UCT ONLINE HIGH SCHOOL

LEARNER CODE OF CONDUCT

in collaboration with
VALENTURE INSTITUTE

OVERVIEW

Purpose	The purpose of the Learner Code of Conduct is to ensure that the principles of a safe, inclusive, and ordered teaching and learning experience, are clear to all and consistently upheld.
Custodian	Governance Manager
Approval Authority	Executive Head of School and Chief Academic Officer
Version History	Version 3, Effective 17 January 2024

Contents

1. Introduction

1.1. This framework has been developed by UCT Online High School.

1.2. UCT Online High School has adopted this Learner Code of Conduct, and as part of this Code of Conduct, we have defined a set of processes to follow when allegations of a breach of the Learner Code of Conduct are identified and reported.

1.3. Learners, staff members and management have an obligation to report any learner disciplinary incidents they are aware of. An action may, depending on the circumstances of the matter, be taken against any person who negligently and unreasonably fails to report a learner disciplinary incident.

1.4. This Code of Conduct replaces all other disciplinary rules and procedures previously published by UCT Online High School. The legally enforceable Code is the version that is published on the Handbooks page of the UCT Online High School website: www.uctonlinehighschool.com.

1.5. This Code of Conduct may not be amended except in writing, under the hand of the Registrar and the Executive Head of School and Chief Academic Officer.

1.6. During the process of enrolling a learner at UCT Online High School, the guardians confirm in writing that they accept the Programme Terms and Conditions, which confirms their agreement to be bound by the policies and procedures of UCT Online High School.

1.7. UCT Online High School subscribes to inquisitorial and restorative justice. Thus, we are committed to investigating all allegations / incidents with fairness and the intention of adopting remedial action, wherever appropriate. Having said this, actions have consequences and the

seriousness of an allegation can never be undermined. Should a learner be found to have committed an act that infringes this Code of Conduct, UCT Online High School will enforce the consequences, taking into account the circumstances.

1.8. Guardians, and the staff members of UCT Online High School accept that the Institute has a duty to learners, guardians, and society to cultivate young people who will play a positive and constructive role in society as adults with a developed sense of responsibility. Consequently, any act of misconduct must be dealt with by means of fair process, which may result in an appropriate consequence being imposed by the Faculty Board.

1.9. Guardians accept that staff members, and management may be called upon to act in the best interests of the learner, the school, and other learners or guardians, in situations of "manifest uncertainty", and that certain decisions may or will have to be taken in the exercise of this general discretion.

1.10. When addressing occurrences of alleged / explicit breaches in learner discipline, all learners, staff members, guardians, and UCT Online High School management will not threaten any particular punishment. All parties must refrain from threats, abuse of power or any indication of bias, dislike or interpersonal difficulties that may compromise the authority of the Disciplinary Process or the atmosphere of equity, of due process, and fairness in which a Disciplinary Process should take place.

2. Scope

This Code of Conduct applies;

2.1. To all the learners who are enrolled at UCT Online High School, including adult matric learners. Learners are expected to adhere to this Code of Conduct when interacting with each other and staff members.

2.2. To all online and in-person school-related activities.

2.3. To all internal and external online platforms including but not limited to social media.

2.4. When a learner is identified or identifiable as a scholar of UCT Online High School and their conduct brings the name of the school into disrepute and/or impacts negatively on its reputation.

3. Learner Undertaking

UCT Online High School believes that collaboration and engagement are vital towards cultivating a rich learning experience that is both stimulating and safe for all members of the learning community.

To support the best interests of the learning community, all engagements, regardless of participants, medium, channel, or format, must be conducted in a healthy and constructive manner that is underpinned by the rules of this Code of Conduct. The Code of Conduct defines the expected standards of conduct in respect of academic matters for all learners at UCT Online High School. Each learner at UCT Online High School is responsible for upholding and adhering to the Code of Conduct in all of their engagements.

3.1. **As a learner at UCT Online High School, with commitment from your guardian(s), you must:**

3.1.1. Ensure that all information provided to UCT Online High School is true and accurate.

3.1.2. Inform UCT Online High School timeously of any changes to your personal information.

3.1.3. Comply with any reasonable instruction issued by an authorised staff member of UCT Online High School.

3.1.4. Comply with all rules and policies of UCT Online High School, both available on the Handbooks page of the website, and including those relating to copyright and intellectual property.

3.1.5. Refrain from making any unauthorised use of the name of UCT Online High School, its logo, or any other materials that can be identified as belonging to UCT Online High School.

