



Mount Mercy College
Model Farm Road
Cork
021-4542366

CODE OF BEHAVIOUR

In Mount Mercy College, we strive to promote self-worth and self confidence in a Christian environment. We aim to enable students to develop their full potential with emphasis on the academic, cultural, social, spiritual, aesthetic, and technological areas and to foster a sense of caring and justice."

Mount Mercy Mission Statement

SECTION 1. PREAMBLE

- 1.1 This code has been developed based on the existing school Behaviour Code.

The code has as its cornerstones two important documents, our school Mission Statement and the key principles of the CEIST charter.

CEIST Charter

The core values of CEIST are intended to support and nourish the lives of the people at the heart of our school: students, staff, and parents. Its key principles focus on:

- o Promoting spiritual and human development
- o Achieving quality in teaching and learning
- Showing respect for every person
- o Creating community
- o Being just and responsible

This policy is informed by and compliant with the following legislation:

Education Act 1998

Education Welfare Act 2000

Education (Miscellaneous) Provisions Act 2007

Equal Status Act 2000

Education for Persons with Special Education Needs 2004

It is also guided by 'Developing a Code of Behaviour: Guidelines for Schools' published by the NEWB

- 1.2 In accordance with section 23 of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000, responsibility for this Behaviour Code rests with the Board of Management. The Board has prepared the policy in consultation with the principal, the Deputy Principals, the teachers, the parents of students registered at the school (through the Parents' Council), the students and the Education Welfare Officer.
- 1.3 In accordance with section 23.2 -of the Education (Welfare) Act, this code will specify the standard of behaviour that shall be observed by each student attending the school, the measures that may be taken when a student fails to observe those standards, the procedures to be followed before a student may be suspended or expelled from the school, the grounds for removing a suspension imposed in relation to a student and the procedures to be followed relating to notification of a student's absence from school.

- 1.4 A positive partnership between all members of the school community is essential to the operation of the code and the full support of parents is required in upholding the code. In accordance with Section 23.4 of the Education (Welfare) Act and Section 9 of the School's Admissions Policy, parents or guardians of students and/or students who have reached majority must accept the Behaviour Code as a condition of enrolment in the school. The appropriate form must be signed and returned to the school authorities as a condition of acceptance in the school.
- 1.5 **The scope of this code.** The rules set out below only apply when the students are on the school premises, while on trips or outings, when engaged in extracurricular activities or when attending functions organised by the school or where the student through their actions/behaviour bring the school's name in disrepute.
- 1.6 Other than those outlined in section 1.5 above, issues that occur outside of the school environment cannot be dealt with directly by the school, however the school will do what it can to support students and parents.

SECTION 2. PHILOSOPHY OF THE CODE

Mount Mercy is a school community which fosters an ethos centred on positive relationships and seeks the development of the potential of each member of the community. We believe that good behaviour is rooted in respect for self and others and in the recognition of the dignity of everyone.

This code gives priority to the promotion of good behaviour, affirming that behaviour and thereby creating and sustaining the environment for effective teaching and learning.

We hold the highest expectations of all members of this community. This code outlines these expectations. Fostering a recognition of responsibilities in relation to behaviour in class and while in school is at the heart of the code. Central also is the knowledge that students' behaviour can change. The code seeks to outline goals, motivation and incentives to support a student in managing her behaviour

This code also clearly outlines our response to behaviour which undermines the positive climate of our school. The code seeks to involve students, teachers and parents in the process of managing behaviour which hinders the promotion of positive teaching and learning. As such, interventions involving discipline and consequences are designed primarily to promote self-discipline in the student.

All members of this community have a right to be safe and to be respected. This code of behaviour is our policy and mechanism for supporting these key rights and provides an outline of the strategies and sanctions which serve to protect them.

SECTION 3. PROMOTING POSITIVE BEHAVIOUR

The Behaviour Code is primarily aimed at reinforcing positive behaviour in the school community. To this end, the code outlines a series of measures to promote positive behaviour.

Strategies to acknowledge and reinforce positive behaviour:

3.1 1st Year /2nd Yr. - Class Awards

The class awards provide a method whereby teachers can validate the desirable behaviour of students and reinforce the Catholic ethos of the school. This code suggests the following reasons for awarding a class award to a student:

- o Voluntary effort outside of class time.
- o Students who show exceptional concern for other students and teachers.
- o Students who demonstrate a high degree of co-operation, responsibility and school spirit.

To heighten the profile of the class award system, the class award will be used as an indicator for the awarding of prizes for School Spirit at the annual Diograis Awards Ceremony.

3.2 Awards systems – Diograis Awards

- o An annual Awards (Diograis) system focusing on characteristics such as Christian Leadership, Extracurricular endeavour, Diligence and School Spirit as well as Academic areas of excellence will serve to recognise the merits of being a positive member of the school community.

School structures which support positive behaviour:

3.3 Referral to pastoral care system

Where it is requested by parents, teachers, or students themselves, and deemed appropriate and necessary to students, the school offers pastoral support. The structures and procedures around this support are outlined in the school's Pastoral Care Policy.

3.4 Mentoring programmes – Student Leaders

The school operates various mentoring programmes, supporting student academic, emotional or behavioural needs as identified.

3.5 Student Support Year Teams: Junior and Senior

These two teams, comprising a senior or junior Year Head, class teacher, a member of the senior management team and a member of the pastoral care

team will co-ordinate the initiatives outlined in this section, ensuring a focus on reinforcing good behaviour in the school.

Interventions to support positive behaviour

3.6 Reflection Sheets and follow up

Reflection Sheets may be used by teachers to encourage students to reflect on their behaviour, enabling them to participate actively in the discipline process. The intention is to encourage students to evaluate the behaviour engaged in and to understand why they are choosing such behaviour. This sheet can be used instead of or in conjunction with a sanction. Reflection sheets are also used in the context of the school's Anti-Bullying Policy to assist in resolving situations. The reflection sheet will also be used for Wednesday afternoon's detention. The reflection sheet will be retained in the students file.

