

The Starfish Academy Code of Conduct

Compliant with South African ECD regulations and standards

Purpose:

To promote a safe, inclusive, and developmentally appropriate learning environment for children, and to guide the conduct of all employees, parents, visitors, and stakeholders of The Starfish Academy in line with South African laws and early childhood development standards.

1. Respect and Inclusivity

- Uphold the **Children's Act** by treating all children with respect, dignity, and care.
- Ensure **non-discriminatory practices** regardless of race, gender, language, disability, religion, or socioeconomic status (as per the Constitution of South Africa and SASA).
- Promote a culture of **Ubuntu**, encouraging compassion, empathy, and fairness in all interactions.

2. Child Protection and Development

- Ensure the **physical, emotional, and psychological safety** of all children at all times.
- Use **positive discipline techniques**—corporal punishment, emotional abuse, or degrading treatment is strictly prohibited under the **Children's Act** and DSD regulations.
- Support each child's **holistic development**, aligned with **NELDS**, by providing age-appropriate learning opportunities.

3. Professional Conduct and Employment Practices

- Maintain ethical, lawful, and professional behavior as per the **Basic Conditions of Employment Act** and ECD policy framework.
- Arrive on time, fulfil responsibilities diligently, and remain actively engaged during work hours.
- Respect confidentiality of all children, family, and institutional matters.
- Participate in **ongoing professional development** and adhere to staff development policies.

4. Health, Safety, and Environment

- Follow all health and safety protocols, including:
 - First aid readiness
 - Regular fire drills
 - Cleanliness and hygiene (e.g., regular handwashing, food safety)
 - Infection control
- Report any injury, illness, neglect, or suspected abuse immediately to management, in accordance with the **Children's Act (Section 110)**.
- Maintain a **safe, welcoming, and child-friendly environment**, indoors and outdoors.

5. Communication and Community Involvement

- Communicate with children, parents, and colleagues in a respectful, clear, and culturally sensitive manner.
- Work in partnership with families, respecting their values and input.
- Engage in inclusive practices that encourage parent and community participation in the life of the centre.

6. Financial and Property Responsibility

- Use all funds and property of the centre responsibly, ethically, and with transparency.
- Refrain from theft, misappropriation, or any form of financial misconduct.
- Ensure accurate record-keeping and financial reporting in line with DSD guidelines.

7. Compliance and Accountability

- Adhere to:
 - The South African Schools Act (where applicable)
 - The Children's Act
 - Labour legislation
 - ECD norms and standards (DSD and DBE)
- Cooperate fully with inspections by **Social Development, Department of Health, or Education authorities**.
- Report violations or misconduct and accept responsibility for actions.

Disciplinary Process for Misconduct

Any breaches will be handled in line with fair labour practices and relevant employment policies, which may include:

- Verbal or written warning
- Suspension pending investigation
- Disciplinary hearing
- Dismissal (in cases of gross misconduct or criminal activity)

Declaration

All staff, volunteers, and stakeholders must sign this Code of Conduct annually and agree to abide by its principles and responsibilities.

Signed: _____

Name: _____

Position: _____

Date: _____