

**ST. JOSEPH'S SECONDARY SCHOOL,  
NEWFOUNDWELL,  
DROGHEDA,  
Co. LOUTH.**

**CODE OF BEHAVIOUR**

**ADOPTED BY THE BOARD OF MANAGEMENT ON THE  
18<sup>TH</sup> OF APRIL 2012**

**AMENDED 23<sup>RD</sup> MARCH 2015  
AMENDED 24<sup>TH</sup> APRIL 2017**

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**The management and authorities of St. Joseph's Secondary School reserve the right to modify details of this code of behavior at short notice. Such modification may be needed in an ever - changing environment and social context. Modification will be communicated as soon as reasonably practical to all the school partners, i.e. teachers, parents, students.**

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## **SECTION 1**

### **The Code of Behaviour**

St. Joseph's Secondary School, as a member of the Edmund Rice Schools Trust, is committed to

***"Promoting full personal and social development in caring Christian communities of learning and teaching."***

*- Vision Statement, Edmund Rice Schools Trust Charter.*

#### **1.1 Rationale**

St. Joseph's Secondary School endeavours to provide a safe environment for the education and care for each member of the school community in the tradition of Blessed Edmund Rice. The legacy of Edmund Rice challenges our schools to be inclusive and to be especially mindful of the disadvantaged and those with special needs.

This school recognises that every student is unique, with different talents and needs. The dignity of all students, staff members and parents is respected, and this is reflected in school policies and structures. Educational achievement and full personal development are promoted through the class based teaching and learning environment and through the student's participation in extra-curricular activities. This includes the life skills, values and attitudes, which will enable our students to lead fulfilling lives and contribute to society. Our school encourages a spirit of mutual respect for all and this is reflected in Appendix 1 'The Respect Rule'. Our 'respect' rule sets out in a positive manner our expectations of all students in the school. A copy of our 'respect' rule is also printed in the students' journal. The 'respect' rule, which applies to all in the school community, adults and young people alike, states: **"Respect will be shown to everyone in the school community at all times."**

The Principal and the Board of Management support individual teachers in their efforts to create a positive teaching and learning environment in the school. Support includes providing teaching resources, arranging appropriate in-service, funding continuous professional development and the formal recognition and support of subject departments. The school community works with parents to develop a meaningful relationship to meet the needs of students. Communication between the subject teacher and the parent is encouraged. The school, through information evenings, meetings, assemblies and explanatory leaflets, seeks to ease the transition from Primary to Secondary school. Class Tutors and Year Heads counsel students regarding behaviour and develop a rapport with them, while also monitoring their academic progress. A special effort is made to maintain a warm and welcoming environment within the school, while pastoral structures have been established to promote positive behaviour.

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## 1.2 Pastoral Structures which promote positive discipline

1. Each subject teacher **explains** and clarifies to students on appropriate classroom behaviour and health and safety rules for their classroom / laboratory / workshop / gym. Advice and encouragement is given in regard to proper completion of assignments and high standards of work. The use of 'Assessment for Learning' by teachers is encouraged.
2. Every class is assigned a Form Tutor. The Form Tutor explains the Code of Behaviour with the class at the start of each year and the reasons for having a code of behaviour. The primary role of the Form Tutor is to offer individual support and encouragement and to help with any difficulties the student may have. The Form Tutor also highlights the extra-curricular activities on offer to students and encourages student participation. The subject teacher initially consults with the Form Tutor and parents in matters of discipline concerning individual students.
3. All first year classes are assigned one class period per week devoted to pastoral care. School rules are discussed and students are advised about rewards for good behaviour and the consequences of misbehaviour.
4. Every year is assigned a Year Head. The Year Head works with the Form Tutors and the senior management of the school on disciplinary matters, and takes an interest in knowing students personally and advising them on correct procedures. He/she will discuss difficulties with form tutors, Principal/Deputy Principal and parents. He/she attends functions associated with the year, encourages students to achieve to the best of their ability, keeps records and liaises with parents.
5. Assemblies are held at the start of each term at which students are advised about attendance, punctuality, high standards of behaviour and work, as well as the support services, activities and events open to them. A report by the Students Council is also given. Presentations and recognition as appropriate are given for positive behaviour and achievement.
6. The Pastoral Care team brings together all the support services of the school to review how the school is responding to the overall needs of the students and in particular students 'at risk'. An 'at risk' student is one who has personal issues or disciplinary/behaviour issues. The team supports Form Tutors and subject teachers by offering advice or putting a plan of action/support/intervention in place to address the issue. The team also review students with particular difficulties and advise the Senior Management team and relevant groups within the school on pastoral and educational issues, as well as liaising with support agencies in the wider community. The Pastoral care team meets weekly or as necessary and is attended by the Principal, Deputy Principal, year heads, guidance counsellors and special education needs co-ordinator. The subject teachers of each year also meet collectively with management, guidance counsellors and year head to identify and

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help students 'at risk'.

7. The school organises a number of Award Schemes (for punctuality, attendance, participation, sporting, extra-curricular, community work and academic achievement) to recognise achievement and positive behaviour in many facets of school life. The past Pupils Union also recognises student achievements with annual presentations.

### **1.3 POLICIES**

The school has also formulated a number of policies and procedures to be followed with a view to ensuring the physical and psychological safety of both staff and students during the normal course of the school day. Such policies that are specifically relevant to students include

- Health and Safety Policy
- Child Protection Policy
- Code of Behaviour
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Guidance and Counselling Policy
- R.S.E. Policy
- Special Needs Policy
- S.P.H.E Programme
- Critical Incident Management Policy
- Internet and ICT User Policy
- Substance Use Policy

### **SCHOOL SAFETY STATEMENT**

St. Joseph's Secondary School aspires to create a safe environment for all members of the school community. The school has a detailed safety statement, which is available from the school authorities on request.

