



CONSTITUTION

1. TITLE

The title of the body formed in terms of this Constitution is SOUTHDOWNS COLLEGE.

2. DEFINITIONS

- 2.1. "The Act" shall mean the South African Schools Act (Act 84 of 1996)
- 2.2. "College Council" shall mean the College Council, a body representative of all role players at Southdowns College. The constitution of such representatives shall be as follows:
 - two representatives of the owners
 - one representative of the management company
 - the two College heads
 - the Parent Teachers' Association Chairman
 - an elected parent representative
 - an independent chairman co-opted from the Council members or from the community
- 2.3. "The College" shall mean Southdowns College and shall be inclusive of the Pre-Preparatory School (Grade 000 to Grade 0), the Preparatory School (Grade 1 to Grade 6) the College (Grade 7 to Grade 12).
- 2.4. "The Senior Head" shall mean the individual appointed by the College Council as professional leader of the College and who shall be the Head of the College Executive and who shall work in conjunction with the other College Heads.

- 2.5. "The College Executive" shall mean the Senior Head, the Preparatory School Head and the Pre-Preparatory School Head who are the professional leaders of the school.
- 2.6. "Parent" shall mean a biological parent or legal guardian of a child registered at Southdowns College.
- 2.7. "Learner" shall mean a child legitimately admitted to the College by the College Council.
- 2.8. "The Board" shall mean the Board of Directors of Southdowns College (Pty) Ltd.

3. AFFILIATION

The College shall be affiliated to the Independent Schools Association of Southern Africa, the Gauteng Department of Education and/or any other body as the College Council shall deem fit.

The Independent Examination Board Matriculation Examination and/or any other acceptable equivalent will be written by the learners of the College.

4. VISION

Southdowns College is an independent, combined school of excellence with a dynamic, happy learning environment and outstanding facilities to enable learners to achieve their full potential academically, physically, socially and spiritually.

Qualified, experienced teachers with passion and enthusiasm fulfil the needs of each child in a sensitive, caring manner supported by a Christian value system.

The College has four specialised institutes that provide expert guidance in the following areas:

- **Academic and learning enrichment**
- **Sports coaching and performance**
- **Environmental education**
- **Visual and performing arts**

Graduates of Southdowns College will thus emerge as fully rounded Individuals moulded by the College's ethos and opportunities, ready to Face life's challenges.

5. OBJECTIVES AND SCHOOL ETHOS

5.1. GENERAL EDUCATIONAL OBJECTIVES

- 5.1.1. To provide, promote and encourage the maintenance of teaching and providing educational services to boys and girls from Grade 000 to Grade 12.
- 5.1.2. To ensure a high level of excellence in teaching and learning with English as medium of instruction.
- 5.1.3. To maintain such numbers of learners per class as will optimise teaching effectiveness, taking into account teaching methods that are adopted, and needs and competencies of the learners concerned;
- 5.1.4. To provide education to any fee-paying learner in a positive, supportive ethos where academic rigor and excellence form the focus of lessons and assemblies.
- 5.1.5. To use special days and festivals of all religious groups to provide opportunities to share and understand the fundamental principles of different cultures and religions.
- 5.1.6. To provide a secure, disciplined learning environment in which the imagination can be kindled, intellectual curiosity aroused, industry rewarded and academic potential fulfilled.
- 5.1.7. To provide a healthy learning environment and to educate and inform learners in an effort to assist and encourage them to make healthy lifestyle choices.

5.2. THE LEARNER

- 5.2.1. To develop each individual to his or her full potential spiritually, intellectually, physically, culturally and socially.
- 5.2.2. To focus on cognitive development by challenging each learner to think, to reason, to debate and to form personal opinions based on available information.
- 5.2.3. To empower learners to access and manage information by providing them with computer skills and exposing them to the most up to date information technology.
- 5.2.4. To encourage in learners a sense of community arising from service as a means of personal growth and civic responsibility.
- 5.2.5. To provide facilities for sport, cultural and adventure activities to maximise the natural environment provided at Southdowns College and its surrounding areas.
- 5.2.6. To develop in learners a sense of personal style and self worth by providing a strong College ethos, a strong value system and a sense of history and tradition.
- 5.2.7. To provide every child with life skills to enable him or her to focus on clear, attainable personal goals.

5.3. COMMITMENTS

Southdowns College commits itself to:

- 5.3.1. An educational facility that allows for elected representatives of parents to actively participate in the College's governance via its existing structures and to offer guidance to the College Heads and educators in their respective fields of expertise.
- 5.3.2. Generally involving parents in contributing to the development of the College in a variety of areas of activity via the College Council, the Parent Teachers' Association, and their subcommittees.
- 5.3.3. Serving the community via service-related projects as may be determined from time to time by the College Council, parents, learners, teachers, or the Southdowns College Education Trust (SET).
- 5.3.4. Maintaining a business and fee structure based on the principles of efficiency, affordability and sustainability, as directed by the College Council. To this end the College shall strive, as far as possible and without compromising the quality of education offered by it, to maintain fees at market-related rates.

