

CODE OF BEHAVIOUR

By sending your child to Our Lady's Secondary School, it is understood that you have read and accept the school Code of Behaviour.

The Code of Behaviour of Our Lady's Secondary School is published in accordance with National Educational Welfare Board guidelines, the Education Act 1998, the Education (Welfare) Act 2000, the Equal Status Act 2000 and other relevant legislation. The Code of Behaviour was drawn up in consultation with the Principal, teachers, parents/guardians and students of the school and was fully reviewed in the 2009-2010 school year. This policy should be read in conjunction with the School's policies on Pastoral Care, Attendance and Participation, Admission, Special Educational Needs, Homework and Assessment, Guidance, and its Anti-Bullying policy. It sets out the roles and responsibilities of all the educational partners, the strategies used to promote good behaviour and the review dates for the policy

Our Lady's Secondary School is under the trusteeship of CEIST. The policy has been developed in line with the Mission Statement of our Trustees where the Christian values of respect, trust, justice, dignity and self worth are an integral part of the ethos. The school strives to provide a safe secure learning environment for the development of our students. Behaviour, which is ill mannered, disrespectful, disruptive or dangerous cannot be allowed. All students have a duty to assist in the learning process, and a duty to allow others to reach their potential. Our school Code of Behaviour is based on respect for oneself, for others and for our environment, so that a positive and co-operative school atmosphere prevails. It is our policy to encourage and acknowledge positive behaviour and to foster and develop qualities such as responsibility and leadership, thus preparing students to participate fully as good citizens in society. We believe that the quality of learning, teaching and behaviour in school are inseparable issues and the responsibility of all staff and students. Therefore we aim to maintain and build upon our high standards of teaching and learning.

Objectives:

- Our Lady's Secondary School is characterised by high standards in all areas of school life. We aim to uphold the characteristic spirit of good discipline, a strong work ethic, high educational attainment and good relationships.
- We aim to maintain a positive climate where mutual respect and co-operation are fostered throughout the school community and where indiscipline is dealt with in line with this Code of Behaviour.
- We strive to be reasonable at all times in the implementation of rules and sanctions. Our Code of Behaviour is implemented in a manner that is consistent and just to all students.

Article 42 of the Constitution states that

The State acknowledges that the primary and natural educator of the child is the Family and guarantees to respect the inalienable right and duty of parents to provide, according to their means, for the religious and moral, intellectual, physical and social education of their children.

At Our Lady's we recognise that parents/guardians play an important role in the education process and therefore a partnership approach to education is promoted. This is characterised by a shared sense of purpose and mutual respect. Positive links between home and school are maintained and developed through the class teachers, the Pastoral Care system, inter-communication between the school and the home (student journal, student reports, yearly parent-teacher meetings, newsletters) and the Parents Advisory Council.

Assistance is sought from external agencies (e.g. National Educational Psychological Services [N.E.P.S.], Visiting Teacher for the Travellers and the Health Authorities) when deemed necessary.

Out of school professional assessment and advice may be recommended in order to assist in finding a solution to behavioural, social, academic and psychological problems. In instances where students have behavioural problems, the mutual support of parents/guardians and teacher is vital in order to progress the student's educational development.

It is expected that all students and parents/guardians will co-operate fully with the implementation of the Code of Behaviour. Students are required to assist fully with investigations into incidents of misbehaviour. For reasons of clarity it is emphasised that school rules also apply to school activities, evening study, games, field trips, tours etc.

Student Motto

In Our Lady's Secondary School there are two basic school regulations:

- ◆ We should respect ourselves and others
- ◆ We should respect our own property and the property of others

Respecting others includes recognising the rights of others:

1. Each member of my class has the right to be educated without disturbance.
2. My teacher has the right to carry out her/his work without having to constantly correct me.
3. My parents/guardians have the right to expect that I give of my best at all times.