3.7 Behaviour Report Cards

The Behaviour Report Card is designed to cultivate and reinforce good classroom behaviour. A student, whose behaviour in class is not up to standard, may be put on report by a Year Head or by the Deputy Principal or Principal. The student presents the card to each teacher at the end of each class period and is then given immediate feedback on her behaviour for that class. The student's progress can then be evaluated by the staff member assigned. The report card should also be signed by the parents or guardians to reinforce its significance.

3.8 Attendance Reports

As regular attendance is a necessity for good academic performance, an award for attendance will also be given at the school Awards ceremony.

3.9 Individual Behaviour Support Planning

When required, an IBP will be put in place to support the behaviour of a particular student. This plan may include specific concrete goals and targets in relation to attendance, punctuality, behaviour in class or at break times, uniform and/or academic performance. See section 4.3 below.

Proactive teaching strategies:

3.10 Induction Sessions

Induction into First Year Second and Third Yr., Transition Year and Senior Cycle will focus on developing student awareness of the practical requirements and the relevant supports pertinent to the particular year. Induction will involve information and reassurance for students.

3.11 Promoting Positive Behaviour

While each member of staff has a role in this task, specific emphasis is placed on positive and appropriate behaviour in SPHE classes. Senior school students and student leaders may also be invited to work with Junior classes to guide and mentor the development of an understanding of appropriate behaviour in school.

3.12 Assemblies

Through regular Assemblies with each year group, school expectations will be reinforced, and positive behaviours will be rewarded. Year Heads and school management utilise assemblies as an opportunity to reiterate the school's mission and ethos.

SECTION 4. BEHAVIOUR SUPPORT STRUCTURES AND PROCEDURES

- 4.1 Behaviour support structures and the rewards and sanctions used in the school are designed to support students in behaviour modification. It is an important lesson for life to realise that adhering to rules brings rewards, while breaches of rules carry negative consequences.

Students who consistently support the expectations and responsibilities outlined in the code will be rewarded in line with the ladder of reward.

4.2 Persistent Misbehaviour

Students who engage in persistent misbehaviour will be referred to the Student Support Team for the year group in question, who will review the student's conduct and decide as to the best course of action.

4.3 Individual Behaviour Plans

An Individual Behaviour Plan will be developed for a student when they have not modified behaviours deemed inappropriate following a number of interventions. An IBP will be designed to respond to specific behaviour concerns, will state expectations and will be co-signed by the student's parent/guardians. The IBP will also outline a period after which a review of the student's behaviour will take place and the possible sanctions, should behaviour not improve.

4.4 Ladder of Reward

Positive behaviour is reinforced by staff through the application of a series of rewards. In the delivery of such rewards a teacher employs his/her professional discretion in deciding the most appropriate method to be used. Staff are encouraged to utilise the full range of rewards available in supporting positive behaviour in school:

- Verbal praise
- VS Ware Positive – teacher/year head will inform student.
- Notification to Year Head
- Notification to parent of positive behaviour.
- Notification to Awards Committee

4.5 **Ladder of Sanction**

Within our school, effecting change to negative behaviour is addressed by a ladder of sanction response. A serious or grave offence may require immediate application of an appropriately weighted intervention. This hierarchy of response begins with:

- Verbal warning
- Use of journal notes system
- Use of VS Ware Behaviour
- Detention Warning – lunch time
- Note to Year Head
- Detention Notice — Wednesday afternoon.
- Student Support Team and/or Pastoral Support Team intervention
- Individual Behaviour Plan
- Suspension
- Engagement with external support agencies (NEPS/HSE/EWO/Community Gardai)
- Expulsion

4.6 **Student Support Year Teams (SST)**

A student support team will exist for each year group consisting of the Year Head class teacher and the Deputy Principal for that year group. This team will administer the behaviour code for the respective year group.

Referral of issues to the year team by staff members will be through the year head referral form.

Referral to the SST will be at the discretion of the Year Head and will normally occur in the case of three or more repeat offences, or in the case of serious or grave offences.

- 4.6.a Interpretation and application of the rules in section 5 below is a matter for the SST and/or Deputy Principals. An appeal of a decision of the SST or the Principal or Deputy Principals can be made, as outlined below (Section 8 below).
- 4.6. b The initial investigation of an allegation or report is conducted by the Year Head & depending on the allegation may also involve the Deputy Principal. The intention of this investigation is to ascertain if a report has credibility and if an incident requires further investigation. In the normal course of events, this initial interview will take place as immediately as is practicable to capture a fresh version of events. It is the right of the school, acting in loco parentis, to conduct this initial interview without the presence and notification of parents.
- 4.6.c In the case of a serious or grave offence or a disputed offence, the SST, having established an alleged offence, shall interview the student as soon as practicable, following notification of the alleged offence.

The student, at the interview, shall be notified of the allegations and shall be given a full opportunity to comment on the allegations made. The SST, following such an interview, shall determine whether the student has committed a serious or grave offence and, should this be the case, shall apply the appropriate disciplinary procedures outlined in the code.

4.6.d The SST will have authority to make recommendations regarding students or incidents to the principal. The SST have the authority to recommend suspension to the principal. Only the Principal or Acting Principal may suspend a student.

The SST will refer individual students to the Pastoral Care Team for support or counselling. The Pastoral Care Team will process all referrals for counselling, including the obtaining of parental consent for support or counselling, in accordance with the school's Pastoral Care Policy.

4.7 Lunch time Detention

Lunch time detention may be utilised by members of staff as a sanction for persistent low-level breaches of the code of behaviour including:

- Out of class without permission
- Contacting home on a device without informing the office.
- Persistent low – level disruption

Lunch time detention is normally applied to a student on the day of the incident.

Failure to attend Lunchtime Detention, after a reminder has issued, will result in an afternoon detention as a sanction.