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## **SECTION 2 – ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

### **2.1 The Role of the Board of Management**

The Board of Management manages the school on behalf of the Patron and for the benefit of the students and their parents. The Board upholds the characteristic spirit of the school, and must publish its policies on admissions, participation, suspension and expulsion. The Board submits the code of behaviour to the Patron – the Edmund Rice Schools Trust – for approval. Only the Board has the authority to expel a student. It has also the authority to suspend a student, and is updated on disciplinary matters by the Secretary to the Board/Principal at its regular meetings. Certain incidents may require the calling of an extraordinary general meeting of the Board.

The Board formally records the adoption of the code of the behaviour, the commencement date and decisions about when the code will be reviewed.

### **2.2 The Role of the Principal and Deputy Principal**

Both the Principal and Deputy Principal have responsibility for the internal management and discipline in the school on a day-to-day basis. The Board of Management has delegated the power of suspension (of up to five days in relation to the risk to the health and safety of any member of the school community) to the Principal. As Secretary to the Board, the Principal reports on disciplinary matters to the Board at its regular meetings. Important leadership tasks for the Principal and Deputy Principal are leading the audit and review of the code of behaviour, and ensuring that it is implemented in the school.

### **2.3 The Role of Support Agencies**

A small minority of students may show particularly challenging behaviour. These students will need a supportive response involving the important adults in their lives, in school and at home. St. Joseph's has established links with local support services in responding to the needs of students with serious behavioural/attendance/personal difficulties. Sources of support may include the National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS), TUSLA, the HSE Social Workers, the Garda Juvenile Liaison Officer, Community Garda, the National Behavioural Support Service (NBSS), or the HSE Child and Family Centre.

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## **2.4 The Role of the Pastoral Care Team**

The Pastoral Care team -which includes members of Senior Management, as well as the School Guidance Counsellors, Chaplain, year heads and Learning Support team - brings together all the support services of the school to review how the school is responding to the overall needs of the students. The team works with Form Tutors, reviewing students with particular difficulties and advising relevant groups within the school on pastoral and developmental issues and liaising with support agencies in the wider community. The student is encouraged to review his behaviour as part of this process.

## **2.5 Referrals to Other Members of Staff**

Some students need more active intervention to help them manage their behaviour. As part of the whole-school plan, subject teachers have access to support from other members of staff. Additional inputs or interventions might include referral to a Form Tutor, Year Head, Deputy Principal/Principal, or Board of management. It may also involve the Chaplain, Guidance Counsellor, Learning Support staff, TUSLA education welfare officer, N.E.P.S. psychologist or community Garda/Juvenile Liaison Garda depending on the seriousness of the issue.

### **The Form Tutor**

The Form Tutor has a pastoral relationship with his/her own class group. The teacher concerned develops positive relationships within the group and between the school and the home. While the office staff records attendance in the morning and afternoon, the form tutor monitors serious cases of poor attendance and refers these students to the year head.

### **The Year Head**

The Year Head liaises regularly with Form Tutors and other staff members to identify students with difficulties or challenging behaviour in a particular Year group. He/she helps to foster a positive learning environment so that students are given every opportunity to achieve their full potential. The Year Head reports regularly to the senior Management team, e.g. the Principal or Deputy Principal at the care team/year head meeting or as appropriate.

## **2.6 The Role of Staff**

### **The Subject Teacher**

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All members of staff have a significant role to play in modeling good practice and promoting positive behavior in their daily interaction with students. The education must include that essential life skills are learnt by every student such as the ability to make well-balanced decisions; to resolve conflicts in a non-violent manner; and to develop a healthy lifestyle, good social relationships and responsibility.

The subject teacher is a significant source of help for students. As a leader of learning, and someone with an established relationship of trust, the teacher has a strong influence with students. The subject teacher will deal with routine incidents of misbehavior through classroom management strategies, thus minimizing the need for other interventions. Addressing the different types of student misbehaviour is suggested in Appendix Four.

Teachers use their experience and professional skill to maintain a high quality learning atmosphere and to modify and adapt the content of lessons and the methods of instruction to suit the needs of students. Staff praise student endeavour, set targets and monitor progress, keep records and communicate regularly with parents or guardians as the need arises.

Most students behave appropriately, with the help of consistent and clear rules in class and in school. Occasional minor misbehavior should be attended to routinely and effectively through the skill of the classroom teacher. Good classroom management, conflict resolution, mediation and restorative practices encourage students to

1. Take responsibility for their actions.
2. Consider the impact their behaviour has on others.
3. Work collaboratively with members of the school community.
4. Repair any harm done and prevent conflict from reoccurring.

## **2.7 The Role of Parents**

Parents/guardians have the primary responsibility for the education and welfare of their children; they are key partners in the school community. The Principal will as a condition of registration, request all parents to confirm in writing that the code is acceptable to them and that they will ensure compliance with the code by their child.

Parents having registered their son **must** advise the school while their son is in 6<sup>th</sup> class primary school of any medical, personal, educational or special needs their son may have, so that the school shall put the necessary supports in place. Early intervention can help young people overcome their difficulties.

### **Illness and Injury:**

The school **must** be notified immediately by parents/guardians of any infectious illness affecting their child. Likewise the school should be informed of any medication



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being taken by a student. In the event of a student being injured or taken ill during school hours or while on school outings/activities, the school will inform the parents at the earliest possible opportunity by telephone call.

It is imperative and the parents' responsibility that the school has a phone contact number for parents/guardians at all times. The school must also have contact details of a family relation in the event that the school cannot contact parents. Please advise the school if you change your phone number.