ATTENDANCE

1. Attend school regularly and on time. Students must be present at class at 9.05 am and be punctual for all classes.
2. A note of explanation is required in the case of all absences. The note should be written in the student journal and must be signed and dated by a parent/guardian.
3. Students are not permitted to leave the school premises at breaktime.
4. Permission to leave the school during the school day will only be granted after a signed request from a parent/guardian has been sanctioned by the Principal/Deputy Principal.

The Education (Welfare) Act 2000, Section 18

Where a child is absent from the school at which he or she is registered during part of a school day, or for a school day or more than a school day, the parent of such child shall, in accordance with procedures specified in the Code of Behaviour prepared by the school under Section 23, notify the Principal of the school of the reasons for the child's absence.

The Education (Welfare) Act 2000, Section 21 (4)

Where

(a) A student is suspended from a recognised school for a period of not less than 6 days

(b) The aggregate number of school days on which a student is absent from a recognised school during a school year is not less than 20

The Principal of the school concerned shall forthwith so inform, by notice in writing, an Educational Welfare Officer.

In a case where a student who had been present for morning classes and is absent for afternoon class(es) due to unforeseen but justifiable circumstances that absence must be communicated by a parent/guardian to the school promptly on that day. A letter of explanation must be presented to the school authorities when the student returns to school.

Any request to leave school during the school day must be confirmed by a parent/guardian. In such circumstances the school must be notified in writing if a person other than the parent/guardian is collecting the student. Any Junior student leaving the school must be collected at the office by a parent, guardian or other authorized adult.

If a student feels ill or has been injured he/she should report to the Principal/Deputy Principal. Permission to go home may be granted following consultation between the student's parents/guardians and the school. The student will normally return to class to await the arrival of a parent or guardian. A student must never leave the premises or go home without prior permission from Principal/Deputy Principal.

All students must sign out in the office before leaving the premises.

Punctuality

Students who are late for school (in the morning or at any other time during the day) must report to the office on arrival at school and sign the late book. Students must ensure that the journal is stamped by the school secretary before presenting in class. A signed note of explanation from a parent/guardian should be presented to the school authorities.

UNIFORM AND APPEARANCE

- (a) Correct school uniform must be worn at all times. There are no exceptions to this rule. The uniform consists of:
- Maroon jumper with crest
 - Maroon tie
 - Grey shirt for boys, striped blouse for girls
 - Grey trousers for boys, grey skirt or trousers for girls (girls' trousers are tailored specifically for the school and no other style is permitted.)
 - Black shoes with leather uppers. (Runners, boots and pumps are not permitted.)
 - Grey or Maroon socks for girls.
 - The wearing of baseball caps is not permitted. Other hats/caps must not be worn indoors.
 - The official school tracksuit and a white or navy polo shirt must be worn for P.E. and Games.
- (b) Students must maintain a high standard of personal hygiene and smart appearance. Hair should be neat clean and tidy, in its natural colour. Beards, moustaches and shaved heads are not allowed.
- (c) The wearing of jewellery is prohibited with the exception of:
a watch, one pair of stud earrings and two rings. Chains, bracelets or any other facial jewellery may not be worn at school or at any public school occasion. This is for health and safety reasons and there will be no exceptions. Offending items will be confiscated. Students will not be exempted from this rule on the grounds that piercings are recent and need time to heal.. Wearing a plaster over jewellery is not acceptable. All such jewellery must be removed entering the school grounds and may be re-inserted on leaving the premises.
- (d) The school uniform should be worn at all times during the school year. The school uniform or full school tracksuit may be worn during the State Examinations.

GENERAL RULES

- (a) Treat all staff, fellow students and visitors to the school with respect and courtesy.