4.8 Compulsory payments

Payment for graffiti removal, repainting, or repair of property will be imposed to defray cost.

4.9 Wednesday Afternoon Detention

This will run from 1.15 – 2.15pm.

Advance notice of detention will be given to the parents or guardians by letter so that arrangements can be made to collect students. The student will complete a reflection sheet during this time.

Parents of students who fail to attend for detention, without prior explanation or arrangement, will be contacted by the school authorities to discuss this grave offence for which suspension will be imposed.

If a student has been detained three times within the period of an academic year and then receives a fourth detention, the sanction of suspension is imposed automatically.

4.10 Restorative Practices

In accordance with our anti-bullying policy, where the SST deem it appropriate, they will utilise Restorative Practices to help students who engage in hurtful and/or offensive behaviour take responsibility for their actions, understand the consequences of their behaviour, and restore a positive relationship with those affected by their actions.

1. Mediation between pupils, acknowledging what has happened,
2. What harm has been done.
3. What can be done to put it right,
4. Apologising and finally agreeing a way forward is at the heart of this practice.

4.11 Data management and GDPR regulations

All data in relation to discipline; records, notifications, decision and meetings will be handled in accordance with the terms of the school's Data Protection policy.

SECTION 5. THE STANDARD OF BEHAVIOUR EXPECTED

*In section 5, school **expectations** regarding behaviour are outlined in bold print, with any **rules, procedures or prescriptions** relating to that behaviour stated in standard print.*

***Sanctions** consequent on the breaking of these rules or the ignoring of procedures are outlined in the correspondingly numbered section — for example, section 5.1.a carrying the expectations and rules is followed below by section 5.1.a/s, outlining the related sanctions.*

5.1 GENERAL CONDUCT, SCHOOL EXPECTATIONS

- 5.1.a All members of the school community are expected to show courtesy and respect for each other, for members of staff and any visitors and behave in a socially acceptable manner in school and while engaged in school related activities outside of school.**

Incidents of disrespect will be regarded as a serious or grave offence, depending on the details of the incident. Any comments of a racist or discriminatory nature will not be tolerated and are considered a grave offence.

- 5.1b Students must always show care for property, buildings, books, desks and all equipment of the school, teachers and other students.**

Student lockers remain the property of the school and are only provided as a convenience to students during the school year. As such school management retains the right to open students' lockers without needing to seek permission from the student as part of any investigation or to deal with any matter of hygiene.

- 5.1.c It is our expectation that the teaching-learning environment be free from distraction.**

Students' mobile devices (phones, tablets laptops, watches etc...) are permitted in the school solely for educational purposes. They may be used only while in the classroom and only under the direct instruction of the teacher. Otherwise, all devices should be powered off and put in the student's locker on arrival to school.

Students must make telephone calls from the office during school hours so that school management can be aware of any issues.

- 5.1.d In order to be organised for class, students will only use lockers in the morning before 1st class, during mid-morning break and lunchtime and again in the evening. Likewise, students are only**

allowed to fill water bottles during the designated break times and not between classes.

- 5.1.e All members of the school community are expected to take care of their school environment, ensuring, by taking personal responsibility, that the school, its environs and classrooms remain litter free.**

Chewing gum is banned from the school. Tippex and other such products are also banned.

- 5.1.f All students are expected to follow directions from staff designed to ensure their own and other's health and safety.**

- 5.1.g It is the responsibility of every member of the school community that an ethos of mutual respect be fostered and that the health, dignity and personal safety of all members of the school community be maintained.**

In accordance with the Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools bullying is defined as follows:

Bullying is unwanted negative behaviour, verbal, psychological or physical conducted, by an individual or group against another person (or persons) and which is repeated over time.

The following types of bullying behaviour are included in the definition of bullying:

- deliberate exclusion, malicious gossip and other forms of relational bullying,
- Cyber-bullying and
- Identity-based bullying such as homophobic bullying, racist bullying, bullying based on a person's membership of the Traveller community and bullying of those with disabilities or special educational needs.

Isolated or once-off incidents of intentional negative behaviour, including a once-off offensive or hurtful text message or other private messaging, do not fall within the definition of bullying and will be dealt with under this code (section 5.4.e).

However, placing a once-off offensive or hurtful public message, image or statement on a social network site or other public forum where that message, image or statement can be viewed and/or repeated by other people will be regarded as bullying behaviour.

Possession and/or circulation of any indecent, pornographic or socially objectionable material is forbidden in school and is considered a grave offence.

5.1 GENERAL CONDUCT RELATED SANCTIONS

5.1 a Disrespectful behaviour to any member of the school community or visitors:

- Inappropriate or abusive language will warrant at least a lunchtime detention.
- A detention will be imposed if it is a serious offence.
- Grave offences in this area (such as racist comments etc.) may merit suspension.

5.1.b Damage to property:

- Accidental breakage will be charged to the student and their parents or guardians.
- Defacement of school property or the property of a teacher will be regarded as a serious or grave offence. The student will be referred to the Year Head. The student may be required to clean the graffiti, or pay to have the cleaning done, or pay to have the damage to property repaired.
- Destruction, vandalism of or interference with the property of, of teachers, ancillary staff, or of other students, resulting from carelessness or wilful intent by students, will be regarded as a serious or grave offence.
- Any form of stealing will be regarded as a serious offence and will merit detention. Grave offences will merit suspension.

5.1.c Mobile Phones/Tablets/Laptops:/Smart watches:

Student Digital Devices which are being used outside of the classroom or within the room without teacher guidance will be confiscated. Devices must be handed over to the staff member when requested. Students are reminded that the phone will be confiscated when they are misused. Refusal to comply with this request will be regarded as a refusal to comply with schools' rules and as a serious offence warranting a suspension.

Devices will be confiscated for the duration of the school day and will be available for return from the school office at the end of tuition.

5.1d Tippex or other similar substances will be confiscated.

5.1.e Littering is regarded as an offence and will warrant a community service activity such as clean up duties at lunch time.