### **Home/School/Community Links**

Regular consultation and communication between the school and the parents/guardians and active participation by them in their child's education and specific school activities are all crucial to establishing effective home, school and community links. Parents are encouraged to keep in regular contact with the school and advise the school of any difficulties their son is encountering by phoning the school and/or making an appointment with the relevant staff member.

### **Parent Teacher Meetings**

Parents and guardians should make every effort to attend the regular Parent/Teacher Meetings held in the school.

### **The Parents' Association**

The Parents' Association meets regularly and acts in an advisory capacity in drafting policies and promoting the ethos of the school and the general welfare of students. The association also hosts occasional seminars for parents on adolescent well-being.

## **2.8 The Role of Students**

Prior to enrolment each year, prospective students and their parents are furnished with a hard copy of the school's Code of Behaviour on request. Parents attention is drawn to the school's website [www.droghedacbs.ie](http://www.droghedacbs.ie) which has all the school policies available for download. The Code is explained to students at the school's induction day on the first day of commencement in St. Joseph's. The Principal will as a condition of registration, request all parents to confirm in writing that the code is acceptable to them and that they will ensure compliance with the code by their child. Parents must sign their son's homework journal on the appropriate page with their son. By enrolling their son in the school, parents and guardians are agreeing to the code and will sign the annual registration form to confirm this and agreeing to represent their son in all matters relating to the school.

Throughout their years at St. Joseph's, the code of behaviour and its rationale is

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explained to students by the Form Tutor, year head and school management. It is explained to students at assemblies about the high standards expected of them in terms of behaviour and school work and the rewards for keeping the rule or making progress towards them. A copy of the School Rules in abbreviated form is also published in the Student Journal. The parent/guardian and student must sign this page in the journal at the start of each school year.

Students are encouraged and taught to take individual responsibility for their own behaviour and learning, and to help create a healthy, safe and happy environment in which everyone can learn and develop. Restorative justice may be used as a means of sanction for misbehaviour, if appropriate. Students are encouraged to take responsibility for their actions, to repair the harm they've done. Students look out for each other's welfare and work for the greater good of the community. They show respect with reference to the Respect Rule in Appendix One. They are encouraged to live by Christian values and to work for social justice. Students are expected and encouraged to engage and participate in all facets of school life.

Student leadership and innovation are fostered through the Student Council, Student Prefect, mentoring systems, outreach programmes, and a wide range of extra-curricular activities. Student leadership shall also be encouraged and fostered in the classroom by the subject teacher.

The **Student Council** is a valuable resource for supporting students. The council members are consulted on certain school policies and they articulate issues of concern for students and suggest effective ways of addressing them.

In the **Student Prefect** programme, fifth year volunteers assist first year students as they make the transition from primary to secondary school. They help to pre-empt many difficulties that can arise in this period and build relationships between senior and junior students.

## **SECTION 3.**

### **Formal Code of Behaviour**

This code has been developed in consultation with the school partners with the intention of encouraging students to behave appropriately, become self-disciplined and responsible in their adult lives. The code, which is in everyone's interest, has the following aims:

- To create a school that is safe for all.
- To provide an orderly environment for teaching and learning.
- To educate students to be courteous and respectful of others.

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- To prepare students to become responsible citizens.
  - To respect every student's right to an education.

## **School Rules**

The standards and rules contained in this code of behaviour apply within the environs of the school. They also apply outside the school and in any situation where the student is still the responsibility of the school. Examples include attending school games, tours, extra -curricular activities or other school-related events. They apply where the student can be readily identified as a student of the school by their school uniform. This includes travel between the home and school. The School Rules may also apply where the students engage in serious misbehaviour outside the school and their actions are deemed to have a direct impact on the school or on the reputation of the school.

1. Students shall treat staff, fellow students and visitors to the school with dignity, due respect and courtesy at all times. Behaviour such as verbal, cyber or physical abuse of staff, visitors and students will be sanctioned up to and including expulsion. Possession of an offensive weapon will result in expulsion by the Board of Management.
2. Students must attend every class assigned to them on their timetable. Visits to the toilets and lockers, routine messages, etc. shall be restricted to break times.
3. Students must attend class on time, and during class behave in a manner that allows themselves and others to gain full benefit from the lesson being taught.
4. Students must not absent themselves from class without permission. Students leaving class must have their journal signed by their teacher. Students leaving the school must have a note from their parents in the journal and must sign out in the office before they leave.
5. Students regularly late to school/class will be referred by the subject teacher to the year head who will give the student a Saturday morning detention.
6. Students must be regular and punctual in attendance. The homework journal shall be used to:
  - Explain all absences. Parents are reminded of their obligation to inform the school of an absence (or illness) and the reasons for same as set out in section 18 of the Education (Welfare) Act

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2000. The journal is to be used by parents to inform the school in writing giving permission for their son to be absent from school.

- Request permission to leave the school premises during the day. Students must sign out at the office when granted permission by the Principal to leave during school hours.
- Students shall not absent themselves from class or school during the day without the written permission of their parents. The sanction for being absent from school without permission is a Saturday morning detention. Students leaving class to go to the toilet or to the office must have their journal signed by their teacher and bring their journal with them.

7. Students are expected to take pride in their personal appearance. Full school uniform must be worn at all times in school, on their way to and from school and on school related outings. It is not permitted to wear PE gear to or from school.

The school uniform consists of white or blue shirt, school tie, school jumper, grey trousers, black or brown shoes. The school jacket must be worn - no other jacket is allowed. Non uniform items will be confiscated and returned to parents.

Runners, jewellery (inc. ear rings, bars, studs) and unusual hairstyles are forbidden. Only natural hair colour is allowed. A note in the homework journal is required if a student needs to wear an alternative to the uniform for a short period of time. Confiscated items will only be returned to parents.