- (b) Good manners and courtesy must be shown at all times. Offensive habits are not acceptable. Gestures or comments, which may be seen as racially or sexually offensive are expressly forbidden.
- (c) Enter the school grounds through the pedestrian entrance and keep to the left. Students must enter the school building via the north door (Junior School) prior to 9.00am. The library may be used at this time. Senior students should not use the north door (main entrance) at any other time.
- (d) Orderly behaviour is expected on the school corridors. When in the buildings, students must walk, not run. Precedence should be given to members of staff and visitors when passing through doorways.
- (e) Playing football or other sports in the quadrangle and in the carpark near the back road is strictly forbidden.
- (f) Keep the school tidy and litter free. All litter should be placed in the bins provided.
- (g) Rowdy behaviour and the use of bad language are forbidden.
- (h) Participate fully in every class and other school activities
- (i) Have a journal at all times and present it when requested to do so by a teacher. The journal should be signed every week by a parent/guardian.
- (j) Arrange any necessary exchange of books at break time or lunch time.
- (k) Students are not allowed to go to the lockers during class-time. Visits to lockers are confined to break-time, lunchtime, before and after school. Vending machines may only be used a break-time and lunchtime.
- (l) **Mobile phones must be switched off and out of sight during the school day** with the exception of break time, lunch time and after 3.40pm. The school will not take responsibility for phones that are lost or stolen. In the event of mobile phones being audible or visible the teacher will confiscate the phone. The phone will be returned to the student by the Principal/Deputy Principal after three school days. The use of recording devices or any type is completely forbidden in school.
- (m) For reasons of hygiene Chewing Gum and Bubble Gum are not permitted.
- (n) Potentially dangerous items or any other materials that might cause disruption. e.g. pointed objects, laser lights, 'joke' items, rubber bands, MP3 players, Ipods, electronic and recording devices, aerosols etc are prohibited. In particular, use of still and video cameras including those on phones is strictly prohibited and will incur serious sanction such as confiscation or suspension as appropriate. Only the Principal may give permission for extraordinary use.
- (o) Possession or display of offensive or unsuitable materials or publications is forbidden. Use of any photographic, audio or video material acquired in the manner described above, and then published on personal website pages of any kind or public websites will be considered a gross invasion of privacy and will be regarded as a most serious offence.
- (p) Public displays of affection are considered inappropriate and therefore prohibited.
- (q) Students must not bring friends or acquaintances into the school grounds or building without permission from the Principal/Deputy Principal.
- (r) Any pupil under suspension/expulsion cannot come onto the school campus.
- (s) Students should show consideration for others when travelling to and from school.
- (t) Orderly and mannerly behaviour is expected at lunchtime. Students must show respect for members of the public and for public property. Loitering in groups is not permitted.
- (u) For safety and insurance reasons, students may not park their cars in the school grounds. Cars parked illegally in the school yard are liable to be clamped. A release fee of €30 will apply.
- (v) Students are expected to be good ambassadors for the school. Any behaviour considered damaging to the reputation of the school or members of the school community will be regarded as a breach of the school Code of Behaviour.
- (w) Students who are absent from or unable to sit summer tests will not be allowed proceed to the following year unless such tests are taken at a later date during the summer as confirmed by the Principal. Students who perform below their potential in summer exams may, after consultation with their teachers, be required to repeat some or all of these exams in August before the beginning of the new school year.

- (x) During the State examinations, students are expected to use the full time allocated for each paper. Students who leave the exam centre early may be required to go to another room to study until the scheduled end of the exam.
- (y) Persistent failure to work conscientiously at school will mean that parents/guardians may be asked to remove their son/daughter from the school.

CLASSROOM RULES

- (a) Arrive on time for every class.
- (b) Have journal, books and other required materials on the desk at the beginning of every class. Forgetting or losing a locker key is not an acceptable excuse for failing to have requirements for class.
- (c) **Follow the teacher's instruction.**
 - Do not interrupt the teacher when he/she is speaking.
 - Show respect to fellow students
 - Avoid distracting behaviour.
 - Follow all safety rules specified for the room in question.
 - Have regard for the authority of the teacher in the classroom.
- (d) Students should use the toilets at break-times. It is the incoming teacher who can give or refuse permission to be excused from class and this will be noted in the student journal.
- (e) Eating and drinking during class is forbidden.
- (f) Sit in assigned places
- (g) Participate fully in every class
- (h) Work to the best of your ability in order to realise your academic potential.
- (i) Complete all homework assignments.