Chewing Gum: The use of chewing gum is considered a serious issue since it is detrimental to furniture and carpets.

- 5.1. g Any incident of bullying/exclusion/cyber bullying/homophobic or identity-based bullying will be dealt with in accordance with the school's Anti-Bullying Policy. Any indecent, pornographic or socially objectionable material, by the judgement of a staff member, will be confiscated and can only be returned when the student is accompanied by a parent. Possession and/or circulation of such material will be considered a grave offence depending on the circumstances. It is to be noted that any offence involving child pornography and coming under the remit of the Child Protection Policy will be handled in accordance with the procedures in that policy.

5.2 CONDUCT IN CLASS - SCHOOL EXPECTATIONS

Encouraging positive behaviour in class is at the core of our school mission. Learning is a partnership between students and staff in the school. By taking personal responsibility for their behaviour, students ensure a positive teaching and learning environment in the classroom. It is our expectation that behaviour in class promotes the student's own learning and the learning of others and assists the teacher in his or her role.

- 5.2.a **Students are required to be on time for class.**
Students should line up outside the specialist rooms to wait quietly for the teacher to arrive.
- 5.2.b **Students are expected to present themselves prepared for class, with the correct books and materials.**
- 5.2.c **Students are expected to listen attentively to the teacher, to follow instructions and to participate in the work of the class to the best of their ability.**
- 5.2.d **Students are expected to be respectful towards their teachers and towards the other students in the class and to be mindful of the teacher's right to teach and the students' right to learn.**

Class may not be disrupted for any reason.

Students should always have their journal with them. All homework must be noted in the journal. Students should present their journal to a teacher when requested. The journal should be maintained in good order, without defacement. The school journal is the property of MMC.

Class Tutors and teachers will check the journals on a regular basis, as will the Year Heads. Parents are asked to sign the student journal at the beginning of the academic year and monitor the journal throughout each week, checking

that it is being used to note homework and that there are no unsigned notes from teachers.

- 5.2.e **To aid the organisation of their learning, students should note homework in their journals. It is our expectation that all homework (oral and written) be done to the required standard and must be completed in time to meet deadlines.**
- 5.2.f **Students are expected to abide by the Computer and Network Usage Agreement in the school. (c.f. Appendix 4.)**
- 5.2.g **To maintain an orderly learning environment, students are expected to keep their classrooms clean and to help pick up any litter when they are asked.**
- 5.2.h **Students are expected to put their chairs up on the desks at the end of the day and to help tidy the room.**

5.2. CONDUCT CLASS, RELATED SANCTIONS

Classroom management is properly the preserve of the subject teacher. The sanctions outlined here are cognisant of the professional discretion of subject teacher

Arriving late for class:	<p><i>On the first occasion:</i> - Warning given</p> <p><i>On subsequent occasions:</i> - Meeting with year head.</p> <p><i>Persistent lateness:</i> - Lunchtime detention and contact with parents.</p>
Not having books or materials for class:	<p>On the first occasion: - Verbal warning given</p> <p>On subsequent occasions: - In the case of students who consistently refuse to do homework, the student can be referred to the Deputy</p> <p>A meeting will be requested with parents to address the situation.</p>
No Homework done:	<p><i>On the first occasion:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Verbal warning. • Note in the journal to be signed by parents or a standard letter home. • Phone call home by subject teacher. <p><i>On subsequent occasions:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On recurrence of the problem, the teacher may consult with the Year Head regarding addressing the problem with the student. <p><i>Persistent offences:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meeting with the Year Head.
Disruptive behaviour in class:	<p><i>On the first occasion</i> -Verbal warning will be given</p> <p><i>On subsequent occasions:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A note sent home for signing by parents. • Consultation with and referral to the Year Head. • Serious offences or constant disruption will result in the behaviour report card being issued.
Eating and drinking in class:	<p><i>On the first occasion:</i> - Verbal warning given.</p> <p><i>On subsequent occasions</i>-A note will be sent home for signing by parents.</p>
Failure to comply with the Computer and Network Usage Agreement	<p>Failure to comply with the Computer and Network Usage Agreement will result in loss of computer privileges. Should the infraction in question fall under another section of this code, such as that covering vandalism or the possession and circulation of indecent material or bullying, the offence will also be treated in line with that section of the code</p>
Forged Documentation	<p>The presentation of forged documentation or signatures or the presentation of plagiarised work or the work of another in examinations or projects will be considered a grave offence and will warrant suspension. There will be an obvious consequence with respect to examination material which will be cancelled, and marks will be forfeited.</p>

5.3. ATTENDANCE AND PUNCTUALITY SCHOOL EXPECTATIONS

It is our expectation that each student will be aware of the importance of attendance at school and at each lesson as a fundamental requirement to achieving success in education. It is also our expectation that students understand that punctuality is critical in promoting a positive teaching and learning environment.

5.3.a In the interests of good order and learning, all students must be in time for all classes. It is the view of the school that punctuality in the morning is the responsibility of each student with the support of parents and guardians. As such, the school relies on the support of parents and guardians in relation to this issue.

A student may not be in the school unless she is marked present. It is the student's responsibility to report to the office if they come in after the class commences to be marked present for the day. Otherwise, a student is marked absent for the day, and this is automatically included in the report to the EWO. This is considered a serious offence since the school is not officially aware of the presence of the student in the building.

5.3.b The following procedures apply should it be necessary that a student be absent from class for a period during the day:

Parents or guardians may, having notified the school, collect a student from the school and return her to the school afterwards.

- (i) Permission for absence from class must be sought by presenting a request from parents or guardians. This can be done through the Schools Management Information System and the school App.

Students must sign out at the school office before being collected by their parent/guardian to record the absence from class.

- (ii) On returning to the school, students must sign back in at the office.
- (iii) Unaccompanied groups of students are not allowed to leave the school.

5.3.c The following procedures apply should it be necessary that a student be absent from school for a day or longer.

