



## CONVENT OF MERCY ACADEMY 'ALPHA'

### DISCIPLINARY POLICY

At the Academy, the disciplinary policy is viewed as crucial for inculcating the values of the Nation and this Institution thus preparing our students to become patriotic and committed citizens. These values include self-control, respect for authority and for duty, thoughtfulness, responsible behaviour, punctuality and proper decorum in and out of school.

While we are cognizant of the importance of academic pursuits, we recognize also that character building is vital and will define our graduates as well- rounded individuals; our motto eloquently expresses this conviction:

**THE END AND AIM OF ALL EDUCATION IS THE DEVELOPMENT OF CHARACTER.**

The Disciplinary Programme at Alpha , therefore, is not only geared to maintain order but also to train our students to embrace the right attitudes and values that are necessary for them to acquire positions of leadership and become models for others with whom they come in contact. To achieve this, we consider carefully the measures chosen to discipline each student. We try to create a balance between teaching our students the importance of accepting responsibility for their actions while helping to foster in them an understanding of the values that we are trying to instill. The aim of any disciplinary action, we recognize, is to ensure that the student benefits positively from the experience. Hence the aims of the programme at Alpha include the following;

1. To maintain order and ensure that the classroom environment is conducive to learning.
2. To provide a safe school environment where students recognize their rights and the rights of others.
3. To help students to gain an awareness of appropriate attitudes, moral and religious, so that they will develop habits of critical thinking and a keen, lively conscience.

The programme is designed in accordance with the Law, the Code of Regulations, the Geneva Convention on the Rights of the Child, and The Child Care and Protection Act. Disciplinary measures

are guided by the Rules of the School and this falls under the portfolio of the Dean of Discipline who works closely with the Principal, Vice Principals, Guidance Counsellors, Grade Coordinators and Teachers.

## **Dean of Discipline**

The Dean of Discipline is a Senior Teacher /Vice Principal who oversees the implementation of the school's disciplinary policy. Serious cases of indiscipline are referred to the Dean and where necessary an investigation is conducted. This process includes written reports from those involved and witnesses, interviewing teachers, parents etc. Where investigation reveals that a serious offence has been committed, the Dean in consultation with the Principal, Vice-Principals, and Coordinators etc. will determine the action to be taken. In some instances, instead of disciplinary actions, students may be referred to the Guidance Counsellor or dialogue is initiated with parents or guardians.

## **The School Uniform**

The details of the school uniform are highlighted in the '**STUDENT HANDBOOK**' and the '**Rules of the School**'. The school uniform is the distinguishing feature of the Alpha student and must be worn with respect. Hence students are made to understand that they must always be neatly dressed in full uniform. Where the incorrect shoes or socks are worn, the uniform is incomplete and therefore the student must wear, instead, a skirt and the school blouse. This is also applicable to shaved eyebrows, wearing hair extensions, coloured nails, missing parts of the uniform (no belt or incorrect blouse) or uniforms above the knee.

## **The Internet**

The school offers Internet Services and students may have access to this facility in designated areas of the campus. In IT labs, students are allowed to use the facility under the supervision of teachers in order to accomplish goals set in classes. Additionally, students of Fifth and Sixth Forms may use laptops while they complete projects for the CXC and internal projects to prepare assignments and projects set by the teachers and Coordinators. **The internet must be used only for educational purposes.**

Students using laptops or school desktops on campus should not access any social network sites or music, movies or other forms of entertainment. This facility must not be used to conduct any illegal, unethical, indecent or inappropriate activity. Where any activity, after investigation, is deemed to be inappropriate, student (s) involved will face the consequences as stipulated by the Rules of the School.

## **Electronic Media**

While the school recognizes the value of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) and the Social Media, we are equally aware that it can have a negative if abused. Cyber bullying, that is the use of electronic devices as a means of exerting pressure on others, harassing, embarrassing or causing

harm to other individuals or the reputation of the school is not permitted. As outlined in the school's ICT and Social Media Policy, the school reserves the right to take disciplinary action against any student who uses such technology to bring the school into disrepute or to intimidate students or make negative remarks about teachers.