FIRE, HEALTH & SAFETY

Fire can have fatal consequences. A high standard of fire precaution is vital to ensure the safety of all. Everyone shall be familiar with the fire evacuation procedure of the school and shall attend all organised fire drills. Failure to co-operate with fire drill will be treated as a serious offence.

- (a) Interference with fire fighting equipment, alarm systems or emergency glass is forbidden.
- (b) Possession of highly flammable substances, e.g. lighter fluid, fireworks and bangers is forbidden.
- (c) Students must not indulge in activities likely to injure others, e.g. throwing stones, gravel or other objects.
- (d) Students must walk on the left side of the corridors when moving around the school.
- (e) Students must ensure that there is clear access on all corridors. Loitering is prohibited. Bags should be placed in classrooms and must not be left unattended on the corridors.
- (f) Students must queue in a mannerly fashion at the school tuck shop.
- (g) Loitering in toilets is forbidden.
- (h) Students must not drive or cycle in the school yard.
- (i) **Students must exercise due caution when entering and exiting the school premises. Care should be taken when crossing the street outside the school.**

PROPERTY

- (a) Respect the property of the school and the property of other students.
- (b) Each student is responsible for his/her own property. Student property should be clearly labelled. Management cannot take responsibility for loss, theft or damage to student property.
- (c) Property damaged due to mistreatment or inappropriate behaviour must be replaced and paid for by the student(s) involved.
- (d) Graffiti and defacement of property is strictly forbidden.

TOBACCO, ALCOHOL & DRUGS

- (a) Possession or smoking of tobacco is forbidden in the school and its grounds. Smoking is also forbidden in the vicinity of the school or wherever students are together as a recognizable Our Lady's group. Anybody found smoking will hand over the cigarettes and be reported to the Principal/Deputy Principal/Year Head. In view of the law and the obvious hazard to health, a fine of €20 will be collected from any student found smoking. A repeat instance will lead to a fine of €50. Failure or refusal to pay a fine will normally result in suspension until the matter can be resolved to the satisfaction of the School.
- (b) The possession or consumption of alcoholic drink is forbidden in the school and its grounds.
- (c) The possession, sale, assisting a sale or use of illegal or unprescribed drugs is most strictly forbidden, as is the misuse of any other substance.
- (d) It is forbidden for a student to attend school under the influence of alcohol or any illegal substance.
- (e) Gardai will be notified of any illegal substances brought into the school
- (f) The school discourages students from entering public houses at lunchtime.

BULLYING

- (a) Everyone at Our Lady's Secondary School has the right to enjoy his/her time in school free from intimidation and harassment.
- (b) Bullying of any kind whether verbal, physical, psychological or by humiliation, intimidation or exclusion will not be tolerated.
- (c) Harassment whether verbal, non-verbal, physical or sexual will not be tolerated. [S. 23 of Employment Equality Act 1998]
- (d) Students will support each other by reporting all instances of bullying. [Health and Safety Act 1989]
All incidents of bullying and harassment will be treated seriously.

HOMEWORK

- (a) Homework and revision are essential components of schoolwork.
- (b) Homework must be recorded by students in the student journal.
- (c) Homework must be carried out diligently by the students.
- (d) Parents/guardians should check the student journal and ensure that homework is completed each night. The journal must be signed by a parent each week.
- (e) Parents/guardians must sign work or tests when requested to do so by teachers.
- (f) Persistent failure/refusal to perform assigned homework will be treated as a breach of the school Code of Behaviour and will be dealt with as such.

STUDENT JOURNAL/BOOKS

Books are expensive and should be treated with due care. Graffiti/defacement of books is prohibited. **The Student Journal is not a personal diary and should not be treated as such.** The primary function of the student journal is to record homework assignments, explanations of absences, incidents of misbehaviour and punctuality. The journal is used as a means of communication between home and school. Interference with notes from teachers or parents/guardians is prohibited. In the unlikely event of a student forgetting the journal, he/she should present to the Principal's office at 9am where a temporary replacement sheet will be provided.