5.4. THE EDUCATOR

- 5.4.1. The College is dedicated to attracting and keeping well-qualified, motivated and enthusiastic staff members who are committed to the welfare of their learners, loyal to the College and dedicated to their profession.
- 5.4.2. The College will provide employee benefits to its educators aimed at maximising individual choice and differentiation of benefits according to accepted taxation practice.
- 5.4.3. College educators will be encouraged to find fulfilment in their work through challenging responsibilities, collegial interaction and personal development.
- 5.4.4. College educators will be expected to be fully involved in the life of the College, according to their interest, qualifications, area of expertise and ability, including the Outreach Programme to assist disadvantaged learners or teachers from other communities.

5.5. THE PARENT

While the College shall endeavour to encourage parents to participate meaningfully in the governance, management, development of facilities and activities of the College, it also asks the following of parents:

- 5.5.1. That parents accept their role as primary educators of their children.
- 5.5.2. That the role of the College is to assist parents in carrying out this responsibility.
- 5.5.3. That active support by parents of a child's schooling will increase the likelihood of the child gaining maximum benefit.

- 5.5.4. That the Code of Conduct established by the College be accepted fully and actively supported by the parent.
- 5.5.5. That any desired alterations in the Code of Conduct be properly considered and agreed by the College Council at the appropriate time.

6. ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURES

6.1. BUSINESS ORGANISATION

OWNERSHIP

Southdowns College (Pty) Ltd will form the basic business unit of the College.

6.2 OWNERSHIP

The College shall be owned by Southdowns College (Pty) Ltd.

6.3 FUNDING

The College shall be funded by school fees raised from parents on an annual basis and a non-refundable enrolment fee.

6.4 GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE

- 6.4.1 The governance structure shall be in accordance with the Memorandum and Articles of Association of Southdowns College, as may be amended from time to time by the company's directors.
- 6.4.2 There shall be an understanding that in order to protect the interests of the owners of the College such owners shall have a "golden vote" on all matters of policy and procedure, including matters of infrastructure, in relation to decisions made about the College. Such vote shall not be unreasonably withheld.
- 6.4.3 The College Council of the College shall meet at least three times a year and from time to time the Board shall meet with the College parents to present an annual report on the state of the College.
- 6.4.4 The role of the College Council will be to assist the College in the following ways:
- Be the guardian of the College's vision and objectives
 - Support and nurture the heads and work with them to fulfil the aims and objectives of the College
 - Evaluate itself annually and establish goals for the following year
 - Advise the College in its structures and strategies
 - Establish policies consistent with the College's vision and objectives
 - Ensure that management implements agreed policies and strategies
 - Ensure ethical practises of operation

- Participate in the selection of senior management of the College
- Contribute to the formation of a strategic plan for the College that will be revised annually
- Act as a consultative body on matters that fall outside the role and responsibility of the College's professional educators

6.4.5 Quorum: one half of the Council members excluding the chairman.

6.4.6 Attendance: any council member who shall be absent from two meetings or more without excuse or explanation shall forfeit his or her position on the Council forthwith.

6.4.7 Policies: The College Council shall keep and maintain a record of all policy decisions made by the College Council.

6.4.8 Term of office: 2 years.

7. INDEMNITY

7.1 No council member in that capacity shall have liability for any loss or damage that may be suffered by the school, or for any claim made against the school or arising from or in connection with its activities, unless caused through the fault of the council member concerned.

8. PARENT TEACHERS' ASSOCIATION

8.1. The role of the Parent Teachers' Association of the College is to support the College Council and the College Executive in the following areas:

- Fund raising for minor capital projects
- Social, cultural and sporting events to enhance the interaction between parents and between the parent and the teacher bodies;
- Encourage support by parents of learner cultural and sport activities;
- Encourage parental involvement in all activities of the College and assist the teacher body in whatever way may be deemed fit.

8.2. The Parent Teachers' Association is a volunteer body and is not intended or constituted to be representative of the parent body in any way. This body shall report to the College Council via its Chairperson.

8.3. The PTA is to be governed by a Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson, Treasurer and Secretary elected from the PTA body.

9. ADMISSION TO THE COLLEGE

- 9.1 The admission policy of the College is determined by the College Council, and is applied by the College Heads. The policy is:
- 9.2 Admission to the College shall not be limited by religion, race or cultural orientation.
- 9.3 A learner's admission to the College may be denied if he or she is outside the accepted age range of the grade level the learner qualifies to enter.
- 9.4 Admission may also be limited by the learner's desired subject choices or by a parent's inability to pay College fees.
- 9.5 Regarding age for school entry, the Act stipulates that in order to qualify for Grade 1 a learner shall turn seven in the year of attending Grade 1. Therefore learners will be accepted for Grade 0 in the year in which they turn six, for Grade 00 in the year in which they turn five and Grade 000 in the year they turn four.