3.1.6. Familiarise yourself with all procedures relevant to your status as a learner at UCT Online High School (for example, procedures relating to learner complaints), and abide by these.

3.1.7. Refrain from behaviour or activities that would hamper or obstruct the work of UCT Online High School or the learning and overall academic experience of learners at UCT Online High School.

3.1.8. Refrain from any behaviour or activity with a learner or staff member that could constitute corruption, such as the acceptance of any reward or compensation for taking part in an unlawful action.

3.1.9. Comply with the findings and sanction of any disciplinary action brought against you.

3.1.10. Treat all members of the learning community with respect and dignity at all times.

3.1.11. Not engage in any forms of bullying towards either staff members or learners, and immediately report any instances within your knowledge to the appropriate authority. This includes, but is not limited to, demeaning or creating a hostile environment for a staff member or a learner based on their race, religion, beliefs, gender, gender identity, or sexual orientation.

3.1.12. Not engage in, or subject another learner to, any form of initiation.

3.1.13. Take personal responsibility for all academic work and adhere at all times to all rules and policies relating to academic integrity.

3.1.14. Participate fully in all academic activities as required by your individual courses and programme(s).

3.1.15. Take responsibility for your learning and pay attention to the requirements of your subjects and relevant programme(s).

3.1.16. Not share your learner number or other learner credentials with another person or persons.

3.1.17. Make use of UCT Online High School's online platforms only for their intended purposes.

3.1.18. Conduct yourself in a manner that is compliant with the laws of the Republic of South Africa and international law (i.e treaties and soft law).

3.1.19. Accept a sanction that is imposed after the disciplinary process and do not assume an ulterior motive. This does not mean you cannot challenge or appeal against the outcome of the disciplinary hearing.

UCT Online High School will, at all times, retain the right to bring disciplinary action and appropriate sanction (including expulsion) against any learner found, through the appropriate channels, to be in violation of this Code of Conduct.

3.2. Online class etiquette

Learners are required to abide by the following rules when attending live sessions and other similar academic sessions.

* No shouting

* Don't abuse the chat box

* Use a respectful tone

* Submit files the right way

* Think before you type
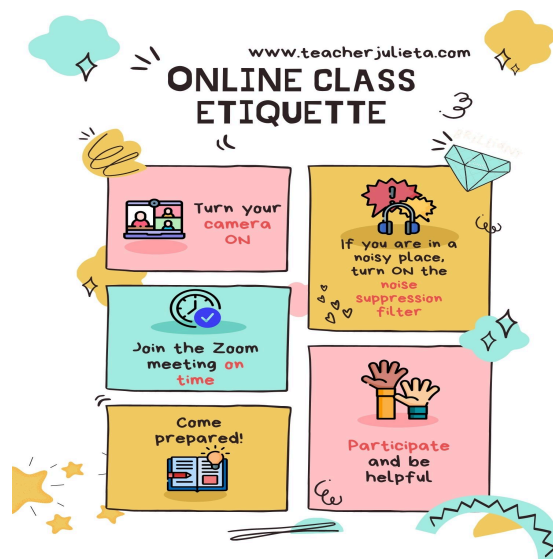
3.3. Bullying

UCT Online High School has a zero tolerance policy towards all types of bullying, including cyber bullying. Where allegations or identified incidents occur, the school will act swiftly and decisively in applying our Disciplinary Process. We believe that assigning demeaning and disempowering labels to individuals such as '*Bully*' or '*Victim*' does not help any of the Affected Parties concerned during the implementation of the Disciplinary Process, and that the focus must be concentrated on the behaviour of an individual/ individuals, and

determining the outcomes. Labelling individuals with these terms is not appropriate and will also be considered seriously.

For the purposes of clarity of upholding the above, learners who have allegedly or explicitly engaged in behaviour that is characterised as bullying, as well as the learner on the receiving end of this behaviour, will be referred to by their first names and collectively as the Affected Parties. This framework is informed by, and must be read in conjunction with, the prescripts of UCT Online High School's Safeguarding of Children Policy, as well as the Social Media Policy.

3.4. **Academic integrity**

Learners and staff are expected to uphold academic integrity at all times. This means that learners are expected to be respectful, trustworthy and honest in their academic activities. Academic dishonesty in formal assessments such as examinations and cycle tests is strongly discouraged.

