

THE CORDWALLES SCHOOL CHARTER

To give effect to these values and objectives all staff, boys and parents make a commitment to abide by and support the policies as adopted and as amended by the Board of Governors.

The School Charter does not replace but informs the school rules and policies of Cordwalles. All members of the Cordwalles community are entitled to due process as outlined in the school rules and policies. This commitment in no way negates the individual's rights as enshrined in the constitution of our country.

Management and staff of the School are committed to:

- Instilling into each individual boy a sound spiritual and moral attitude, based on the values of love, justice, compassion, respect, care, acceptance and tolerance.
- Developing a curriculum of excellence.
- Setting the highest standards of work and behaviour for all boys.
- Protecting the dignity of all who are a part of our school community.
- Creating a loving and caring environment for the boys.
- Fostering strong communication with parents as the basis for close co-operation.
- Conducting ourselves in accordance with the Code of Professional Conduct of the South African Council for Educators.
- Being heard by parents and boys.
- Listening to parents and boys and understanding any concerns raised.
- Providing the appropriate time and place for full and confidential discussion.
- Establishing reasonable expectations for solving any issues or problems.
- Establishing a written action plan for any proposed or agreed solution.
- Reporting and reviewing the action plan.
- Providing an opportunity to a parent or boy to work towards a solution.
- Recognising that:
 - Parents have a depth of experience with the boy.
 - Parental and teacher perspectives may justifiably differ.
 - Parents have multiple time commitments.

Parents/Guardians are committed to:

- Helping and encouraging their son to develop strong spiritual and moral values.
- Taking an active and supportive interest in the School's aspirations.
- Taking an active interest in their son's work and progress and in this regard attending parents' meetings.
- Supporting the values, authority and discipline of the school.
- Ensuring their son abides by the school rules.
- Reading and committing themselves to the relevant policy documents that pertain to them at this school.
- Being heard by teachers.
- Listening to teachers.
- Holding discussions with teachers at a time and place that permits full and confidential exploration of issues:
 - Concerns will be directed at the teacher only
 - The issue/problem will be articulated clearly and fully.
 - Teachers will be afforded the opportunity to work towards a solution, which will require sufficient time.
- Recognising that:
 - Teachers are trained professionals.
 - Teachers' perspectives may differ from those of parents'.
 - Teachers have multiple time commitments.

Boys are committed to:

- Behaving and acting in a manner which reflects the values of Cordwalles.
- Respecting and being courteous and co-operative with teachers, other school staff, other boys and visitors, at all times.
- Attending school regularly, and on time.
- Aiming to achieve their highest standard in all areas of school life.
- Completing all homework and assignments with pride and to their highest level of competence.
- Wearing the correct school uniform and appearing smart at all times.
- Respecting the feelings and property of other people, both in school and in the community.
- Caring for the buildings, furniture, equipment and grounds of the school.
- Supporting and abiding by the Cordwalles pledge.

The absence of a specific guideline in this School Charter does not relieve an individual of his or her responsibility to behave in what would be considered a fair and reasonable manner in all situations related to the school.

THE ROLE OF SCHOOL COMMITTEES

Introduction

Schools are most successful in developing boys when they work with parents as part of the milieu in which a boy grows. This comprises a boy's family, school and environment. For the most effective influence to be exerted on children, parents must understand and embrace the school's mission, share its core values and fully support its curriculum and staff

One impediment to effective team work between the school and the parents is a misunderstanding of the roles of the decision-making bodies in the school and a clarification of the latter is critical to fostering good relationships in the community and lessening frustration. At the same time, parents should understand that they too, have a responsibility to inform themselves of the workings and culture of the school.

The Board of Governors

At Cordwalles, the highest authority resides in the Board of Governors. It comprises volunteers, some or all of whom may be parents, as well as the Head, the Senior Deputy Headmaster, Bursar and two members of the Parents' Association. The Bishop of Natal acts as our visitor on the Board and he appoints someone to attend meetings in his place. The existing members appoint board members to the Board for a period of three years. The three years is renewable if both parties are happy with this. These members are chosen for their specific areas of expertise i.e. lawyer, accountant, architect, etc. In this way the Board is able to draw on the professional expertise and skills and at the same time have a diverse array of people with different skills and experiences. The Board has a Chairman, Deputy Chairman and several sub-committee Heads. The subcommittees of the Board are:

- PR and Marketing
- Property and Maintenance – Finance

These sub-committees comprise people who have expertise in these specific areas. They may well be Board Members who are not parents. The head of each sub-committee reports back to the Board at our termly Board Meeting.

It is not the task of the Board to intervene in the daily running of the school or in its operational sphere such as appointing, evaluating or disciplining staff Rather the Board should focus on the following areas critical to the success of the school:

- 1.1 The appointment, evaluation and support of the Head, to whom it delegates authority to manage and lead the school.
- 1.2 The management of and accountability for the school finances as well as the endowment of the school.
- 1.3 The ratification of a strategic plan for the school which is generally proposed and developed by the Headmaster and his staff.

