



SPRINGFIELD CONVENT SCHOOL DIVERSITY AND BELONGING: STATEMENT OF INTENT

Springfield Convent School is an Independent Catholic Girls' school which was founded by the Dominican Sisters in 1871 and is a member of ISASA.

We celebrate and value the uniqueness of our school's identity as part of the evangelising mission of the Church, honouring the past and welcoming the future.

Ethos is the responsibility of the entire school community, and our identity is witnessed to by right relationships with God, our world, our community and ourselves.

We recognise our responsibility for contributing to the transformation of our country, towards a society fit for the children of God.

Dominican schools aim to provide forward looking education of the highest quality, based on a tradition that goes back over eight hundred years of commitment to education. Rooted in a vision of integrity, social transformation, and care, especially of our children, we will aim at greater justice and equity.

Our schools seek to care for the whole person in order to develop in young people:

- *a love for learning*
- *an enthusiasm for truth*
- *a love for others*
- *respect for the culture and religious values of all*
- *A practice of responsible stewardship, servant leadership and the promotion of educational sustainability, renewal and growth*
- *a willingness to serve in a spirit of healing and reconciliation, flowing from an appreciation of the word of God and a deep commitment to Christ*

Springfield is proud of its history in opening its doors to girls of all races in 1976. We believe that everyone who walks through our gates should feel welcome. We aim to foster a spirit of mutual respect in understanding and celebrating the diversity which comes from being a South African school. Furthermore, we are committed to fostering a sense of belonging through institutional change which is thoughtful and which prepares young women for taking their rightful place in society.

We do not condone any form of unfair discrimination as a result of our differences in race, language, gender, sexual orientation, culture, physical or intellectual ability, religion or socio-economic position.

Any pupil, member of staff or management who believes that they have been unfairly discriminated against on one of the above-mentioned grounds should report such conduct by following the procedures set out in the Discrimination grievances procedure attached as an addendum here.

ADDENDUM - DISCRIMINATION GRIEVANCES PROCEDURE

Lodging a discrimination complaint

- Complaints of discriminatory behaviour must be lodged in writing or discussed in person with one of the designated discrimination grievance counsellors (“DGC’s”), whose particulars are available at reception.
- The designated DGC must prepare a written complaint setting out the facts alleged by the complainant in conjunction with the complainant.
- If the alleged discriminatory conduct was committed by a pupil, the DGC must submit the complaint to the Head of the School, and the matter will be dealt with in the manner prescribed for serious infringements relating to conduct as provided for in the School’s Code of Conduct read with the Policy on Disciplinary Procedures and Appeals.
- If the alleged discriminatory conduct is employment related, the designated DGC must submit the complaint to the Head and the matter will be dealt with in accordance with the School’s employment policies.
- In all other cases, the designated DGC must follow the procedures set out below.

Consideration of complaints by DGCs

- If the complaint does not relate to alleged discriminatory conduct by a pupil or employment related discrimination, the designated DGC must, after preparing the complaint, meet with the alleged wrongdoer in order to establish their version of events.
- Once the designated DGC has met with the alleged wrongdoer, he or she must arrange a meeting between the complainant and the alleged wrongdoer in an attempt to facilitate an amicable resolution to the matter. The process will entail an informal discussion, held in private, and the parties will not be entitled to have representatives present, save only in the case where one of the parties is a minor, in which event their parent or legal guardian may be present. Applicable solutions will be those agreed to by the parties, but may, for example, include an apology, a public statement, community service or any other lawful solution which the parties may agree to.
- After the meeting between the parties, the designated DGC must prepare a written report summarising both parties’ versions of events, the possible solutions discussed at the meeting and the outcome of the meeting. The report must be submitted to the Board of Governors to keep on record or to take such further action as the Board may deem necessary, in the event that the matter was not resolved at the meeting.

- Should any party fail to cooperate with the designated DGC or to attend any meeting, the DGC must indicate this in their report.

Criteria and designation of DGCs

The following persons will qualify to be designated as DGC:

- School counsellors.
- Any member of staff who holds a certificate in an accredited counselling or dispute resolution course of at least NQF Level 7 or equivalent and who has been appointed to the role of DGC by the Head or the Board of Governors.
- Any independent dispute resolution practitioner appointed by the Board of Governors on an *ad hoc* basis.

DGCs will be designated to any particular complaint based on a pre-determined duty roster to be compiled by them in advance in respect of each school term, provided that a DGC who is supposed to be on duty but who is temporarily unavailable, or who believes that the facts complained of are of such a nature that the matter would be more appropriately dealt with by another DGC, or who believes that they may have a conflict of interest, may instead refer the complaint to another DGC, or submit a request to the Board of Governors to appoint an external DGC to consider the complaint.