### **Disciplinary Actions**

Where disciplinary action is deemed necessary the following measures may be considered depending on the nature of the infringement. These are listed in the School Rules and include:

- 1. Community Service:** Students are assigned hours of service in various areas of the campus; this is usually served after school and on holiday projects set by different departments.
- 2. Out of uniform:** This is when the student is asked to wear a black, white, brown or blue skirt with school blouse for a period to be determined by the Dean, Vice Principals or Principal. A student is taken out of uniform when she conducts herself in any way that embarrasses the school or shows disregard for the values of the school. Usually students who are suspended return out of uniform and are assessed over a period of time to determine whether they show signs of improvement. This measure is usually implemented in consultation with the Guidance Counsellor and/or Grade Coordinator.
- 3. Work Detentions:** This is where students are engaged in projects such as cleaning the grounds, assisting in the cafeteria etc.
- 4. Late Detention:** This is given to students who are consistently late and is served after school on the days when they are late for school.
- 5. Detention Sessions:** Students are detained after school for one hour supervised by a member of staff to complete an assignment set by teacher.
- 6. Internal Suspension:** This is where students are under the direct supervision of the Dean of Discipline for a specific period of time.
- 7. External Suspension:** This results when serious infractions are committed (listed in the School Rules). These are recorded on students' permanent records and are subject to the recommendation of the Board of Governors.
- 8. Expulsion:** This occurs after several attempts to help undisciplined students have failed. The recommendation to expel rests with the Board of Governors after the student is referred to the Board. The process is conducted in accordance with the Education Regulations 1980.

**Lateness and absence**

Lateness and absence are also monitored by the Dean of Discipline. The Late Book is placed at the gate in the morning. Under the supervision of Sixth Form Prefects the names of students entering the campus at 8:00am and later are recorded. Any student who enters the campus after 9:00AM is referred to the Dean of Discipline. If the student has no evidence to substantiate lateness, the parent or guardian is contacted and informed. Students who attend school late without reasonable explanation are held in detention after school to discourage this practice. Additionally, habitual latecomers must sign a Register at the Main Office as soon as they arrive. Where students are frequently late or absent in any semester, letters are attached to Semester or Progress Reports informing parents of their daughter's/ward's attendance record. These Reports are held by coordinators who discuss this matter with parents and suggest possible solutions.

The Dean of Discipline keeps records of all disciplinary matters in the Dean's Log Book and must present this document to the Principal at the end of each Term or at any other time that the Principal may deem necessary. At the end of each term a written Report must be submitted to the Principal. Additionally, a file detailing suspensions is kept by the Principal and the Dean must ensure that this file is updated regularly.



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## SCHOOL RULES

### **The School Rules**

The rules of the school represent a common understanding and agreement shared by parents, students and Administration. It informs the process of discipline and ensures the smooth function of teaching and learning on a daily basis in the institution.

On entry to the Academy, each parent is provided with a copy of the School Rules and he/she is encouraged to discuss the document with students. A copy is placed in each classroom and at Orientation; the Form Teacher discusses it in detail with students. Each year after, copies are placed in Report packages so that parents will discuss them with their daughters/wards.

The Document highlights the values of the Academy and its expectations of each student. It directs student conduct on and off campus as well as details consequences for infringements committed. The following are the Rules of the School.

### **RULES OF THE SCHOOL**

Inspired by God's love and the interest and commitment of parents/guardians and teachers, each student of the Convent of Mercy Academy should strive to grow in appreciation of the school's motto, **AD VERUM ET BONUM** thus embracing the qualities of **Truth and Goodness** in all its forms.

#### **To this end, each student should:**

1. Respect herself, her companions, her teachers and all with whom she comes in contact.
2. Be truthful, honest and obedient.
3. Be courteous in manner, ladylike in conduct, modest in dress and prudent in conversation.
4. Be industrious and committed to her studies.
5. Be punctual and regular in attendance.

## **1. General Information**

Parents/Guardians and students are asked to kindly note the following:

- A. The hours of the school day are from 7:45 am to 3:00 pm., except on those occasions when academic and/or co-curricular activities are scheduled beyond 2:40 pm.
- B. Students are not allowed to leave the campus without the permission of the Principal, Vice-Principals and the Dean of Discipline. The parent or guardian must make a written request for this permission.
- C. No parent or visitor is allowed to go directly to the classrooms to see students or teachers. All visitors are required to report to the School's Office for assistance or information they may need.