CONTRAVENTION OF SCHOOL RULES/POLICIES WILL RESULT IN SANCTION.

Any act which contravenes the law or is disrespectful could be deemed an infraction of school rules.

PASTORAL CARE

THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CODE OF BEHAVIOUR OCCURS WITH THE SUPPORT OF A STRUCTURED PASTORAL CARE SYSTEM WHICH HAS AT ITS CORE THE SUPPORT OF EACH STUDENT. THE SCHOOL HAS A STRONG PASTORAL CARE TEAM CONSISTING OF SUBJECT TEACHERS, CLASS TUTORS, YEARHEADS, CHAPLAIN, GUIDANCE COUNSELLOR, PASTORAL CARE CO-ORDINATOR, DEPUTY PRINCIPAL AND PRINCIPAL. STUDENTS ARE ENCOURAGED TO ACHIEVE THEIR POTENTIAL AND BOTH EFFORT AND ACHIEVEMENT ARE RECOGNISED BY THE FORMAL AWARDS SYSTEM. THE PASTORAL CARE POLICY IS AVAILABLE FROM THE SCHOOL OFFICE ON REQUEST.

Restorative Justice

From time to time and at the discretion of the Principal/Deputy Principal, the process of “Restorative Justice” may be used in dealing with breaches of school discipline. Restorative Justice is defined by Howard Zehr(2003) as “a process to involve to the extent possible those who have a stake in a specific offence and to collectively identify and address harms, needs, and obligations, in order to heal and put things as right as possible”. The process might involve the following steps

- Meeting the student (s) and discussing in detail the circumstances of the breach of discipline
- Meeting with all parties involved in the incident as victims or perpetrators
- Coming to an understanding of the damage done to all concerned
- Agreeing on steps to “put things as right as possible”, including acknowledgement of harm done, offer of apology, carrying out some agreed community service to make up for the misdemeanour.

SANCTIONS

GENERAL PRINCIPLES APPLYING TO SANCTIONS

All students and teachers have the right to be treated fairly and with dignity, in an environment free from disruption, intimidation, harassment and discrimination. To achieve this, the school needs to maintain high standards of student behaviour.

The explanation of the referral system attempts to show the structure, which exists in the school for maintaining good discipline and some of the sanctions used when rules are broken and how they are applied. It is impossible to list every instance, which would be considered a breach of discipline or to specify the precise sanction, which would be imposed for each offence. Every case is unique and must be treated on its own merits.

Every effort is made in the school to explain the rules and the purpose of the rules to the students. A firm reprimand from a member of staff is expected to be sufficient to correct inappropriate behaviour.

When rules are broken, or for consistent breaches of our Code of Behaviour, one or more of the following sanction(s) may be imposed (depending on the severity of the breach of discipline) in line with the referral system outlined below.

- (a) Reasoning with the student to seek co-operation
- (b) Advising student of the consequences of misbehaviour
- (c) Alerting student to the inappropriateness of behaviour
- (d) Alerting student of disruption to other students
- (e) Informing student of teacher's right to proceed with work
- (f) Verbal reprimand (including advice on how to improve)
- (g) A comment in the student's journal for parents'/guardians' attention.
- (h) Moving student to a different seat
- (i) Transcription of School Rules/ Summary of section or chapter of work
- (j) Allocation of appropriate additional work
- (k) Detention during lunch-break (1.15pm -1.40pm)
- (l) Complaint Form
- (m) Temporary withdrawal from class and placement in an alternative class.
- (n) Homework report
- (o) A school/community task such as picking up litter, removal of graffiti/chewing gum, tidying classroom etc
- (p) A verbal reprimand from a member of senior management.
- (q) Behaviour Report
- (r) Exclusion from favoured activities, games, school trips etc
- (s) A written or verbal apology to staff member
- (t) Referral to the Class Tutor/Yearhead/Deputy Principal/ Principal
- (u) Detention in school after a minimum of 24 hours notice
- (v) A telephone call or letter to parents/guardians from the Teacher, Class Tutor, Yearhead, Deputy Principal or Principal.
- (w) A meeting with parents/guardians
- (x) Payment of a fine
- (y) Confiscation of mobile phone/other electronic devices in line with the school's policy.
- (z) Payment of the cost of repair/replacement caused by damage to school/student property.