10. NOTICE OF INCREASE IN SCHOOL FEES

The College Council will inform parents no less than 115 calendar days (i.e. approximately 3½ months) in advance of any change in school fees.

11. REMOVAL OF LEARNERS FROM THE COLLEGE

- 11.1 Parents are expected to inform the College in writing three months (ie one term) in advance of any intention to remove a learner from the College. Failure to so notify the College shall result in the parent concerned immediately becoming liable to pay the College compensation of one month's school fees for each month of short notice given in respect of a child that has been removed from the College. For this purpose short notice in respect of part of a month shall be deemed to be short notice of a full month.
- 11.2 The College Executive, on behalf of the College, shall be entitled, and reserves the right, forthwith to bar a scholar from attending any classes and/or grade examinations and/or College functions upon due written notice given to the scholar's parent or guardian that any school or other fees, in respect of that learner's enrolment or participation at the College are, and have been in arrears for a period of 3 months or longer. The aforesaid sanction will be imposed, at the sole discretion of the College Executive, for so long as the fees remain in arrears, and may be moderated upon satisfactory arrangements having been made for payment.

12. CODES OF CONDUCT

- 12.1 The College shall institute codes of conduct for learners, educators and parents by written and verbal notifications, and through practice and precedent established from time to time. It shall not be incumbent on the College to record codes or rules for scholars in respect of serious infringements normally covered by law, or for transgressions which, although not punishable at law, seriously contravene acceptable community standards of behaviour expected of scholars upon school premises, as interpreted at the College's sole discretion.
- 12.2 Rather the aforesaid behavioural norms are taken as having been accepted into the College's codes of conduct without the need for explicit treatment. The codes of conduct of the College will act as a guide as to required standards of behaviour, dress and procedure expected of the various role players.
- 12.3 The codes shall be amended from time to time as the need may arise. The College Executive is mandated to enforce the aforesaid codes and to firmly and fairly deal with transgressions thereof and it is ultimately empowered in accordance with due and fair process to remove permanently scholars from the College in respect of serious infringements, after following statutory procedures, where it is deemed necessary.

13. COMMUNICATION AND GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES

- 13.1 For the purposes of encouraging communication and interaction at all levels among participants and members of the College community, and in order to constantly improve standards aspired to and/or methodologies adopted by the College, the following communication and grievance procedures have been put into place in relation to specific issues, namely:
- 13.2 Matters of school policy, ethos and general College affairs should be referred to either a member of the College Executive (i.e. Primary or Secondary School Head), or, if considered to have broader governance or financial implications, to the Chairman of the College Council.
- 13.3 Class teaching issues or matters relating directly to learners should be referred firstly to the class teacher. If further discussion is needed, and the matter cannot be satisfactorily addressed at teacher level, then the matter should be referred to the phase head, or in the absence of a phase head, the relevant School Head;
- 13.4 Subject teaching issues should be referred first to the subject head or headmaster.

- 13.5 Co-curricular (sport and cultural) issues should preferably first be discussed with the coach or teacher concerned. If the matter is not capable of satisfactory resolution at coach/ teacher level, then the matter may be referred to the co-ordinators of the sport or cultural activity. Only if the matter still remains unresolved, should it be necessary to approach a member of the College Executive.
- 13.6 All matters of serious concern should be put in writing and addressed to the Senior Head or Chairman of the College Council. In this way the essence of the matter can be investigated, discussed and agreed upon, and the College's response effectively recorded and communicated to interested or affected persons.
- 13.7 The College Heads are available at all times to discuss parents' concerns, and will endeavour to advise parents on the responsible person and the desired processes in order to address suggestions for improvements or formal grievances.

14. TEAM SPORTS

The College will allow learner participation in team sports other than those laid down in the Learner Enrolment Contract, subject to the following conditions:

- administration thereof, use of College facilities, and notices and methods of obtaining learner participation shall in each instance be approved in advance by the College Executive, or such other person specifically appointed by the College Executive from time to time to perform such responsibility;
- participation therein by any one or more learners shall not, in the discretion of the College Executive or the responsible person referred to above, at any time or in any manner interfere with or disrupt the required learner participation in a College team sport; and
- the College Executive shall have the right at any time to terminate or vary the terms, conditions or arrangements for learner participation in such team sport upon due notice to persons concerned.

15. AMENDMENT OF THE CONSTITUTION

This Constitution may be amended at a meeting of the College Board of Directors in consultation with the College Council.