## **2. The School Uniform**

The School Uniform is a symbol of the century-old tradition of the Academy and confers in the student a distinct identity rooted in the long history of the Institution. **It is to be worn with pride and dignity at all times.**

Students must wear the prescribed School Uniform:

- a. **a. Shoes** (leather or leatherette) should be dark brown in colour, low-heeled (no higher than one inch). No sneakers or crepes must be worn. No decorative buckles or bows are allowed and shoes must be always properly cleaned.
- b. **Socks** should be dark brown and folded to the ankle. Ankle length socks are not permitted.
- c. **Uniform skirts** should be at least three inches below the knee.
- d. **Belts** should be white in colour and should not have buckles or bands attached. Belts must be worn appropriately around the waist at all times.
- e. **Blouses** should be buttoned at the neck at all times.
- f. **No accessories** should decorate the uniform except those allowed by the school
- g. **Nails** should be cut short and without colour
- h. **No lipstick or Lip-gloss** is permitted. If lips are chapped, medicated lip treatments should be used
- i. **Only dark brown, navy blue and white clips** are permitted. Bandoos, decorative scrungies, decorative clips, beads, comb clips, ribbons and bows are not allowed. If worn they will be confiscated.
- j. **No hairpieces or weaves** are allowed. Hair should not be coloured or gelled. Hairstyles should be simple and neat and should be suitable for school.

**k. Eyebrows** must not be shaven.

**l. No jewellery** must be worn. Only a simple wristwatch will be permitted; decorative bands are forbidden. Sixth Formers are allowed to wear the school's graduation ring.

**m.** Students are encouraged to be neat and clean and pay specific attention to personal hygiene.

### **3. On Campus**

**a.** The use of the telephone in the Office is for important calls only; this facility should not be used for social and/ or lengthy conversations.

**b.** Classrooms are study areas and must be kept as such. There should be no eating or recreation in the classrooms. Each student must play a role in maintaining the cleanliness of the classroom.

**c.** No writing or marking should be placed on school furniture or walls or any other area of the school campus.

**d.** Students are not allowed in the Staff Room or other Administrative offices without permission.

**e.** The chewing of gum is prohibited, at all times, on and off the campus.

**f.** Students should be in classes at all times, unless they have obtained the teacher's permission to go outside. Loitering is prohibited.

**g.** Homework assignments must be completed and handed in on time. Late submission of assignments may attract appropriate disciplinary measures

**h.** Students may not bring radios, tape recorders, CD players, Mp3 players, or any other electronic device to school other than a calculator.

**i.** Cellular phones are not allowed and will be confiscated.

**j.** No pornographic material, comics, romance novels should be taken to school.

**k.** No weapon or any item that might be deemed as a weapon is to be taken to school.

### **4. Off Campus**

The importance of the Uniform both on and off campus must be recognized; hence the following guidelines:

**a.** Students are not allowed to enter shops, stores, arcades, restaurants etc. in their uniforms.

**b.** Students are not allowed to buy or eat on the road, in restaurants, on the bus in their uniforms.

**c.** Students should make their way to and from school promptly without idling or congregating at bus stops or in any other area outside of their designated route.

## **5. Disciplinary Actions**

The following infringements of the rules will attract serious disciplinary action. Not only is an entry made on the student's personal Record, but also parents/guardians may be called in for discussion of the breach and the measures to be taken to prevent recurrence.

### **INFRINGEMENTS/BREACHES FOR WHICH DUTIES MAY BE ASSIGNED**

- (i) Littering of grounds, bathroom or defacing of walls: Students will be asked to clean the area littered in addition to other disciplinary measures which may be imposed.
- (ii) Neglecting to perform assigned class duties: Students will be asked to clean the classroom for a designated period.
- (iii) Stoning mango trees etc: students will be asked to clean the area around tree.
- (iv) Carrying food items on the person, eating, drinking outside the cafeteria area: Students will be asked to clean the specified area

### **ACTIONS WHICH MERIT DETENTION**

- (i) Failure to do homework, incomplete homework/ other assignments or not performing tasks assigned.
- (ii) Doing another subject in a teacher's class, reading non-school material during teaching sessions.
- (iii) Lateness for class without proper excuse.