SERIOUS BREACHES OF THE CODE OF BEHAVIOUR WILL LEAD TO SUSPENSION AND MAY ULTIMATELY LEAD TO EXCLUSION.

Ladder of Referral

The classroom teacher is responsible for discipline in his/her classroom. He/she may request the support of the Class Tutor, Yearhead, Deputy Principal/Principal and parents/guardians in addressing inappropriate behaviour. The teacher may write a complaint form for a student.

The class tutor is the first to be contacted by a subject teacher if there is a problem or an incident of misbehaviour. The class tutor refers the student to the Yearhead if he/she has three complaint forms.

The Role of Parents/Guardians

- By sending their child/children to Our Lady's Secondary School, it is understood that parents have read and accept the school Code of Behaviour.
- To foster a positive attitude towards school and to help explain the code of behaviour to their child/children
- To work in a spirit of partnership and mutual respect with the school in dealing with instances of misbehaviour when they arise
- To help formulate and implement improvement plans where relevant
- Parents/Guardians who wish to raise concerns about or bring a complaint about a behaviour matter, should contact the school and make an appointment to see the Deputy Principal or Principal.

The Role of the Teacher

- To be part of a whole school approach to promoting and maintaining a positive atmosphere which is conducive to good relationships among all members of the school community
- To take responsibility for the promotion of good behaviour within the classroom and within the school in general
- To engage students in their learning by preparing good quality, student-centred, differentiated lessons
- To have a clear knowledge of the school's Code of Behaviour and to consistently implement the code
- To actively engage in teaching the Code of Behaviour to all students, formally in the classroom, and in informal situations throughout the school
- To engage with Class Tutors, Yearheads, Principal/Deputy Principal, Parents/Guardians and other relevant agencies in resolving issues of poor behaviour and in implementing improvement plans for particular students
- To engage in continuous professional development in the areas of pedagogy, subject knowledge, and classroom management.
- To be part of a whole school review of the Code of Behaviour

The Role of the Class Tutor

- To promote positive behaviour in the class tutor group and to monitor progress through the student journal.
- To help the class teacher to deal with minor incidents of misbehaviour
- To refer more serious instances of misbehaviour to the Yearhead.

The role of the Yearhead

Each year group has a teacher assigned as Yearhead. The Yearhead has responsibility for the academic and pastoral needs of the students in the year group. He/she administers and promotes positive aspects of good discipline and behaviour among the students in the year group. The Yearhead

- Is a member of the senior management team in the school
- Supports the classroom teacher and the tutors in responding to unacceptable behaviour.
- Discusses with the student any misbehaviour brought to their attention by the Class Tutor or by subject teachers.
- Applies the appropriate sanction and keeps a record on the student file in the Yearheads' office
- Holds assemblies with the year group
- Liaises with the Principal/ Deputy Principal

On receipt of three complaint forms the Class Tutor refers the student to the Yearhead who will put the student on the applicable Behaviour Report.

When a student is placed on report, he/she will present the report to the class teacher at the beginning of each class. At the end of class the teacher will allocate a number 1 (for good behaviour) 0 (for behaviour that is satisfactory) and -1 (for unsatisfactory behaviour). Parents/guardians are requested to sign the report form each evening. The Yearhead, Deputy Principal and Principal monitor the Behaviour Reports each day.

The report structure will be colour coded as follows:

First Report	White
Second Report	Yellow
Third Report	Red
Suspension	
Fourth Report	Yellow
Fifth Report	Red
Suspension	
Sixth Report	Red

If a student attains an unsatisfactory report or loses a report he/she may be placed on a further report. The Yearhead will have discretion to put a student on a follow up report either of a similar colour or the next colour.

