disciplinary proceedings against such a Guardian. In this disciplinary hearing, the guardian will:

- 7.3.1. First, be given an opportunity to provide a satisfactory explanation for his/her failure to attend the Formal Meeting Hearing and/or repeating the same conduct.
- 7.3.2. If the explanation is satisfactory and accepted, there will be no written warning issued against the guardian. Likewise, if the explanation is rejected, a written warning may be issued against the guardian.
- 7.3.3. Second, the Guardian will then have to answer the main charge of misconduct levelled against him or her. Like in any Formal Disciplinary Hearing, the Guardian will be given an opportunity to be heard, and to challenge any evidence given against him or her; and generally, about their rights in relation to the hearing, including the rights described in paragraphs below.



7.4. Step 3: Formal Disciplinary Hearing for serious misconduct

In the event of an allegation of serious misconduct against a guardian, the School may proceed directly to a formal hearing, to adjudicate the allegation. The school will appoint an independent chairperson to chair the hearing.

For the purposes of a formal hearing, the Guardian:

- 7.4.1. will be given reasonable written notice (at least seven calendar days) of the date, time, and venue of the hearing;
- 7.4.2. will be informed of the allegations of misconduct;
- 7.4.3. will be given an opportunity to be heard, and to challenge any evidence presented against him or her; and generally, about their rights in relation to the hearing, including the right to:
- 7.4.4. be represented by another guardian or an acquaintance.
- 7.4.5. call witnesses and cross-examine witnesses who give evidence on behalf of the school;
- 7.4.6. be informed of the outcome of the hearing;
- 7.4.7. present evidence in mitigation, in appropriate circumstances;
- 7.4.8. be informed of the sanction, if any, against him or her;
- 7.4.9. be notified of the internal appeal process.

7.5. Step 4: Communicating the Outcome and Follow-up

- 7.5.1. Once the hearing has been completed, the Chairperson must carefully consider all the evidence that was presented, including the evidence that was presented in mitigation and/or aggravation, and determine, on a balance of probabilities, whether the guardian



is guilty of the allegations. If found guilty, the Chairperson must decide the appropriate sanction or measures to be implemented. The Chairperson has the discretion to either communicate his/her decision immediately or in due course.

- 7.5.2. If the decision is not communicated immediately, the Chairperson must communicate his/her decision, in writing, to the guardian within seven days after the date of the hearing. This should be accompanied by the notification of the appeal process that the guardian may wish to invoke.

7.6. Possible Sanctions Resulting from a Formal Hearing

As a result of a formal disciplinary hearing, depending on the circumstances of the guardian's conduct, the impact of such conduct on the rights of others, and the possibility of reconciliation, if any, the Chairperson may in appropriate circumstances enforce the following sanctions:

- 7.6.1. Revoke the guardian's right of admission to school events, whether in person or online, for an appropriate period of time to prevent the Guardian from harassing the staff, learners, or other guardians
- 7.6.2. Revoke personalised engagement with representatives of the school for an appropriate period of time to prevent the guardian from harassing the staff, learners, or other guardians.
- 7.6.3. Revoke invitations to school events for an appropriate amount of time and supply the guardian with a recording of the event to prevent the guardian from harassing the staff, learners, or other guardians.



7.6.4. A letter of apology addressed to the affected party or parties.

7.7. Internal Appeal

A Guardian may appeal the outcome of the Formal Hearing in writing on the record of that evidence via the UCT Online High School Governance Committee within 5 days of the outcome of the Formal Hearing.

- 7.7.1. The UCT Online High School Governance Committee will consider the appeal to determine the basis upon which and the timelines within which the parties may make submissions in relation thereto.
- 7.7.2. The Committee must determine the appeal within 10 days of the receipt of the submissions, and provide the outcome thereof to the parties.
- 7.7.3. The outcome of the appeal is final and binding and must be complied with.
- 7.7.4. If after the outcome of the appeal the Guardian wishes to reach reconciliation, the approach should be made to the Principal of the School who will engage with the Guardian in that regard, and determine whether reconciliation is appropriate or possible in the circumstances.