8. While wearing the school uniform the students are representing our school and must ensure that they do not behave in a manner that will bring discredit on themselves, their parents or their school.

9. Students must have proper books, copies and equipment for each subject. All personal property must be neat and free from graffiti.

10. The homework journal must be used in every class. All notes to the school shall be written in the homework journal. All homework, written or learned shall be noted at the end of each class period. All homework assigned should be properly learned and presented.

11. Smoking/Illegal Substances

Students are forbidden to smoke in the vicinity of the school and during school activities. Under the Public Health (Tobacco) Act 2002, it is an offence for any person to smoke anywhere within the school grounds and building. The school therefore deems smoking within the school boundaries a serious offence. E cigarettes are not permitted. Any student caught smoking or in possession of any smoking paraphernalia will incur a one-day suspension.

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Repeated offences will incur more serious sanctions, up to and including expulsion. The student's attention will also be drawn to the Act and he will be advised that he will be reported to the Environmental Health Officer. He will also be reminded that he is liable to the penalties referred to in the Act, up to and including a fine of €3,000.

### **Alcohol**

The consumption of alcoholic drink and bringing alcoholic drink to school or on school outings is expressly forbidden. Any student found in possession of, or under the influence of, or selling/offering alcohol, will be sanctioned up to and including expulsion.

### **Substance misuse**

(Including the misuse of drugs, "legal highs" or otherwise) is expressly forbidden, as is the possession of drugs or drug-like substances in school or on school outings/activities. Any student found in possession of, or under the influence of, such substances will be sanctioned up to and including expulsion. The Gardai will be notified. Further details are available in the Substance Abuse Policy on the school's website.

12. Food and drink may be consumed only in the General Purpose Area and school grounds during break times. The chewing of gum is forbidden.
13. Electronic equipment including mobile phones and personal stereos, e.g. mp3 players, I Pods, must be switched off and out of sight. Non-compliance will result in the item being confiscated, given to the Principal/Deputy Principal and will be confiscated for at least one week. Note: the SIM card is defined as part of the mobile phone.  
  
The use of electronic recording equipment of any type is strictly forbidden in the school building and grounds or on any school activity. The sanction for non-compliance with this rule will include up to and including expulsion.
14. School property must be treated with care and respect. Students must compensate the school for damage caused. Students are expected to practice a positive approach to order and tidiness by not littering and by picking up any litter found in classrooms, corridors and communal areas.
15. All students are expected to contribute positively to school life. Willing participation in games and other extra-curricular activities is expected.
16. Students must not run or engage in inappropriate behaviour on the school corridors.
17. Bullying is strictly forbidden as outlined in the school's Anti-Bullying Policy.

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## SECTION 4

### SANCTIONS

#### 4.1 The Objective of a Sanction

The purpose of sanctions is to bring about a change in behaviour by helping students to learn that their behaviour is unacceptable, to take responsibility for their actions and to recognise the effect of their actions and behaviours on others. In instances of serious breaches of school standards, sanctions may be needed to prevent serious disruption of teaching and learning or to keep members of the school community safe.

#### 4.2 How are Sanctions Applied?

Teachers, Form Tutors and Year Heads have the power to impose minor sanctions. The Principal has the authority to suspend, while the Board of Management has the authority to suspend or exclude a student.

Sanctions are applied in a fair, consistent and timely fashion and are proportionate to the nature and seriousness of the misbehaviour. The school distinguishes between minor misbehaviour and serious misbehaviour, depending on such factors as:-

- the nature of the offence
- the frequency, duration and persistence of the misbehaviour
- whether it is part of an escalating pattern of poor behaviour
- The context of the behaviour.

#### 4.3 Range of Sanctions

Sanctions range from a word of advice/warning to expulsion. Sanctions may include (but this list is not exhaustive):

##### **Initial Sanctions may take the form of...**

- Verbal reprimand.
- Being moved to another location within the classroom.
- Extra work.
- Note in journal or text message to parents.
- Contact with parents by phone.
- Formal written warning.
- Complaint form.
- Refer to Appendix Four.
  
- **Referral to Class Tutor and/or Year Head**
- Incident recorded in the year head Incident Book.
- Referral to another member of staff, such as Form Tutor or Year Head.

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- Student may be put on class by class report.

### **Referral to Deputy Principal or Principal**

- Temporary removal to a supervised location.
- Withdrawal of privileges (e.g. school outing or participation in extra-curricular activities withheld).
- Withdrawal from the particular lesson or peer group.
- Carrying out a useful task in the school.
- A Fine if damage to property is caused.
- Detention.

### **Referral to Board of Management**

- Board advised of short-term suspensions.
- Board decides on longer term suspensions.
- Formal report on discipline matters to the Board of Management.
- Parent/Student Appeals to the Board of Management.
- Expulsion.

### **Referral to the Gardai, HSE or other support agencies**

In the case of an alleged criminal act, the matter may also be referred to an Garda Síochána and/or the duty Social Worker in the HSE, as appropriate, in line with national child protection procedures, best practice and State legislation.

## **4.4 Detention**

It is expected that students will accept and respond positively to correction from members of staff, be it inside or outside the classroom. Students who fail to do so or who repeatedly disregard any regulations will be given a period of detention. This may be after school, Saturday morning, during lunchtime or at another time deemed appropriate by the school authorities.

## **4.5 Sanctions may not always be Incremental**

Sanctions are applied appropriate to the misbehaviour concerned. Generally, the sanctions may follow incremental steps if the student re-offends. However, in certain serious cases (see examples of listed named behaviours in Appendix 2) the degree of disrespect or disregard for school rules shown by a single act may warrant that a student is referred directly to the school Principal or Deputy Principal and in line with fair procedures (and following consultation with the student, parents and Year Head) be suspended or recommended for expulsion.