### **ACTIONS FOR WHICH STUDENTS MAY BE TAKEN OUT OF UNIFORM**

- (i) Engaging in activities that mar the reputation of the institution.
- (ii) Being inappropriately attired.
- (iii) Having eyebrows shaven, hair coloured etc.
- (iv) Any other offence deemed worthy of discipline by the Principal, Vice-Principals and the Dean of Discipline.

### **INFRINGEMENTS WHICH MERIT SERIOUS DISCIPLINARY ACTIONS**

- (i) Being out of uniform without proper authorization.
- (ii) Eating or drinking outside the school campus while in uniform.

- (iii) Presence in unauthorized places without valid excuse. e.g., stores, supermarkets etc.
- (iv) Leaving classrooms without permission of authorized person (s).
- (v) Consistent lateness for classes.
- (vi) Vending on or off campus
- (vii) Breaching Exam Regulations in internal as well as external examinations.

### **SOME INFRINGEMENTS/BREACHES WHICH MERIT IMMEDIATE SUSPENSION**

- (i) Disruptive action in or out of class.
- (ii) Using foul language/ engaging in vulgar conversation.
- (iii) Insolence to teacher whether verbal or non-verbal.
- (iv) Stealing/ dishonesty.
- (v) Violent physical or other forms of aggression.
- (vi) Involvements in brawls.
- (vii) Carrying weapons to school.
- (viii) Unauthorized presence and unbecoming conduct (when in uniform)  
in questionable places, such as bars, clubs, cinemas, etc.
- (ix) Unauthorized absence from school or class.
- (x) The use of ICT technology to bring the reputation of the school into disrepute or  
to intimidate or embarrass staff and/or students.

**It is our hope that our students will become familiar with these rules and seek to adhere to them during their years of attendance at Alpha.**

### **Students' role in the enforcement of discipline**

The student is required to;

- a. Have a clear understanding of the Rules of the School and ensure that these are not broken.

- b. Recognise the importance of practising social graces, good manners and moral and spiritual values.
- c. Play a part in ensuring that order is maintained at all times and where there are breaches, a report should be made.

At the beginning of each academic year, the School Rules are discussed and students are encouraged to respect all adults and students on and off campus. The Guidance Programme at Junior School helps in fostering conflict management skills and the students are given clear guidelines as to how to address conflict. The authority structure of the school is clearly explained so each student is aware of the channels through which they can address any issues of concern effectively.

Where students commit infractions deemed to be serious they are referred to Coordinators or the Dean of Discipline. The student is asked to write a Report especially where there are conflicting accounts of the incident. The Dean conducts investigations. This might include interviews, discussions, etc. After investigation, a decision is made about the disciplinary action to be taken. The student is briefed on the finding and the Dean helps the student to understand the nature of her error and discusses with her alternative actions that might have been taken to avoid this situation.

Where the student is suspended, a letter is sent home with the student inviting parent(s)/guardian to meet with the Coordinator and/or the Dean. The parent will therefore have the opportunity to seek clarification as well as to discuss student's record etc. In appropriate cases, the involvement of the Principal may be sought.

### **Prefects**

The Prefect Body includes of all Sixth Form Students. These are carefully selected and monitored over their two years of training at Alpha. Not only must a candidate be academically strong (meeting the C-Sec requirements etc.), but she should be a graduate who has over her junior years (First to Fifth Form) defined herself as a disciplined, model student who will be an example to her sisters.

The Head Girl and her deputies and the Student Council President and her deputies form the Executive Body which directs the activities of the Prefect Body. As Prefects, these students are expected to embody the school values so as to be models of the school's expectations of our students. Prefects assist in managing Form classes and help in maintaining order and monitoring student conduct on and off campus. Students are encouraged to show respect to them and are aware that they will be disciplined if they are disrespectful to any prefect.

In order to prepare prefects, a number of Leadership Workshops are conducted throughout the school year and participation is compulsory.