Academic dishonesty in formal assessments generally takes various forms including:

a. Cheating
b. Plagiarism
c. Use of artificial intelligence tool/s
d. Circumventing proctoring or assessment tools

Disciplinary action will thus be taken against learners and staff who fail to uphold academic integrity.

You are required to properly reference your academic work as per the Referencing Guide to avoid plagiarism.

4. UCT Online High School's Obligation

Our primary consideration is to ensure that we uphold the safeguarding of each learner and the overall integrity of a safe environment for the learning community. As a result, the safeguarding coordinator and the student wellbeing team must be timeously informed about learner disciplinary incidents and be part of the process of resolving the matter.

4.1.   Our key objectives in cases of alleged learner misconduct are to:

4.1.1.   Uphold our contractual obligation to protect all learners in our care as an institution.

4.1.2.   Protect the privacy of every learner.

4.1.3.   Be highly responsive to reported cases of alleged misconduct.

4.1.4.   Ensure that all cases of alleged misconduct are handled by the appropriate forum and people.

4.1.5.   Do all that we can to ensure cases of alleged learner misconduct are handled fairly.

4.1.6.   Exercise the overriding discretion enshrined in all policies relating to misconduct using a careful and considered approach.

4.1.7.   Adhere to the principles of inquisitorial and restorative justice.

4.1.8.   To meet our objectives, we commit to following these policies and prescripts:

4.1.9.   Comply with the prescripts of the following UCT Online High School policies:

4.1.9.1.   Terms and Conditions;

4.1.9.2.   Safeguarding of Children;

4.1.9.3.   Learner Handbook; and

4.1.9.4.   Learner Code of Conduct.

4.1.10.   Comply with all relevant laws and regulations applicable in each country in which we operate.

4.1.11.   Respect the role of UCT Online High School's designated Safeguarding Coordinator and Executive Head of School and Chief Academic Officer, as well as the authority of the:

4.1.11.1.   Oversight Committee; and

4.1.11.2.   External regulatory authorities.

4.1.12.   Not share the nature / information of the alleged misconduct with any team member who is not privy to this. Only the following team members may be informed of the required information:

4.1.12.1.   Safeguarding Coordinator;

4.1.12.2.   Executive Head of School and Chief Academic Officer;

4.1.12.3.   Support Coach;

4.1.12.4.   Any staff member who has been directly mentioned by an affected party / or involved in part of the alleged misconduct;

4.1.12.5.   Members of the Executive Committee;

4.1.12.6.   Members of the Oversight Committee; and

4.1.12.7.   External authorities as provisioned for under law.

5. Cycle Test and Examination rules

The Cycle Test and Examination rules are important for learners to adhere to when completing an online test or examination. They set clear expectations of what is expected from learners when completing their tests, the impact and consequences of not adhering to these rules. Learners are thus expected to familiarise themselves with the Cycle Test and examination rules before they commence with their examinations. Examination sessions commence at the time indicated on the final cycle test or examination timetable. You are required to adhere strictly to the specified times.

Learners are expected to complete the <u>General Orientation Course: Module 5 Submissions Practise Zone</u> and <u>complete the DEMO assessments.</u>

Definition of an Online Cycle Test or Exam

When writing an online Cycle Test or Exam the following is considered to be compulsory in order to deem it a successful assessment.

It is the responsibility of the learner to ensure that:

1. You have started your devices with sufficient time to allow for any automatic updates that your laptop may need to do.
2. You are logged into The Invigilator app with your UCT Online High School Google Account before attempting your test.
3. Your phone battery is fully charged, or on charge for the duration of the test.
4. You have a stable internet connection, whether that be mobile data or WiFi, for at least the start and end of your test.
5. Your phone volume is on full for the duration of your test.
6. You stay within The Invigilator app at all times.

7. You test your sound and camera before commencing the test.

8. You take your selfies as soon as prompted.

a. Learners receive a pop-up and a sound notification.

9. Scan your script as soon as prompted by The Invigilator app.

a. Learners receive a pop-up and a sound notification.

10. You use the scanning time to scan your documents in The Invigilator app

   a. Learners are afforded 10 minutes of scanning time per test or exam.

Failure to ensure the above will result in the learner being deemed unsuccessful in writing their Cycle Test or Exam and will be considered an infringement of the Online Examination regulations.

Cycle Test and Examination Regulations

It is the responsibility of the <u>learner</u> to adhere to the online cycle test and examination rules and regulations.

