



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	Head of Schools
Approval Authority	Executive Head of School and Chief Academic Officer Registrar
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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. Facilitate a collaborative relationship between the school and guardians;
- 2.2. Eliminate unacceptable conduct and encourage Guardians to adhere to the school policies at all times when carrying out their duties;
- 2.3. Facilitate a culture of zero tolerance for unethical and unacceptable behaviour in the school amongst guardians;



- 2.4. Hold guardians who act in contravention of the school policies to account;
- 2.5. 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. Principles that govern Guardian Behaviour

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

- Respect and model the caring ethos of the School whenever engaging with the School or its representatives.
- 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;
- Seek assistance from the School to resolve any conflictual situations, and desist from confrontational, aggressive or unsafe behaviour;
- Play a supportive and collaborative role in all circumstances.

5. Unacceptable behaviour

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

- 5.1 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;
- 5.2 Use of offensive language, expletives, derogatory or profane language, or generally demonstrating intolerant or tempestuous conduct;
- 5.3 Making threats or threatening to harm or injure;
- 5.4 Sharing of proprietary material, content or materials developed and owned by Valentre Institute with people and/or institutions not affiliated with Valentre Institute without obtaining permission;



- 5.5 Abusive, persistent or threatening emails, texts, written communication or communications on social media platforms;
- 5.6 Defamatory, offensive or derogatory comments or communications in whatever form;
- 5.7 Physical aggression;
- 5.8 Being confrontational, disrespectful, intimidatory, discriminatory or victimising, or bullying others;
- 5.9 Consumption of alcohol or intoxicating substances in any School-related events except where alcohol is served and permitted by the School;
- 5.10 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;
- 5.11 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.

6. 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:

- 6.1. 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 Success Lead. You can request the contact details of the Student Success Lead from the Support Coach.

- 6.2. 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.
- 6.3. Upon receipt of the grievance, the Support Coach/Student Success Lead may, within 5 days, arrange a meeting with the guardian to get clarity and/or more information about the incident.
- 6.4. 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.
- 6.5. Should communication break down and no resolution to the grievance is arrived at, the guardian may then submit a grievance report to the Head of School.
- 6.6. Head of School must consider and decide on the grievance within a reasonable time. Communicate the decision in writing to the guardian. The Head of School'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:

- 6.7. 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.

- 6.8. 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.
- 6.9. 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.

7. The process relating to all infractions

7.1. Step 1: Resolution between staff member and guardian

Depending on the nature, circumstances and gravity of the conduct, the aggrieved staff member must engage the guardian about his/her conduct. The aim of this engagement is to make the guardian realise that his/her conduct is unacceptable as it goes against the Guardian Code of Conduct and obtain an undertaking that it will not be repeated.

The staff member can engage the guardian through the exchange of letters or hold a meeting where both parties meet to discuss and resolve the matter. The communication should clearly set out the following information:



- 7.1.1. Explain the details of the incident and clearly demonstrate how the guardian's conduct contravenes the Guardian Code of Conduct;
- 7.1.2. Attach evidence i.e copy of the email or a recording of a phone call.
- 7.1.3. Ask the guardian to acknowledge, in writing, his/her wrongdoing;
- 7.1.4. Request an undertaking that the behaviour in question will not be repeated in future;
- 7.1.5. Should the guardian continue with the behaviour, the matter will be escalated to the office of the Registrar for intervention.
- 7.1.6. Must give the guardian 10 school days to respond.

Resolution

If the guardian writes back and acknowledges his/her wrongdoing, apologises and undertakes not to repeat the egregious conduct, then the matter will be considered resolved.

However, if one of the following happens the matter will be considered as not resolved, and the staff member can escalate it to the Registrar.

- The guardian fails to respond to the letter (or attend a meeting) despite one follow- up email requesting his/her response.
- The guardian responds but disputes the allegations and refuses to take accountability.
- The unacceptable conduct persists despite the engagement with the guardian.

7.2. Step 2: Escalation to the Registrar



In the event that the matter is not resolved as explained above, the aggrieved staff member can escalate it, in writing, to the Registrar. When escalating an unresolved matter please ensure that you furnish the Registrar with the following information;

- 7.2.1. Brief summary of the matter clearly setting out the guardian's conduct which, in your opinion, contravenes the Guardian Code of Conduct;
- 7.2.2. Attach any evidence you might have to prove the infraction.
- 7.2.3. Steps taken by the aggrieved staff member to amicably resolve the matter with the guardian;
- 7.2.4. Must attach the letter sent to the guardian to resolve this matter as per paragraph 7.1 (step 1) above, as well as the guardian's response.

7.3. Step 3: Registrar

Once the Registrar is seized with the matter, he will review the information submitted and decide a way forward with the sole aim of resolving the issue.

- 7.3.1. The Registrar must engage both the aggrieved staff member and the guardian concerned throughout the process.
- 7.3.2. The Registrar must act in an independent and impartial manner, and make his own assessment of whether or not the alleged guardian's conduct constitutes an infringement.
- 7.3.3. If in his own view, the conduct in question does not constitute an infringement of the Guardian Code of Conduct, this will be the end



of the matter and this must be communicated with the staff member.

- 7.3.4. If the Registrar, however, believes that there is merit to the allegations, he must engage with the guardian about his/her conduct with the sole aim of resolving the matter.
- 7.3.5. The Registrar can engage the guardian through the exchange of letters or hold a meeting where both parties meet to discuss and resolve the matter.

Resolution

If the guardian voluntarily accepts wrongdoing and undertakes not to repeat his/her conduct, the matter will be considered resolved.

However, even if the guardian does not voluntarily accept wrongdoing, the Registrar has a final say on the matter. If the guardian's conduct, in his view, contravenes the Guardian Code of Conduct he must request the following from the guardian:

- An undertaking that the conduct will not be repeated.
- An apology.

In addition to the above, the Registrar has a discretion to issue a warning which will be valid for a period of three months.

- 7.3.6 The Registrar must then communicate the final outcome of the matter with all the relevant parties, including the staff member who escalated the matter.