### **Teachers' role in discipline**

Teachers are made responsible for maintaining order not only within the confines of the classroom but also on and off the school's campus. An environment conducive to learning is expected in classes and teachers must relate to students with respect and demand appropriate conduct from students. Teachers are encouraged to be on time for classes and, where absence is unavoidable, plans must be put in place to ensure that students are supervised. Where students display indiscipline, teachers may discipline students in accordance with the provisions of the School's Rules. Where a serious offence is committed a report must be made to the Block Coordinator or the Dean of Discipline. Teachers, especially Form Teachers, may invite parents for dialogue if they deem this necessary.

Teachers are required to keep a record of infractions, misdemeanors as well as any action he/she has taken in an Incident Register. Where a student is a repeat offender and offers cause for concern the Coordinator or the Dean must be informed so parents can be summoned.

### **Disciplinary Actions available to teachers**

- 1. Warning:** for minor infringements including lateness to class, minor personal conflicts between students etc.
- 2. Isolation:** This is where a student is asked to stand on the outside of the classroom within sight and hearing of teacher. This is mainly for students who continue to disrupt classes after several warnings. If the student continues this practice, then she must be referred to the Dean.
- 3. Demerit:** (First and Second Forms) for such offences as minor rudeness, conflicts, lateness, littering, wearing incorrect uniform and any other minor infringement. Demerits are recorded on a Demerit Sheet kept by the Form Teacher.
- 4. Detention:** (listed in the School Rules) This is served a day after the offence. Assignments are given to students and they complete this under supervision during a one-hour session after school.

Detention sessions are held in Room 401, Mondays – Thursdays from 3:00-4:00 PM

During this session, students are kept for one hour and are engaged in completing work assigned by the teacher who gave the detention.

### **Breaches which merit Detention**

According to the Rules of the school the following infringements merit Detention:

- Failure to do homework, incomplete homework/ other assignments or not doing any work assigned.
- Doing another subject in a teacher's class, reading non-school material during teaching sessions.
- Lateness for class without proper excuse.

Additionally teachers may, at their discretion, assign detentions to students if they feel that the offence merits detention.

### **Procedure for Detention**

When a candidate is identified for detention, the teacher informs the student giving them details e.g., date, place of Detention.

- In most cases, students will be given at least one (1) day's notice and detention data must be recorded in the Detention Book at least one day prior to the serving of detention.
- The Detention Book is located beside the Staff Register in the main office. The following information should be given for each student:
  - i) Name of student
  - ii) Form
  - iii) Nature of wrong-doing
  - iv) Assignment to be completed in session.
- Teachers who assign more than ten (10) students to detention must make their own arrangements for the supervision of these students.
- Assignment given must be collected from the teacher supervising detention, to ensure that the exercise is meaningful.

Teachers assigned to detention should:

- Check detention book on the morning before scheduled session to confirm whether or not students are slated for detention. If no names are listed in the book for that day speak with the Dean of Discipline as late comers may be scheduled for detention on that day.

- Be on time for sessions and ensure that order is maintained and students complete assigned tasks.
- Collect all assignments, complete or incomplete, and ensure that teachers receive these.
- Ensure that slot for attendance is marked and indicate where students are late for the session.

### **The role of Parents\Guardians**

Parents and Guardians are authority figures and therefore have a great deal of influence over students. Parents are therefore encouraged to:

1. Ensure that students are on time for school.
2. Supervise students outside of school hours to ensure that assignments are done.
3. Discourage any kind of indiscipline or disrespectful conduct.
4. Ensure that daughter/ ward is monitored at all times and, where parent is absent, that the child is placed under the supervision of responsible adults and in a supportive home environment.
5. Keep in contact with the school and, where there are concerns, engage in meaningful dialogue with relevant member of staff.
6. Foster a caring, supportive and loving home environment for daughters as this is essential to their development.
7. Display exemplary conduct so that their children see them as role models, worthy of emulation.

The Academy's Disciplinary Programme is geared to empower our students to be prepared for life as active citizens of a vibrant democracy. The principles that we adhere to, herein stated, are aimed at producing graduates who understand the value of discipline and good conduct in nation-building.