The rules and regulations are as follows:

1. Learner must upload their full script on The Invigilator app when prompted

2. No emailed scripts will be accepted

3. Review your script on The invigilator app post scanning to ensure that all content of the test has been scanned and is legible

4. Incomplete script scans will be marked on what has been scanned, failure to scan within the stipulated time will result in no grade being awarded

5. Learners are required to scan their scripts in the time afforded (10 minutes per exam), failure to do so will result in partial scripts, illegible scripts and or no script. No opportunity for resubmissions will be granted.

6. A mark awarded for an incomplete submission will be the Learner's final mark. No opportunity for resubmission will be granted.

7. A mark awarded for an illegible scanned submission will be the Learner's final mark. No opportunity for resubmission will be granted.

8. Wrong answer scripts that are uploaded, that is, any file other than the exam answer script or answer booklet (e.g. uploading the exam question paper instead of the exam answer script or answer booklet) will not be marked and no opportunity will be granted for resubmission.

9. Submissions will only be accepted from registered Learner accounts.

10. Learners who have not utilised invigilation or proctoring tools will be deemed to have transgressed UCT Online High School's examination rules and will be referred to the Disciplinary Committee for investigation. While the investigation is underway a learner's marks will be withheld. If any Learner is found to have been outside the Invigilator app (by exiting or minimising The Invigilator app) for a total of 10 minutes during their examination session will be considered to have violated UCT Online High Schoo's examination rules and will be referred to the Disciplinary Committee for investigation. While the investigation is underway a learner's marks will be withheld.

11. Assessments invigilated by The Invigilator App require a Learner to activate the QR code. The QR code is available for activation at the start of the examination for 30 minutes. Learners who fail to activate the QR code within the available 30 minutes will be deemed not to have utilised the invigilation or proctoring tools and will receive a zero grade.

12. Learners have 48 hours from the completion of their examination session to upload their invigilator results from The Invigilator App. Failure to do so will result in Learners deemed not to have utilised the invigilation or proctoring tools will receive a zero grade.

13. Learners must complete the online declaration of their work when submitting their examination script. Learners suspected of cheating during the examinations will be subjected to disciplinary processes. Learners may not communicate with any other person, source or tool or request assistance from any other person, source or tool during their examinations.

The use of Telegram, WhatsApp or any other instant messaging services with any other person (except when asking for technical assistance via official channels) are strictly prohibited. Cheating is a violation of academic integrity and Learners who copy from published work or use Artificial Intelligence Software (e.g. ChatGPT) or online sources (e.g. course material) will be in violation of the Academic Integrity policy and may be referred to a disciplinary hearing. UCT Online High School has a zero tolerance for plagiarism and/or any other forms of academic dishonesty.

14. Phone must be fully charged, or on charge, failure to do so will negatively impact the ability to be proctored and complete the online examination. No resubmissions or alternate opportunities will be granted.

15. Phone must be on loud, with the speaker volume turned up to full. Failure to do so will result in missing the selfie and scanning prompts which will be considered as failing proctoring and will be referred to the Disciplinary Committee for investigation.

16. Phone must have a stable internet connection - whether using Mobile Data or via WiFi.

17. Notifications must be enabled on The Invigilator app in order to hear and see prompts for selfies and scanning

18. No music may be played while writing an Exam, failure to do so will result in failed proctoring based on microphone recordings and will be considered as failing proctoring and will be referred to the Disciplinary Committee for investigation.

19. Queries that are beyond the School's control include the following:
    a. Personal network or service provider issues.
    b. Load shedding (we accommodate for a load shedding slot).
    c. Limited space on personal devices.
    d. Crashed computers or personal devices crashes.
    e. Non-functioning cameras.
    f. Printer and ink issues.
    g. Device battery dying.

6. Learner Misconduct

"Misconduct" means any conduct by the learner which:

- Is contrary to the Code of Conduct or any School Policies.
- Interferes with the ability of any member of UCT Online High School from fulfilling their duties.
- Is harmful to the welfare of other learners and interferes with their educational experience.

6.1.   Minor acts of misconduct

6.1.1.   Minor acts of misconduct refers to acts which are less harmful to the affected parties, including the school. Although these acts should be addressed, they do not necessarily require a disciplinary hearing.

6.1.2.   Staff members   have the authority to address minor acts of misconduct in terms of their own procedures, in harmony with this Code of Conduct, to ensure that effective learning takes place in the classroom.

6.1.3.   Minor acts of misconduct are classified as level one offences. Please see the examples of minor offences and possible consequences in section 10 below.