In the conduct of its official business, the Board acts only as a whole: individual Board Members, including the Board Chair, have no authority to act unless specifically authorised to do so by the Board acting as a whole. In the course of their interaction with the school, Board Members will be approached by parents with concerns of an operational nature (e.g. staff competence or behaviour, curricular, etc.). Governors are expected to inform the Head as matter of good practice, but they should not get involved, leaving it instead to the Head to tackle.

The school executive

This body, which is led by the Head (in the capacity as the CEO), consists of the senior management including the Deputy Headmaster, Director of Sport, Head of Boarding, Head of the Senior Primary, Head of the Junior Primary, Head of the Pre-Primary, Head of Academic Support, Head of Cultural Affairs, Pastoral Care, the Bursar, the PR and Marketing Manager and the Support Services Manager.

The Executive Committee is responsible for the day-to-day operations of the school including such issues as curriculum development, the extramural programme, appointments and evaluation of staff, maintenance, etc.

The Head and Executive should seek to keep parents informed of decisions and changes. This is usually accomplished in newsletters and parents' meetings. It is incumbent on parents to inform themselves of such meetings and the frequency of written communications in order to remain informed.

The Parents' Association

Aims and objectives

The aims and objectives of the association shall be:

1. To advance and promote the interests, in general, of the school as a whole;
2. To create a forum for the furtherance of the aims and objectives of the school;

3. To create a forum for the exchange of views and ideas amongst parents of pupils at the school and to promote fellowship amongst such parents;
4. To provide a channel of communication between parents, headmaster and the Board of Governors in addition to all such other channels, both formal and informal that may exist from time to time;
5. To harness the energy and talents of parents for the benefit of the school;
6. To function as a voice or channel representing the members' needs and point of view to existing management, and the Board of Governors for the sole purposes of assisting management in enhancing the development of the school;
7. To create a forum for research and debate relating to a variety of topics of concern and/or interest to members of the association.

The Parents' Association consists of volunteer parents and some staff.

This body provides a wide range of volunteer services including fund-raising, fostering good fellowship in the community, arranging functions and being a communication channel between the parents, the school and the Board of Governors.

The Parents' Association has its own constitution. The committee consists of:

1. The Headmaster, the Deputy Headmaster, the PR and Marketing Manager and the Media Manager.
2. A minimum of nine members and a maximum of twelve members, of whom one shall preferably be a boarder parent, representing senior and junior boarders.
3. The committee may co-opt any number of members as it so wishes, during the year.
4. The committee shall be as representative as possible, and every effort shall be made to ensure representation from every class in the school.
5. The quorum for any meeting of the committee shall be six (6) members.
6. All decisions of the committee shall require a simple majority vote. In the event of an equality vote, the chairperson, or in the chairperson's absence, the person presiding at that meeting, shall have a casting vote in addition to a deliberative vote.
7. The committee shall elect its own Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson, Treasurer and Secretary as may be necessary, and any other office bearers it deems necessary and appropriate.
8. The committee shall meet at least once every school quarter.
9. Minutes shall be kept of all meetings of the committee or any meetings held by any subcommittees/working groups set up by the committee.
10. The committee shall hold office for a period of two years provided they are eligible for membership of the Association.

This constitution clearly states the association's mission is to support the decisions and policies of the Board and the Executive. The Parents' Association neither participates in policymaking by the school, nor functions as a lobbying group. It can be used as a means of communication between the Parents and the school.

The finances of the Parents' Association are supervised by the school and form part of the school's annual audit process. Co-operation and teamwork between the Head and the Parents' Association are crucial to the health of the school community.

It is appropriate that the Parents' Association advertise its activities, events and achievements. However, the association is not a public relations arm of the school and should play no role in the school's effort to communicate about itself.

Class Parents

The general aim of the class parent is to help build a closer Cordwalles community. This is achieved by:

- Providing positive, practical and cheerful support to Headmaster, Staff and Parents.
- Liaising with teachers and parents as communication is so important!
- Providing support to teachers/school through
 - a) Organising transport for outings when necessary.
 - b) Arranging work parties to:
 - * help with costume for drama productions/foyer displays
 - * provide flowers for the Ronald Brooks Admin Block (as per the roster)
- Providing support to parents by:
 - a) making new parents welcome by
 - * Contacting them by phone
 - * chatting at school functions
 - * introducing them to other parents
 - b) encouraging parents to support school functions, i.e.:
 - * parents' meetings/cocktail parties
 - * 100 Club
 - * aQuelle Cordwalles Mudman, PA events, etc.
 - c) Contacting parents who need assistance ie: death or illness in the family, birth, lifts etc.

Other functions of class parents are to organise a morning get-together for their respective classes. This is especially the case in the Pre-Primary where there are many new parents.

Parents and Staff

Parents play an essential and positive role in the life of Cordwalles School. Not only are parents advocates for their children, they also support the staff and executive through extensive volunteer activities and events.

Parents are encouraged to work productively with teachers by staying informed about their child and important events in the life of the school. In the same manner, they should timeously inform the teacher of any information relevant to the well-being of the child. Thoughtful questions and suggestions will be welcomed by the school.

Parents best support a school climate of trust and respect by communicating concerns timeously, openly and constructively to the staff member closest to the problem. Efforts by parents to lobby other parents will be viewed by the school as counterproductive. In any event, if a concern is legitimate, a good school will address it with the same vigour whether it is raised by one or a multitude of parents.