This system will run concurrently with a system of immediate suspension or red report for serious misbehaviour.

The role of the Principal/Deputy Principal

Day to day school management is the responsibility of the Principal subject to the authority of the Board of Management. The Principal/Deputy Principal deals with serious incidents of misbehaviour and applies the appropriate sanction including suspension. If further misbehaviour occurs during or subsequent to a Red Report the Yearhead will refer the student to the Principal/Deputy Principal. The student may be suspended for a period of up to three days. Students who reach the sixth report during one academic year may have their case brought to the Board of Management. .

Immediate suspension for up to three days applies in the case of serious misbehaviour. The Board of Management may extend the duration of a suspension. A probationary report (green) will be provided for students who return to school after suspension.

Behaviour or actions likely to compromise the safety, welfare of any person or which may compromise the right of the teacher to teach or students to learn may result in a recommendation for expulsion to the Board of Management.

The role of the Board of Management

- Under section 23 of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000, the Board of Management of each school must prepare and make available a code of behaviour for its students.
- The Board of Management will ensure that fair procedures are followed in relation to all issues of school discipline.
- The Board of Management of Our Lady's has delegated the power to suspend students to the School Principal
- The Board of Management will meet to consider the case of any student referred to it under the School's Code of Behaviour. At this meeting, a range of sanctions up to and including suspension may be considered.
- The Board of Management will deal with concerns from Parents/Guardians relating to a behaviour matter involving their child/children which have not been resolved by the school to the satisfaction of the Parents/Guardians.

SUSPENSIONS/EXPULSIONS

In the case of certain instances of unacceptable behaviour it may be in the best interest of the school community and/or the student involved for the student to be removed from the school for a period of time or completely. Suspension and expulsion are the options available to the Board of Management in these situations.

The Principal has authority to suspend any student for a limited period, such suspension to be reported to the next meeting of the Board of Management. If in the judgement of the Principal a student should be expelled, the Principal shall refer the matter to the Board of Management. The Board of Management and the Principal will exercise this authority having regard to their responsibilities to the whole school community. The Principles of Natural Justice are fundamental to the implementation of these procedures. In implementing these procedures, the Principal and the Board of Management will ensure that no student is discriminated against on any of the nine grounds specified in the Equal Status Act. [this is subject to the provision of Section 7 4(b) Equal Status Act 2000]

The Board of Management will ensure that the implementation of these procedures will take into account such factors as:

- (a) Age and health of the student
- (b) The student's previous record at the school
- (c) Any particular circumstances unique to the student, which might sensibly be taken into account in connection with the behaviour e.g. bereavement.
- (d) The severity of the behaviour i.e the degree to which the behaviour was a violation of one or more school rules.
- (e) The frequency of offences and the likelihood of reoccurrence
- (f) Whether or not the behaviour impaired or will impair the normal functioning of the student or other students in the school.
- (g) The reputation of the school.
- (h) Whether the incident was perpetrated by the student on his/her own or as part of a group.

SUSPENSION

Suspension is only one strategy within the school's Code of Behaviour. The Principal/Deputy Principal may suspend immediately in some circumstances e.g. vandalism, stealing, persistent smoking, skipping detention, incidents of fighting, assault, violence, threat of violence, presence of illegal drugs, presence of weapons, persistent refusal to obey an instruction, persistent disruption of class, the use of foul or abusive language to any member of staff, racial or sexual harassment, serious cases of vandalism or damage to property, bullying or leaving the school premises without prior

permission from the school, or any other kind of behaviour likely to bring the school into disrepute (the list is not exhaustive).

In other circumstances suspensions will only occur after the Principal has:

- (a) Ensured all discipline options under the Code of Behaviour have been applied and documented
- (b) Ensured all appropriate support personnel have been involved
- (c) Ensured that communication has taken place with the student and parent/guardian regarding the breaches of discipline, which the school considers may lead to suspension.