6.2. Serious Acts of Misconduct

6.2.1. "Serious Misconduct" means gross acts of misconduct that may warrant a Disciplinary Hearing, and in appropriate circumstances, result in more severe sanctions.

6.2.2. This Code of Conduct sets out the list of serious acts of learner misconduct, and their level of severity. This is not an exhaustive list and the school may add other serious acts that objectively ought to be discouraged in a school environment.

6.2.3. Serious acts of misconduct are classified as levels two and three offences.

6.2.4. The following must be noted and followed in all alleged learner serious misconduct cases:

6.2.4.1. If a learner is in immediate danger, actions appropriate to the circumstances must be taken, which could include calling the parent(s) / guardian(s), police, medical services, or other appropriate agency.

6.2.4.2. The Safeguarding Coordinator and the Student Wellbeing team must timeously make contact with the victim learner and/or any other learner that may have been negatively affected by the alleged incident for the necessary support.

7. Addressing Learner Misconduct

7.1. The school must consider the reported learner disciplinary incident and determine whether, considering the severity and available evidence, the alleged misconduct warrants a disciplinary hearing.

7.2. Where it is determined that a disciplinary hearing is required due to the seriousness of the matter, the school must;

7.3. Ask the Office of the Registrar to prepare a notice of the disciplinary hearing to be sent to the guardian and the implicated learner. The notice must be given by no less than five (5) school days before the date of the hearing;

7.4. Appoint a disciplinary committee or a person that will chair the disciplinary hearing.

7.5. The decision of the Disciplinary Committee/Chairperson is final and binding, and can only be set aside on appeal by the Operations and Governance Committee.

7.6. Where it is determined that a disciplinary hearing is not required, UCT Online High School will resolve the matter without involving the Operations and Governance Committee.

7.7. The Deputy Registrar must notify the Safeguarding Coordinator of the outcome reached.

7.8. The Safeguarding Coordinator must ensure that any support plan(s) required for the affected learner/s are initiated.

8. Right to Appeal

8.1. A learner has a right to appeal within five (5) school days following the disciplinary hearing.

8.2. The appeal must, in writing, be directed to the Head of School. The appeal can be submitted to the learner's Support Coach.

9. Learner Dress Code

All learners should be permitted to wear the clothing of their choice, regardless of whether it conforms to traditional gender stereotypes, provided that such clothing does not violate the school's dress code. Learners may dress in accordance with their gender identity and gender expression. School staff should not enforce a school's dress code more strictly against transgender and gender nonconforming learners. This applies to attire at school as well as at a school's co- and extracurricular activities.

Defining Dress Code

This policy aims to outline how both learners and staff at UCT Online High School are expected to dress when representing themselves and the school in both online and in-person settings. Guidelines on the dress code remain applicable whether in live meetings and/or pre-recorded sessions. All are encouraged to present themselves neatly and professionally in a manner in which they feel proud and comfortable.

Purpose

- To create an environment which is conducive to learning for all.
- Ensuring safeguarding of all UCT Online High School learners and staff.

Dress Code: Minimum Attire

- This dress code applies to all learners and staff at UCT Online High School regardless of gender identity.
- Learners must wear clothing including both a shirt with pants or skirt, or the equivalent (for example dresses, leggings, or shorts)
- When the body is standing straight, clothing must cover the chest, back, torso, stomach, and lower extremities from armpit to armpit to mid-thigh. Tops must have a strap.
- Clothing must cover all undergarments at all times and may not be transparent.

10. Cybersecurity and data privacy

UCT Online High School learners must adhere to relevant cybersecurity best practices to help keep themselves, fellow learners and staff secure online.

10.1.   Learners may not submit any confidential or sensitive information about themselves, other learners or staff to any unauthorised third-party tools (including any AI tool). This includes any personally identifiable information (such as names, ID numbers, email addresses, social media handles or phone numbers). All third party tools which have not been explicitly recommended by a staff member of UCT Online High School (or linked to in course notes, help articles or other sources published by UCT Online High School) should be considered to be unauthorised.

10.2. Learners may not submit any content that is subject to copyright to any unauthorised third-party tools (including any AI tool). This includes UCT Online High School course notes/material, content from third-party textbooks or other sources that have copyright notices.

10.3. Learners who are enrolled at UCT Online High School receive a Google Workspace account that is associated with their student number.

10.3.1. Learners may not reuse their Google Workspace credentials (username and/or password) for any other third-party systems or services as this poses a security risk should the third-party provider be compromised.

