



# Collegiate Girls' High School

## COMFORTABLE IN OUR SKINS

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### EMBRACING DIFFERENCE AND DEALING WITH DISCRIMINATION

#### 1. Objective:

Collegiate Girls' High School (CGHS) seeks to create and maintain an integrated and harmonious learning environment in which difference is embraced and all members of the school community (learners, educators, management, parents, and visitors) feel physically and emotionally safe; are protected from demeaning and disrespectful behaviour and expressions; are treated with due care and sensitivity, and are adequately counselled and equipped to communicate and thrive in a diverse and multi-cultural society.

#### 2. Background:

*Recognising that:*

- CGHS exists and operates within the Nelson Mandela Bay and broader South African environment;
- Apartheid and colonialism perpetuated and entrenched prejudice against groups of people based specifically on their race, language, culture, gender, sexual orientation and disability;
- Since 1996, the democratic state of South Africa (SA) is governed by a Constitution that calls for us to recognise the injustices of the past, honour those who suffered for justice and freedom in our land, and affirms that SA belongs to all who live in it, united in our diversity.
- The Constitution also calls for us to heal the divisions of the past and establish a society based on democratic values, social justice and fundamental human rights, with the ultimate aim of improving the quality of life and freeing the potential of all citizens.
- Discrimination (specifically racism) can occur at both an intentional (conscious) level and at an unintentional (subconscious) level. Identifying and responding to deliberate, as opposed to unintended, acts of discrimination may require different approaches and strategies;
- In any case of discrimination, the issue of intention and whether discrimination took place can be contentious if contested, thus in deciding such, the burden of proof must lie on the claimant to prove that the incident took place whilst the respondent must show that the discrimination was neither unfair nor unwanted.

#### 3. Conduct within the school community:

3.1 CGHS wishes to encourage the following attitudes and behaviours:

- Respect and tolerance for diverse races, language, culture, nationality, gender, sexual orientation and disability;
- Interest in, and the celebration of, difference – recognising factors that have shaped different cultures and communities;
- Gentle confrontation when conflicting differences occur, with the aim of resolving such constructively and to the enrichment of all.

3.2 CGHS will not tolerate the following attitudes and behaviour:

- Unwanted or unfair acts of discrimination that include, among others: ridicule, abuse, derogatory language or jokes, harassment, or the vilification of other groups;

- Behaviour or actions that deliberately seek to harm, hurt, humiliate or bring discomfort to persons based on their race, language, culture, gender, sexual orientation or disability;
- Institutional policies and/or practices that serve to protect the interests of one group at the expense of another.

**4. Process in resolving:**

- Care needs to be taken to ensure that the rights of all within the school community are duly respected in assessing how an action is perceived and how it was intended, and in further deciding what process of resolution is to be followed and what sanction is to be applied.
- Where appropriate and agreed to by all parties, conciliatory and rehabilitative action should be attempted prior to any disciplinary action being taken.
- Disciplinary action must be in accordance with the school's Code of Conduct and every effort must be made for the process to be completed within a reasonable period of time.