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However, fair and just procedures as well as the right of appeal still apply in these cases.

#### **4.6 Ladder of Referral**

The initial sanctions outlined above are effective for the majority of students. However a small number of students may require further attention. The following structures and procedures – a ladder of referral - indicate how the situation will normally be dealt with when the need arises:

- The teacher deals with the issue. The teacher contacts and informs parents.
- The matter is referred to the Form Tutor and/or to the Year Head.
- In some cases, the student may be referred to the Guidance Counselling Service, NEPS, HSE or other support service.
- The matter is referred to the Deputy Principal.
- The matter is referred to the Principal.
- The matter may be referred to the Board of Management. The Board may be asked to consider expulsion.
- Officers of TUSLA are informed.
- The matter may be referred by way of appeal to the Department of Education under Section 29 of the Education Act.

#### **4.7 General Procedures for Dealing with Breaches of the Code**

(a) Any breach of classroom discipline will in the first instance be dealt with by the classroom teacher. The classroom teacher may counsel, reprimand or impose a sanction on the student as appropriate. The teacher will attempt to teach/explain to the student appropriate behaviour. The teacher will also inform the parents/guardians of the issue by a note in the journal, phone call or text message. Appendix Four illustrates how unacceptable behaviour will be dealt with.

(b) Where the behaviour is repeated or is of a more serious nature, the class teacher should complete a complaint form and refer the matter to the Form Tutor and if the offence continues it is referred to the Year Head. The complaint is to be written into the year head incident book. Appendix Four illustrates how unacceptable behaviour will be dealt with.

(c) The Year Head will counsel, reprimand or impose a sanction on the student as appropriate. Where appropriate the matter is referred to the Deputy Principal or Principal. Where a student is placed on detention twenty-four hours notice in writing/text message is given to parents. The Year Head will report to the Principal and/or Deputy Principal on a regular basis.

(d) A serious breach in the code or an offence listed as named behaviours (Appendix 2) must be brought directly to the attention of the Deputy Principal and Principal.



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(e) Where the above procedures have been followed and there is persistent low-level disruption or misconduct; where there is a once-off incident of a very serious nature - intimidation, bullying, bad language, damage to property, harassment, refusal to obey reasonable instructions or disruption to the educational process- where students have failed to comply with the sanctions outlined above or where there are other considerations which merit it, the matter is to be referred to the Deputy Principal or Principal. The matter will then be investigated. Following investigation, sanctions may be applied. A report of the action taken should then be given of the year head/form tutor/subject teacher ensuring that all parties are kept informed.

(f) Where an investigation is carried out, a brief note will be maintained by the person carrying it out. Where any student is interviewed about alleged or suspected wrongdoing by others or by themselves, a brief note of the interview will be taken; students may be asked to make a written statement about their knowledge of an incident. Records should be kept by the Year Head, Principal, Guidance Counsellor and Form Teacher and if necessary the subject teacher involved.

(g) Where there is persistent low-level disruption or misconduct and the student has failed to respond to the strategies followed so far; where there is a once-off incident of a very serious nature; where students have failed to comply with the sanctions outlined above or where there are other considerations which merit it, the matter may be referred to the Principal. The Principal will review the matter and will, if necessary, engage in further investigation.

**(h) Suspension.** After consulting with the parents and guardians, year heads, form tutors, and subject teachers if necessary, the Principal may suspend a student from the school for a period of up to five days. The Parents have a right of appeal to the Board of Management. The Principal will report on discipline matters to the Board of Management at their regular meetings. Decisions to suspend a student for a period of more than five days will be considered by the Board of Management. See Section 5 for more information on Procedures involved in Suspension.

**(i) Expulsion.** A decision to expel a student rests with the Board of Management. Where it is decided to expel a student, or where the cumulative number of days on suspension for a particular student exceeds twenty in one school year, parents will be informed of their right to appeal the decision to the Department of Education and Science under Section 29 of the Education Act. See Section 6 for more information on Procedures regarding expulsion.

**(j) TUSLA** will be informed of any suspension of six days or more and of any expulsion. TUSLA shall also be informed if any suspension gives rise to a situation where a student's total absences for the school year exceed 20 days. Appeals may be made by the parents/guardians to the Department of Education and Science in the case of an expulsion or where the cumulative total number of days on suspension for a student exceeds twenty in any one year.

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#### **4.8 Appeals Procedure:**

The procedure for appealing against the decision of a teacher or of the Board of Management is covered under Section 28 and Section 29 of the Education Act 1998.

##### **Section 28 states:**

- (a) The parent of a student or, in the case of a student who has reached the age of 18 years, the student, may appeal to the Board of Management against the decision of a teacher or other member of staff of a school.
- (b) Grievances of students, or their parents relating to the student's school (other than those that may be dealt with under paragraph (a) or Section 29, shall be heard.
- (c) Appropriate remedial action shall, where necessary, be taken as a consequence of an appeal or in response to an appeal.

##### **Section 29 states:**

- (1) Where the board or a person acting on behalf of the board-
  - (a) Permanently excludes a student from a school, or
  - (b) Suspends a student from attendance at a school for a period to be prescribed for the purposes of this paragraph, or
  - (c) Refuses to enrol a student in a school, or
  - (d) Makes a decision of a class which the minister, following consultation with Patrons, national association of parents, recognised school management organisations, recognised trade unions and staff associations representing teachers, may from time to time determine may be appealed in accordance with this section, the parent of a student, or in the case of a student who has reached 18 years of age, the student, may, within a reasonable time from the date that the parent or student was informed of the decision and following the conclusion of any appeal procedures provided by the school or the patron, in accordance with section 28, appeal the decision to the Secretary General of the department of education and science and the appeal shall be heard by a committee appointed under subsection (2).