Where a preliminary assessment of the fact confirms serious misbehaviour that could warrant a suspension, the school will follow the following procedures:

- a) The student and his/her parent(s)/guardian(s) will be informed about the complaint
- b) The parent(s)/guardian(s) will be given an opportunity to respond.

When a student has been suspended the parent/guardian will be notified in writing. The suspension letter will give details of an appointment for the parent/guardian to meet the Principal/Deputy Principal. This meeting must take place before the student returns to school.

On suspension a parent/guardian will be contacted to arrange for the student to be brought home without delay. (Staff resources do not allow for supervision of students who have been suspended.)

It is essential that parents/guardians take an active role in working with the school to assist a suspended student to rejoin the school community as quickly as possible. Suspension allows the student time to reflect on his/her behaviour, to acknowledge and accept responsibility for the behaviour, which led to the suspension and to accept responsibility for changing his/her behaviour to meet the school's expectations in the future.

Grounds for removing a suspension

Under Section 23 (2) (d) of the Education Act the school may remove a suspension where

- (a) New circumstances come to the Principal's notice
- (b) Other factors as described in "GENERAL PRINCIPLES APPLYING TO SANCTIONS" pertain

Formal appeal against suspension

A parent/guardian, or student aged 18 or more, may appeal against a suspension. For an appeal against a short suspension (1-5 days) the parent/guardian shall make an appointment with the Principal to discuss the issue. For an appeal against a longer suspension (6 days +) the parent/guardian shall appeal in writing to the Secretary of the Board of Management.

EXPULSION

Expulsion is the ultimate sanction. Authority to expel is reserved to the Board of Management. It is a sanction to be used for an extreme case of indiscipline or a case of a student persisting in repeated disruptive or offensive behaviour even after warnings and short suspensions. Where a serious case of indiscipline has occurred and the Principal is recommending expulsion, he/she will

- (a) Organise a full investigation and prepare a report for the Board of Management
- (b) Make a formal report to the Board with supporting evidence.
- (c) Invite the parent(s)/guardian(s) to make a written submission to the Board.
- (d) Provide the parent(s)/guardian(s) with a written copy of the allegations being made against the student and a summary of the case being made at the Board meeting.
- (e) Invite the parent(s)/guardian(s) to the Board meeting.

Expulsion may only occur after the Board has:

- (a) Heard the evidence from the Principal/parent(s)/guardian(s) [and student where he/she so desires] at the Board meeting.

- (b) Examined all the documentation presented.
- (c) Considered the student's total record in the school.
- (d) Made a formal decision to expel and communicated this decision in writing to the parent(s)/guardian(s) through the Board secretary.

The Board will inform the Education Welfare Officer under Section 24 (1) of the Education Welfare Act.

Appeal to the Department of Education and Science against expulsion.

Under Section 29 of the Education Act a parent/guardian or student over 18 may exercise the right of appeal to the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Science in a case where the Board of Management decides to expel a student. The Board shall advise the parent/guardian in writing of this right of appeal and shall furnish the parent/guardian with the appeal form. If the Board of Management decides to expel a student from the school, it shall, before expelling the student concerned notify the relevant Education Welfare Officer or the National Education Welfare Board in writing of its decision and the reasons for the expulsion. An expulsion shall not take effect before the passing of twenty school days following the above written notifications. The Board of Management is entitled to suspend the student during this process. The school takes into consideration the rights of the individual student and balances these with the common good and rights of other students.

CONCLUSION:

The Code of Behaviour is adopted by teachers, parents/guardians and students. It is ratified by the Board of Management. The Code of Behaviour is subject to change as the need arises. All changes shall meet with the approval of the Board of Management. It is school policy to communicate changes in writing to students and parents/guardians. Due to the high cost of postage, students are expected to hand deliver some correspondence to parents/guardians.

Parents/guardians and students are expected to familiarise themselves with and adhere to school policies. A copy of the school Code of Behaviour is available from the school office on request.

September 2010