If a student is absent for one or more consecutive days the parent/guardian must notify the school.

This can be done through the school's Management Information System online or alternatively the student can provide a note The Principal or Deputy Principal.

Procedures in this section are established to comply with the provisions of the Education (Welfare) Act, 2000. Section 18 imposes a duty on parents to inform the school of the reasons where a child is absent from the school during part of a school day or for a school day or for more than a school day. Under section 21(1) of the said Act, the school is obliged to keep a record of attendance for each student for each school day, which must specify the reasons for any absence. Pursuant to section 21 (4) of said Act, 'where the aggregate number of school days on which a student is absent is not less than 20 or where a student, in the opinion of the Principal, is not attending school regularly; the Principal is obliged to so inform, by notice in writing, an Educational Welfare Officer.

5.3.d The following procedures apply should a student arrive late to school:

Late for 08.40am

All students who are late report to the social area where the fact will be recorded so that the student is not marked absent for that day.

Students must have a note from parents to explain lateness.

If a student is late throughout the day the parent must notify the school via the app and on arriving in school these students must sign in at the main office before proceeding to their class.

5.3.e Students must remain within school grounds and attend timetabled classes, unless they have permission to leave the school and are collected by a parent/guardian or other arrangements are validated over the phone with the parent/guardian. A valid reason must be presented for leaving the school.

5.3. ATTENDANCE AND PUNCTUALITY SANCTIONS PROCEDURES

5.3.f Truancy from school will warrant referral to the Year Head and Principal and is regarded as a grave offence.

Non-attendance at timetabled classes (though the student may still be in the building) is regarded as a serious offence, because of concern for student safety and the way it impacts on a student's education and the health and safety of all.

5.4 HEALTH AND SAFETY, SCHOOL EXPECTATIONS

As a Health Promoting School, we endeavour to offer students a broad range of healthy activities and options. Through the curricular and extracurricular programme, these options are presented to our community. All members of our school community are entitled to teach and learn in an area devoid of unnecessary health and safety risk.

5.4.a Students are expected to be always vigilant to ensure their own safety and the safety of the other members of the school community or persons visiting the school.

5.4.b It is our expectation that students will uphold the Public Health (Tobacco) Act 2002 in relation to cigarette smoking which is illegal on school premises.

Section 47(b) of the Public Health (Tobacco) Act, 2002 states:

Fines of up to €3,000 can be incurred by persons Smoking in a prohibited area. Smoking will be considered a grave offence. The use of 'e-cigarettes', vaping etc as it is a means of consuming nicotine, a harmful substance, is also forbidden on school premises and will be considered a grave offence.

5.4.c It is our expectation that students will uphold the law in relation to possession, consumption, inhalation or otherwise taking of drugs or alcohol or any harmful or mood-altering substances.

5.4.d Any attempt to encourage or involve others in such activities (5.4.c above) is forbidden. (c.f. the school Substance Abuse Policy for a full account of procedures in relation to the use/abuse of controlled substances.)

5.4.e It is our expectation that each member of the school community will act in a manner which promotes the dignity of all members of the community. Anti-social acts against any member of the school community such as bullying, intimidation, extortion, rough conduct, harassment, teasing and exclusion are not acceptable in the context of a school which promotes the dignity of the individual. Breach of this rule will be handled in accordance with the Anti-Bullying Policy in the school.

Any act of assault or physical violence or battery against any member of the school community will be considered a grave offence. Incitement to or facilitation of acts of assault or battery will also be considered a grave offence.

5.4.g Students are expected to be conscious of the welfare of others while moving between classes and at break times, and while on the school grounds

In the interests of safety, students are requested to walk on the left-hand side of the corridor. Running on the corridors or in the classrooms or the careless depositing of students' possessions is always forbidden.

5.4.h It is our expectation that students will not bring any illegal, forbidden or potentially dangerous substances, implements or objects (as determined by school authorities) to school. Any illegal, forbidden or potentially dangerous substances, objects or implements will be confiscated. Parents may be required to accompany students when such issues are being dealt with. Possession of such substances/objects/implements can lead to suspension or expulsion if the situation is considered grave enough. For health and safety reasons, throwing objects in the classrooms or in the corridors is forbidden.

5.4 HEALTH AND SAFETY SANCTIONS

5.4.j As smoking /vaping is a grave offence, should reasonable certainty exist that a student has been smoking/vaping in the school or on school grounds, the student will be suspended. The same sanctions will apply to the use of 'e-cigarettes'. In cases of persistent or repeated offences of smoking, the student may be reported to the Health and Safety Authority.

5.4.k Possession, consumption, inhalation or otherwise taking of drugs or alcohol or any harmful or mood-altering substances and/or any attempt to encourage or involve others in such activities is forbidden. Breach of this rule will be considered to constitute a grave offence and will lead to suspension or expulsion. The procedures for handling situations in relation to substance use and abuse are outlined in the school Substance Abuse Policy and will be followed in these cases.

5.4.l In reference to behaviours in 5.4.d incidents will be investigated by the Year Team and/or Principal and the seriousness and nature of the incident determined. Procedures outlined in the Substance Abuse Policy will be followed in these cases.

5.4.m In reference to behaviours in 5.4.e incidents will be investigated by the Year Team and/or Principal and the seriousness and nature of the incident determined. Procedures outlined in the School Bullying Policy will be followed in handling such situations and the determination and imposition of sanctions will be a matter for the Year Head Teams.

determined. Procedures outlined in the Substance Abuse Policy will be followed in these cases.

5.4.m In reference to behaviours in 5.4.e incidents will be investigated by the Year Team and/or Principal and the seriousness and nature of the incident determined. Procedures outlined in the School Bullying Policy will be followed in handling such situations and the determination and imposition of sanctions will be a matter for the Year Head Teams.

Any act of assault or violence, as outlined in 5.4.e, will be considered a grave offence and will warrant suspension or expulsion. It is a requirement for the school to notify an act of battery and/or assault to An Garda Siochana.