*The full section of this appeals procedure is available on request from the school.*

## **SECTION 5.**

### **SUSPENSION**

#### **5.1 Procedures to be followed in the event of a Suspension**

Suspension is defined as "*requiring the student to absent himself from the school for a specified, limited period of school days*". During the period of suspension, the student retains his place in the school. The Board of Management has delegated the authority to suspend a student for up to five days to the school Principal.

Suspension should be a proportionate response to the behaviour that is causing

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concern. Normally other interventions would be tried before suspension. The decision to suspend requires serious grounds, for example:

- The student's behaviour has had a serious detrimental effect on the education and/or welfare of students or others;
- The student's continued presence in the school at this time constitutes a threat to safety;
- The student is responsible for serious damage to property;
- The latest incident represents an accumulation of offences by the student and other interventions have failed;
- A single incident of serious misconduct;
- The student engages in a behaviour that is seriously disruptive to learning or potentially dangerous.

## **5.2 Factors to consider before suspending a student**

- The nature and seriousness of the behaviour
- The context of the behaviour
- The impact of the behaviour
- The interventions tried to date
- Whether suspension is the appropriate response
- The possible impact of suspension
- The fact that all the parties have signed up to Code of Behaviour and the list of named misbehaviours.

## **5.3 Forms of Suspension**

### **• Immediate Suspension**

In exceptional circumstances the Principal may consider an immediate suspension to be necessary where the continued presence of the student in the school would represent a serious threat to the students, or staff or any other person, or for a breach of the named misbehaviours listed in Appendix 2. Fair procedures must still be applied.

### **• Suspension during a school examination or a state examination**

This sanction should only be used where there is:

- A threat to good order in the conduct of the examination
- A threat to safety of other students and personnel
- A threat to the right of other students to do their exam in a calm atmosphere.

### **• 'Automatic Suspension'**

The Board of Management may decide, as part of the school's policy on sanctions and following a consultation process with all the school partners, that particular named behaviours incur suspension as a sanction. See Appendix 2 for a sample list of such named behaviours. However, due process and fair procedures must be followed in each case.

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- **General Case of Suspension**

When there is a serious incident of misbehaviour, the issue will be fully investigated by the Principal or Deputy or a person with delegated responsibility, other than the offended party. Witnesses to the event(s) may be interviewed. A written record of the investigation will be kept.

#### **5.4 Informing Student and Parents**

Where a preliminary assessment of the facts confirms serious misbehaviour that could warrant suspension the school will inform the student and their parents about the complaint and give the parents and student an opportunity to respond, before a decision is made and before any sanction is imposed. Parents may be invited to attend a meeting by phone or in writing.

If a student or parent fails to attend a meeting, the Principal should write advising the gravity of the matter, the importance of attending a rescheduled meeting and the duty of the school authorities to respond to the alleged misbehaviour. In exceptional circumstances, where a suspension is being considered a student may be required to stay at home until their parents visit the school.

At the meeting, the Principal outlines the case to the parents and the pupil. The Principal then hears the response of the parents and the pupil. The Principal decides the sanction (if any) and imposes it.

#### **5.5 Appeals**

The Board of Management offers an opportunity to appeal a Principal's decision to suspend a student. The parents are informed of this right. The parents may be invited to attend a hearing with the Board of Management. The Principal outlines the case and the parents are invited to respond or question the evidence.

When an **Immediate Suspension** is being considered, a preliminary investigation should be conducted to establish the case for suspension.

Parents should be contacted and arrangements made for the student to be collected. The formal investigation should immediately follow the imposition of the suspension.

#### **5.6 The Period of Suspension**

A student should not be suspended for more than three days, except in exceptional circumstances, when the Principal may consider a suspension of up to five days appropriate. The Board of Management may impose a longer period of suspension, up to a ceiling of ten days for any one period. Any suspensions of six days duration or more must be reported to TUSLA.

#### **5.7 Written Notification**

The Principal notifies the parents and student in writing of the decision to

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suspend and their right to appeal. The letter will confirm:

- Notification of the decision & reason(s) for same.
- The effective date and duration of the suspension.
- A clear statement that the student is under the care of the parents/guardians for the duration of the suspension.
- Expectations of a student while on suspension.
- Any study programme to be followed.
- The arrangements for returning to school including any commitments to be entered into by the student or parents.
- If TUSLA has been informed, this should be stated.
- Rights of appeal (if any) e.g. to the Board of Management or to the Secretary General under Section 29 Appeal if applicable.

**5.8 Grounds for removing a suspension:** Following a suspension the parents/guardians (or student over 18 years) may seek a meeting with the Principal to discuss the matter further and to make further representations. Where the school is satisfied that new circumstances have come to light that have a bearing on the matter, the decision to suspend may be reviewed (by those who made the decision) and an alternative sanction imposed if deemed appropriate.

A suspension may also be removed following a decision of the Board of Management to that effect or if the Director General of the Department of Education and Science so directs, following an appeal under Section 29 of the Education Act.

### **5.9 Fresh Start**

When any sanction, including suspension, is completed a student should be given the opportunity and support for a fresh start. However his previous offences will remain on the school record, and may be taken into consideration if subsequent offences occur.

### **5.10 Records and Reports**

Formal written records should be kept of the investigation (and notes of all interviews held), the decision-making process, the decision and the rationale for the decision, the duration of the suspension and any conditions attached.

The Principal is required to report all suspensions to the Board of Management. The Principal is also required to report suspensions to the National Education Welfare Board in accordance with NEWB guidelines.