10.3.2. Learners must use a unique, secure password for their UCT Online High School Google Workspace account and may not reuse this password for any other systems or services.

10.3.3. A learner may not share their Google Workspace credentials with or permit their account to be used by any other party.

10.3.4. Learners must abide by password and account security-related recommendations as stipulated by UCT Online High School technical support staff.

10.3.5. Learners must immediately report any suspicious or unauthorised activity they detect taking place using their account credentials.

10.3.6. Where a learner makes use of a shared computer to access UCT Online High School systems, the learner must log-out of their Google Workspace account and close all browser windows before leaving the workstation.

10.3.7. Learners may not use their UCT Online High School email email address to sign up to any unauthorised third-party services.

10.4.   Learners are granted access to various systems as a result of their enrolment at UCT Online High School.

   10.4.1.   Learners must adhere to all licence terms stipulated and use these systems in accordance with instructions from UCT Online High School staff.

   10.4.2.   Learners may not send out messages, post content or link to any third party website that is not related to school activities.

   10.4.3.   Learners may not attempt to access restricted content or functionality, or in any way attempt to compromise the security or stability of any system.

   10.4.4.   Learners must take reasonable precautions to ensure that the computer they use to access any UCT Online High School system is free from viruses and spyware. This includes keeping their computer's operating system, antivirus software, and web browser up-to-date.

10.5.   Once a learner leaves UCT Online High School, they must delete any confidential or private information that they may have stored locally.

11. Prescribed Levels of Misconduct of Severity and Consequences

11.1.   The levels set out on the next page are to be used as a guideline. Nevertheless, the respective Committees must use their discretion in order to assess the severity of each incident.

11.2.   It is important to note that the prescribed levels and the forms of misconduct therein are not intended to act as an exhaustive list, but

rather as an indication of the type of severity of an infringement in general.

11.3. Instances of academic misconduct require consideration from the respective staff member

11.4. One or more consequences / sanctions may be implemented as fitting to the circumstances of the incident.

LEVEL ONE	POSSIBLE CONSEQUENCES
- Making inappropriate noise and disturbing others; - Refusal to cooperate; disobedience; insolence; - Talking out of turn; use of crude and abusive language; - Calling out while a staff member is talking; - Absenteeism and late coming; ridiculing others; - First offence of name calling or rude gestures. - Minor infringement of the live session or discussion forum etiquette.	- Verbal and/or written warning. - Verbal/written apology for the infringement to the affected party. - Kick the learner out of a live session. - Compulsory development sessions with a Support Coach. - Minor penalty on grade for assignment (in the case of academic dishonesty) and letter of apology.
LEVEL TWO	POSSIBLE CONSEQUENCES

	Second warning letter, kept on file.
• Repeated Level One infringements. • Persistent live session code infringement. • Participating in bullying and intimidation by encouraging or supporting the instigator. • Fighting (impulsive or petty); Persistent insolence; Dishonesty. • Forcing others to hand over property that belongs to them. • Defacing the property of others / the school. • Posting inappropriate content on the Online Campus. • inappropriate usage of social media platforms. • Moderate infringement of the live session or discussion forum etiquette.	• Second warning letter, kept on file. • Written apology for the infringement to the affected party / parties. • Final warning letter, kept on file. • Suspension from the Online Campus (maximum of three school days). • Moderate penalty on grade for assignment (in the case of academic dishonesty) and letter of apology. • Cancellation / reduction of scholarship, if applicable.
LEVEL THREE	**POSSIBLE CONSEQUENCES**
• Repeated Level Two Infringements. • Making fun of, threatening, ridiculing, or humiliating a person or group of people, whether on the basis of their appearance, physical characteristics, sexuality, cultural background, religion, or otherwise. • Any form of physical assault, victimisation and instigating bullying. • Attending school events including live sessions under the influence of alcohol and/or any other substance. • Being part of a plot intended to physically harm another learner and/or a staff	• Final warning letter, kept on file. • Written apology for the infringement to the affected party / parties. • Suspension from the Online Campus (maximum of five school days). • Compulsory community service. • Expulsion. • Receive zero for an assignment (in the case of academic dishonesty) and letter of apology. • Cancellation / reduction of scholarship, if applicable.

member. • Failure to uphold and maintain academic integrity (i.e cheating in examination, test, assignment). • Any form of impersonation, identity theft, and / or identity fraud. • Any act qualifying as a sexual offence under the Sexual Offences Act. • Any act that violates the law. • Severe infringement of the Learner Code of Conduct.	