Repeated involvement in acts of assault or violence or an act of grave seriousness will warrant referral to the Board of Management for consideration of sanctions up to and including expulsion.

5.4.g/s Any act which impinges on the welfare of other students, through boisterous or careless actions, will lead to a sanction commensurate with the seriousness of the offence. It may include confiscation of carelessly deposited personal possessions or materials, detention, or suspension.

5.4.h/s Any implement which might be considered threatening or dangerous in the school context will be confiscated. A parent may be required to accompany the student when collecting the item/s. Possession of such implements may lead to suspension if the situation is considered grave enough.

Students throwing objects, should this cause intentional harm or not, will be issued with a lunchtime/afternoon detention at the least. More serious sanctions will apply in response to intentional acts that result in harm to others.

5.5 DRESS AND APPEARANCE EXPECTATIONS

It is our expectation that all students will wear the official school uniform, without modification, at all times. The wearing of the school uniform promotes respect for self and peers and serves to increase a sense of community, order and organisation.

5.5.a Out of respect for themselves and others in the community, students must be neat and tidy.

Students will wear the full school uniform without modification. Only official school jackets should be worn in the school during tuition times.

During P.E. period, each student must be properly attired in the appropriate P.E. uniform.

5.5.b All students are expected to keep their hair in a neat and clean condition. Extremes of hair colour and style, as determined by school management, will not be allowed.

5.5.d Students may wear, at most, two pairs of stud earrings, one ring, and one bracelet.

5.5 DRESS AND APPEARANCE SANCTIONS

5.5.a If the dress code is not adhered to:

1. Explanatory notes will be required.
2. Further to this and depending on the circumstances:

- A record is uploaded to vsware
- After the second offence parents are contacted by the year head
- Students may be given items of uniform to wear for the day

5.5.b Students will be asked to remove hair colour or remedy hair style deemed to be extreme, to remove makeup, unless they have received permission from a member of school management to wear makeup in accordance with section 5.5.c. Contact may be made with parents/guardians to gain their assistance in ensuring that the rule is complied with within a reasonable timeframe. Failure to comply with such request will be deemed as noncompliance with the school code.

5.5.c Students will be asked to remove jewellery more than that allowed. Excess or inappropriate jewellery may be confiscated.

SECTION 6. SUSPENSION

- 6.1 The purpose of suspending a student from school is to provide the student with time for reflection, to emphasise the seriousness of specific misbehaviours and to give staff time to plan ways of helping the student to change unacceptable behaviour.
- 6.1.a The Board of Management has delegated authority to the principal to suspend a student for a period up to and including three days. If a suspension for longer than three days is being proposed, the matter must be referred to the Board. In such a case, having sought approval from the Chairperson of the Board, the Principal may suspend for up to five days to allow for time to convene a Board meeting. The Board will not normally impose a suspension of more than ten consecutive school days.
- 6.1.b Suspension will normally be imposed for a serious offence, as defined in this policy. Further to this, where in the opinion of the Student Support Teams and/or Principal or Acting Principal, detention or warning are inadequate disciplinary responses to serious offences, or in the instance of repeated serious offences, the sanction of suspension may also be imposed. Such incidences may involve:
- A threat to the safety of others and to self
 - Undermining the dignity of members of the school community
 - Serious disruption of teaching and learning and the orderly atmosphere of the school
 - Deliberate damage to property
 - Misuse of technology
 - Substance abuse
 - Persistent breaches of the Code of Behaviour which have not been rectified by the normal school interventions.
 - Truancy
- 6.1.c Other than in the case of immediate suspension (6.1.e below), before a suspension is imposed, the Principal, mindful of the investigation report from the Year Team, will have considered the seriousness and context of the behaviour; the impact of the behaviour on the other members of the school community; the interventions that have already been implemented with the student involved (where relevant) and the likely impact of the suspension on the particular student.
- 6.1.d Suspension Procedures.
- The alleged incident will be investigated by the Deputy Principal and/or the Year Team to determine the facts of the situation, this will involve an interview with the student(s) in question and any witnesses to the event.

Following the report from this investigation, should the principal decide that it is appropriate to suspend a student, the following procedure will be implemented:

Before the suspension is imposed, the student and their parents will be contacted, and the matter will be explained to them. Every effort will be made to request and to facilitate the student/ parent/ guardians to meet with the principal and/or Acting Principal, Deputy Principal and Year Head at a specified time acceptable to all parties, to afford them a full opportunity to comment on the disciplinary action being considered.

If the student/parents/guardians fail to attend such a meeting and fail to provide a reasonable explanation for not doing so, the matter will be determined in their absence and the suspension carried out. The student and parents/guardians will be informed in writing that the suspension has been imposed, the date from which the suspension takes effect and the period of the suspension.

In the event of the student/parents/guardian attending such a meeting, if having heard the student/parents/guardians, the principal considers that it is proper and necessary that suspension be imposed, s/he may suspend on such terms as s/he considers appropriate.

Confirmation in writing will be given to the student/parents/guardians that suspension has been imposed, the date from which such a decision takes effect and the period of the suspension. Parents/guardians will be fully informed of their right to appeal the decision to suspend to the Board of Management.

A suspension is understood to mean that the student does not have permission to be present in the building and is under the care of their parents/guardians for the day/s in question. A student coming into the school during suspension will be deemed to have flouted the behaviour code and this is considered a grave offence.

- 6.1.e Without prejudice to the foregoing, where the Principal or Acting Principal has been notified of an alleged grave offence and where immediate suspension is deemed necessary for Health and Safety reasons, the Principal, (as per EWB guidelines p75), following a preliminary investigation and without prior notice to the students/parents/ guardians, may suspend a student with immediate effect for such a period as is deemed appropriate, pending a full investigation of the alleged offence.

Official notice of such suspension will be confirmed in writing to the student/guardians/parents/ and the period of the suspension indicated, the matter will then proceed as per section 6.1 ed above.