## **SECTION 6**

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## EXPULSION

### **6.1 Procedures to be followed in the event that expulsion is being considered**

Only the Board of Management has the authority to expel a student. The matter will be very serious, either a pattern of persistent misconduct or a serious once-off incident. The student may pose a real threat to safety or property. The school would normally have taken significant steps beforehand to address the misbehaviour and tried a series of other interventions, exhausting possibilities, before considering expulsion.

### **6.2 Factors to consider before expelling a student**

- The nature and seriousness of the behaviour
- The context of the behaviour
- The impact of the behaviour
- The interventions tried to date
- Whether expulsion is the appropriate response
- The possible impact of expulsion

### **7.3 Procedures in respect of Expulsion**

Schools are required by law to follow fair procedures as well as procedures prescribed under the Education (Welfare) Act when proposing to expel a student. When a preliminary assessment of the facts confirms serious misbehaviour that could warrant expulsion, the procedural steps will include:

1. A detailed investigation carried out under the direction of the Principal.
2. A recommendation to the Board of Management by the Principal.
3. Consideration by the Board of the Principal's recommendation and the holding of a hearing.
4. Board of Management deliberations and actions following the hearing.
5. Consultations arranged by the Educational Welfare Officer (TUSLA).
6. Confirmation of the decision to expel.

#### **Step 1: A detailed investigation is carried out by the Principal**

In investigating the allegation, the Principal should inform (in writing) the student and his parents about the details of the alleged misbehaviour, how it will be investigated and that it could result in expulsion. The parents and student are given every opportunity to respond to the complaint before a decision is made or a sanction imposed. If a student or parent fails to attend a meeting, a further meeting should be rescheduled and the gravity of the situation made clear to all concerned in writing.

#### **Step 2: A Recommendation is made to the Board of Management by the Principal.**

Where the Principal forms a view that, based on the investigation, that expulsion may

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be warranted, the Principal makes a recommendation to the Board of Management. The Principal should:

- inform the Parents and the Student that the Board is being asked to consider expulsion;
- ensure that the Board and the parents (and student) have records of the allegations against the student; the investigation and the notice of grounds for the possible expulsion;
- notify the parents of the date of the hearing by the Board of Management and invite them to attend;
- advise the Parents (and the student) that they can make a written and oral submission to the Board;
- Ensure that the Parents have enough notice to prepare for the hearing.

### **Step 3: Consideration by the Board of Management of the Principal's recommendation and the holding of a hearing**

It is the responsibility of the Board to review the initial investigation and satisfy itself that the investigation was properly conducted. The Board should undertake its own review of all documentation and the circumstances of the case. It should ensure that no party has a conflict of interest in the case.

Where a Board decides to consider expelling a student, it must hold a hearing. Each party should be allowed to question the evidence of the other party at the hearing. Parents may wish to be accompanied at hearings. As this is a lay forum, legal representation is not the normal practice. Should the parents wish to bring a legal representative with them, they should inform the Secretary to the Board well in advance.

After both sides have been heard, the Board ensure that the Principal and parents (or student) are not present for the Board's deliberations.

### **Step 4: Board of Management deliberations and actions after the hearing**

Having heard from all parties, it is the responsibility of the Board to decide whether or not the allegation is substantiated, and if so, whether the expulsion is appropriate or not. When considering an expulsion, the Board will ensure that the following factors are given due consideration:

- The seriousness of the misbehaviour.
- The likelihood of a recurrence.
- The impact the misbehaviour is having on the learning of others.
- The safety of students and teachers in the school.
- The degree to which the behaviour was in violation of written school rule(s) and the relative importance of the rule(s).
- Whether the incident was perpetrated by the individual on his/her own or whether as part of a group; if as part of a group, the extent to which the individual is responsible for the misbehaviour.
- The extent to which parental, peer or other pressure may have contributed to the misbehaviour.
- The frequency of misbehaviour from the student.

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- The cumulative discipline record of the student.
  - What other sanctions have been tried and the level of success of such sanctions.
  - The responses of the student and his/her parents or guardians to any previous misbehaviour.
  - The age of the student.
  - Whether the student is of school-leaving age.
  - Whether the student is due to sit for any State Examinations in the near future.

Where the Board is of the opinion that the student should be expelled, the Board must notify the Educational Welfare Officer (EWO) in writing of its opinion, and its reasons for this opinion. The student cannot be expelled before the passage of twenty school days from the date on which the EWO receives this written notification. The Board should inform the parents in writing about its conclusions and the next steps in the process.

### **Step 5 Consultations arranged by the Educational Welfare Officer**

Within twenty school days of receipt of a notification from the Board of management to expel a student, the Educational Welfare officer must hold consultations with the Principal, parents, student and anyone else who may be of assistance and convene a meeting in order to ensure that arrangements are made for the student to continue in education.

The Board of Management may consider it appropriate to suspend the student during this time, in the interests of safety or good order.

### **Step 6 Confirmation of the Decision to Expel**

Where the twenty-day period following notification to the Education Welfare Officer has elapsed, the Board of Management should formally confirm the decision to expel. Parents should be notified immediately that the expulsion will proceed and their right to appeal under Section 29 of the Education Act, along with a copy of the standard appeal form.

## **6.5 APPEALS**

A parent, or student aged over eighteen years, may appeal a decision to expel to the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Science. An appeal may also be brought by the National Educational Welfare Board on behalf of a student.

## **6.6 Review of Use of Expulsion**

The Board of Management should regularly review the use of expulsion, in consultation with all of the school partners.





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## Appendix One

### The 'Respect' Rule

Our 'respect' rule sets out in a positive manner our expectations of all students in the school. A copy of our 'respect' rule is printed in the students' journal. The 'respect' rule, which applies to all in the school community, adults and young people alike, states: "**Respect will be shown to everyone in the school community at all times.**"

In other words, we will all act with courtesy and consideration to one another at all times.