- 6.1.f Following the imposition of a suspension, the principal will notify the Board of Management of the suspension. Under Section 21(4) of the Education (Welfare) Act, 2000, where a student is suspended for a period of not less than six days, the Principal will forthwith so inform the Educational Welfare Officer by notice in writing.

- 6.1.g Following a period of suspension, the student, accompanied by her parent/guardian, is required to present herself to the Principal or Deputy Principal on returning to the school, before going to any class. At this meeting the Principal/Deputy Principal will review the case, and decide what structures are required to support the student in returning to school and in addressing the behaviour which led to the suspension.

6.2 Appeals of suspension

A suspension imposed by the principal can be appealed to the Board of Management as follows:

- 6.2.a An appeal should be submitted in writing to the Secretary of the Board of Management within five school days of the imposition of the suspension and should set out the parent's case against the suspension.
- 6.2.b At its next meeting, the Board will nominate two members, neither of whom should have any involvement in the case, to investigate the issue and report back to the Board with its findings and recommendations. (A recording secretary for the sub-committee may be included).
- 6.2.c If this investigation recommends that the Board remove the suspension, the record of the suspension will be removed from the student's file. If the investigation approves the suspension, then the suspension will stand.
- 6.2.d There is no further right to appeal unless the student's cumulative suspensions in any one year exceed 20 days, in which case there is a right to appeal to the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Skills. The principal must inform the parents and the NEWB if this 20-day limit has been reached.

6.3 Review

The Board will monitor the frequency of the use of suspension as a disciplinary measure and will regularly review the procedures to ensure that it is being used fairly and appropriately and in the best interests of the entire school community.

SECTION 7. EXPULSION

SECTION 7. EXPULSION

- 7.1 Only the Board of Management has the authority to expel a student. This authority may not be delegated.
- 7.2 Expulsion of a student is a profoundly serious step and will only be taken by the Board.
- 7.2.a Where there is significant and continuing disruption to the learning of others or to the teaching process.
- 7.2.b Where there is a serious threat to the health and safety of the student him/herself, other students or members of staff.
- 7.2.c Where the student is uncontrollable and is not amenable to any form of school authority.
- 7.2.d Where parents refuse to exercise their responsibility for the student in accordance with this Behaviour Code
- 7.2.e Where the student's behaviour is detrimental to sustaining the ethos of the school
- 7.2.f In cases of specific behaviour such as:
- Actual violence or physical assault.
 - Supplying illegal / mood altering substances.
 - Sexual assault and indecent sexual behaviour
 - Deliberate serious damage to property
 - Serious misuse of technology.
- 7.3 Other than in exceptional circumstances (section 7.4. below), before considering expulsion, the school will have taken significant steps to address the student's behaviour. These steps may include:
- 7.3.a Meeting with parents and the student to endeavour to find ways of helping the student to change their behaviour.
- 7.3.b Ensuring that the student understands the possible consequences of her behaviour, should it persist.
- 7.3.c Ensuring that other possible options have been given a fair trial to bring about an improvement in behaviour through an Individual Behaviour Plan (IBP).
- 7.3.d Seeking the assistance of support agencies (e.g., National Educational Psychological Service, Health Service Executive Community Services, the National Behavioural Support Service, Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services, National Council for Special Education).
- 7.4 However there may be circumstances where the Board of Management forms the opinion that a student should be expelled for a first offence where the issue

is grave and/or of such a serious nature as to warrant that sanction. Due process and fair procedures will be followed in all cases and the principles of natural justice will apply.

7.5. Procedure for expulsion

- 7.5.1. The principal will ensure that there is a thorough investigation of the incident. The student may be suspended from school while this investigation is taking place, if this is deemed necessary, in accordance with section 6 above.
- 7.5.2. The Principal will inform the student and the parents, in writing, of the details of the alleged misbehaviour and the possibility that it could result in expulsion.
- 7.5.3. The student and parents will be given every opportunity to respond to the complaint before a final decision is made. If the final decision is that the principal intends to recommend expulsion to the Board of Management, then the parents will be invited to a meeting with the principal before the recommendation proceeds to the Board.
- 7.5.4. The Principal will provide the parents and the Board of Management with records of the allegations, the investigation and the grounds on which the Board is being asked to consider expulsion.
- 7.5.5. The parents will be notified of the date of the Board of Management hearing and will be invited to attend. They will be given adequate notice of the meeting and will be informed that they may make a written and oral submission to the Board. The written submission may be made in advance.

7.6. The Board of Management Hearing

- 7.6.1. The Board will ensure impartiality and no Board member who has had any involvement in the circumstances of the case will take part in the hearing.
- 7.6.2. At the hearing, the principal and the parents, or a student who is eighteen years or over, will put their case to the Board in each other's presence.
- 7.6.3. Parents may wish to be accompanied at such hearings and the Board will facilitate this. There is no right to legal representation in this process.
- 7.6.4. Neither Principal nor parents will be present when the Board is making its decision.

7.7. Following the Board Decision

- 7.7.1. Where the student and their parents/guardians attend the meeting with the B.O.M., and the Board, having heard the student and/or their parent/guardian, form the view that it is necessary and proper to impose the sanction of expulsion, the Board, before making the decision to expel the student, will notify, in writing, the Educational Welfare Officer of its opinion and the reasons therefore, in accordance with Section 24(1) of the Education (Welfare) Act, 2000.

Where the student/parents/guardians do not attend the meeting:

If the student or his/her parent/guardian fail to attend the meeting with the

B.O.M. and fail to provide a reasonable explanation for not doing so, the B.O.M. will determine the matter in their absence. Before deciding to expel the student, the Board will notify, in writing, the Educational Welfare Officer of its opinion and the reasons therefore, in accordance with Section 24(1) of the Education (Welfare) Act, 2000.

- 7.7.2 Where it is decided to impose the sanction of expulsion, the student and his/her parent/guardian will be informed by letter by the Board that the sanction of expulsion has been imposed and the date from which decision will take effect. The student will not be expelled from the school before the passing of twenty school days following the receipt by the Education Welfare Officer of the notification. In the interim, the Board may, in accordance with section 5 of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000, suspend or make other arrangements to ensure that 'good order and discipline are maintained in the school'.

7.8 Involvement of the Education Welfare Officer

- 7.8.1 Within this twenty-day period, the Education Welfare Officer will convene meetings with relevant parties to ensure that arrangements are made for the student to continue in education.
- 7.8.2 While these negotiations are taking place, and before the expulsion is finalised, the Board may consider it necessary to continue the student's suspension from school. This task may be delegated to the Principal or Chairperson.
- 7.8.3 After the twenty days has elapsed, where the Board remains of the view that the student should be expelled, the decision will be formally confirmed to the parents and the student in a registered letter signed by the Chairperson and the Principal.
- 7.8.4 The parents will be told about the right to appeal and supplied with the appropriate form. This appeal is made to the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Skills.

SECTION 8. APPEALS

8.1 General Remarks

The parent of a student or, in the case of a student who has reached the age of 18 years, the student, may appeal against a decision of a teacher, Year Head, the Behaviour Support team or the principal,

Appeals are made in accordance with the hierarchy of authority in the school. An appeal against the decision of a teacher may be addressed to the Student Support Team. An Appeal against the decision of a Year Head or the Student Support Team will be heard by the principal and thereafter by the Board of Management and an appeal of a decision of the principal will be heard by the Board of Management. An appeal of certain decisions of the Board of Management (section 8.4 below) will be directed to the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Skills as outlined in the Education Act.

8.2 An appeal to the principal

The parent/guardian of a student, or, in the case of a student who has reached the age of eighteen, the student, may appeal to the principal against a decision of a teacher that the student has committed an offence and /or any decision of a teacher to impose a penalty.

It is recommended that the initial approach be informal, seeking to investigate and resolve the situation. The appeal can be made orally or in writing within a reasonable time from the date of the communication of the decision. Upon receipt of notification of an appeal, the principal shall investigate the matter and shall arrange a meeting with the parent/guardian and/or student and the relevant teacher. At this meeting, all parties shall be given a full opportunity to comment on the matters under appeal. The arrangement of such a meeting will be undertaken cognisant of the school policy on teacher/parent meetings. In the event that the parent/guardian and [or student do not attend that meeting and fail to provide a reasonable explanation for not doing so, the appeal will proceed in their absence.

After hearing the parties, the principal may make such decision as considered appropriate including affirming, revoking or amending any decision of the teacher. Notice of the decision will be communicated to the parties involved.

8.3 An appeal to the Board of Management (other than in the case of suspension or expulsion see section 6 and 7 above)

The parent/guardian of a student, or, in the case of a student who has reached the age of eighteen, the student, may appeal to the Board of Management against a decision of the principal that the student has committed an offence and /or any decision of the Principal or Year Team to impose a penalty. The right of appeal exists regardless of whether the decision was made by the Year Team or Principal or on foot of an appeal against a decision of a teacher.

The appeal must be in writing, specifying the grounds for the appeal and must be lodged with the Chairperson of the Board of Management within a period of 21 days from the date of the decision being appealed.

In determining the appeal, the Board of Management will follow any procedures, which may be prescribed by the Minister for Education and Skills pursuant to Section 28 of the Education Act, 1998 and the current guidelines for Boards in handling any such complaint.

Upon receipt of the Notice of Appeal, the B.O.M. shall appoint a subcommittee to deal with the appeal. The sub-committee will notify all the parties involved of the procedure that is to be followed. The subcommittee shall investigate the matter and meet the parties involved. At this meeting, all parties shall be given a full opportunity to comment on the matters under appeal. In the event that the parent/guardian and [or student do not attend that meeting and fail to provide a reasonable explanation for not doing so, the appeal will proceed in their absence.

After hearing the parties, the sub-committee will prepare a report for the Board of management and the Board of Management may make such decisions as considered appropriate including affirming, revoking or amending any decision of the principal. Notice of the decision will be communicated to the parties involved.

8.4 The appeals process through the Department of Education

Pursuant to Section 29 of the Education Act, 1998, there is a statutory right of appeal to the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Skills against a decision of the Board of Management or of a person acting on behalf of the Board to permanently exclude a student from the school or to suspend a student from attendance at the school for a period which would bring the cumulative period of suspension to 20 school days in any one school year. This right of appeal can be exercised by the parent(s)/guardian(s) of a student, or in the case of a student who has reached the age of 18 years, by the student. The school will advise the parent/guardian and/or student of the right of appeal and associated timeframe when notifying them that the relevant sanction has been imposed.

Appeals must generally be made within forty-two calendar days from the date the decision of the school was notified to the parent/guardian or student. As a general rule, appeals will only be considered by an appeals committee under

section 29 where the parties are unable to resolve the issue at local level. Accordingly, the appellant and the Board of Management will first consider the matter at local level to determine if an accommodation can be reached.

Appeals to the Secretary General must be made in writing on the Section 29 Appeals Application form (a copy of which can be obtained from the school or from the Appeals Administration Unit of the Department of Education and Skills) and addressed, by signed letter, fax or e-mail to the Appeals Administration Unit of the DES. The appellant should at the same time notify the school of the appeals or, alternatively, send a copy of the completed Application Forms to the school.

SECTION 9. REVIEW and EVALUATION

9.1 Yearly Review

The code will be reviewed on a yearly basis by school management in conjunction with the Year Teams. In conducting this review, these teams will seek the views of the Student Council and the Teachers' Council in the school. Cognisance will be taken of the level and pattern of suspensions and detentions enforced and the effectiveness of these measures.

Next Review will be in May 2024.

Signed by: Clare McCutcheon Chairperson BOM
Clare McCutcheon

Tricia Ryan Principal

Date: 29/05/2023