This means that:

1. **You always try to understand other people's point of view.**
2. **In class you make it as easy as possible for everyone to learn and for the teacher to teach.** (This means arriving on time with everything you need for that lesson, beginning and ending the lesson in a courteous and orderly way, listening carefully, following instructions, helping each other when appropriate and being quiet and sensible at all times).
3. **Remember 'Safety First and Safety Second'.** (This means never running, barging or shouting, but being ready to help by opening doors, standing back to let people pass and helping to carry things). On the corridors please keep to the left.
4. **You always speak respectfully to everyone** and use a reasonable tone.
5. **You listen to the other person's point of view.**
6. **You keep the school clean and tidy** so that it is a welcoming place we can all be proud of. (This means putting all litter in bins, keeping walls and furniture clean and unmarked and taking great care of displays, particularly of other people's work).
7. **Out of school**, coming from and going to school, walking locally or with a school group, you always know that the school's reputation depends on the way you behave.

As part of our Code of Behaviour we have a very strong policy against Bullying. Our Anti-Bullying Policy is stated in the Homework Journal. It is part of our Anti-Bullying Code that:

- Every pupil is entitled to an education free from harassment or abuse and bullying is not tolerated in the school. Every person has the right to feel safe and valued at our school.

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- There should be no unwelcome name-calling, teasing, verbal abuse, physical abuse or fighting; no unwelcome comments about a pupil or their family.
  - Any incident brought to the attention of teachers *or* the school authorities will be investigated. If the problem persists the perpetrator(s) will face serious disciplinary sanctions.

If you are being bullied or are the subject of unwelcome attention or if you are aware that anyone else is suffering in this way,

**Please tell someone you trust**  
**immediately.**

It is very important that we are informed about any unwelcome incidents as soon as possible.

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## APPENDIX 2 – Named Behaviours

To protect the authority of the school and the integrity of the teaching and learning process, suspensions for a number of days should be considered the appropriate punishment for the offences listed below. This sanction should be imposed following a collective decision by the Principal, Deputy Principal and the appropriate Year Head, having fulfilled the requirements of the Disciplinary Process.

Examples of such named behaviours include:-

Abusive, lewd, threatening, racial or sexually suggestive language or behaviour directed by a student at any member of the school community.

Sexual abuse and/or sexual harassment.

Physical abuse, violence or threat of physical behaviour (e.g. invasion of personal space liable to lead to violence).

Fighting.

Bullying.

Name calling of any member of the school community.

Vandalism or deliberate, malicious damage to school property or that of a member of the school community.

Substance Misuse.

Blatant flouting of the school's anti-smoking rules.

Stealing from school/staff/students.

Use of fireworks, bangers, stink bombs, etc.

Setting off fire alarm without good reason.

Failing to turn up for detention without good reason.

Disrupting school examinations, State examinations or school-related events.

Persistent disruption.

Refusing to obey the reasonable demands of a teacher in a significant manner.

This list is not meant to be exhaustive but indicates the types of offences which may be deemed to merit suspension.

The rights of the disruptive student to remain in class must be balanced against the right of the teacher to teach and for the other students to learn. At times, this might necessitate the removal of a student from class to report to the Principal or Deputy Principal with a written note or report from the teacher concerned. A student removed from a class for serious disruption and reported to the Principal or Deputy Principal should not be returned to that class during that period.

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## APPENDIX 3

### Year Head Detention System

#### Basis

- Detention is usually given for misbehaviour.
- It is given after a number of complaints in one week from a variety of teachers. The teacher refers to specific misbehaviours in year head complaint book. Detention is also given for repeatedly coming late to school, late to class or skipping classes.
- Requires consistent record keeping by teacher of misbehaviour.

#### Administration by Year Heads

- Teachers write incident reports into the year head complaint book.
- Max of two incident reports from the same teacher to be considered in same week.
- Student informed directly by Year Head.
- **Detention notification written into student journal and text message sent to parent. Student's name recorded into the detention attendance book.**
- Parents called in for meeting with Year Head to discuss. Amnesty/fresh start each month for pupil with only one detention.
- Ongoing/problematic misbehavior to be addressed by other forms of intervention/discipline code.

#### Operation of weekly detention

- Detention is held every Friday 3.45pm to 4.45pm. It will also be arranged for Saturday mornings as the need arises from 9am to 11am.
- Student's signs register at start of detention.
- Behaviour monitored/recorded by teacher in register.
- A member of the senior management team supervises the detention or delegates the supervision role to members of staff by agreement.
- Body of work assigned by the year head to the student.

## Appendix 4

**There are two types of unacceptable behaviour by students:**

<b>1. Disruptive.</b>	<b>2. Aggressive.</b>
For example: continually talking or distracting other students, no textbooks, no homework, coming late to class, not engaging.	For example: being continually argumentative/confrontational, using unacceptable language, temper tantrums, refusing to move seat or follow instructions.
<b>What does the teacher do?</b> Any or all of the following:	<b>What does the teacher do?</b>
Note in Journal for parent to sign.	Send for the Deputy Principal/Principal.
Letter home to parents.	Student will be removed from class and a meeting between the teacher and parent will be convened before the student returns to the class.
Text message to the parents through the school office.	Write an account into the Incident Book for the Year Head and inform the Form Tutor.
Phone call to parents.	Sanctions of detention / suspension / referral to the Board of Management will be considered.
Meeting with parents.	
Arrange to meet the student with the Form Tutor/year head.	
Always keep a record and advise the Form Tutor.	
If the problem persists then write an account of the issue into the Incident Book for the Year head to intervene.	