

Loreto College Cavan School Code of Behaviour

INTRODUCTION

Mission Statement

As part of the family of Loreto schools and in cooperation with parents and the community, we are dedicated to Catholic education. We aim to provide a balanced academic, pastoral and physical education for all our pupils, affording space for reflection and learning through experience. We seek to promote self-esteem, self-discipline, and the goal of self-fulfilment and to foster in our students the virtues of courage, sincerity and truth.

Mary Ward Core Values

The Loreto philosophy of education is centred in God and is rooted in Gospel values where truth, freedom, justice, sincerity and joy find expression.

Code of Behaviour

The Code of Behaviour is the set of policies, practices and procedures that together form the school's plan for helping students in the school to behave and learn well in a positive teaching and learning environment.

RATIONALE

- To foster good behaviour and self-discipline which allows for effective teaching and learning.
- To encourage students to engage positively with, and take personal responsibility for, their own learning.
- To maintain an orderly and creative environment in which all members of the school community work together in an atmosphere of co-operation and mutual respect.
- To have effective procedures in place to allow for the maintaining of this orderly and creative environment free from disruption for all members of the school community and which meet the demands of current legislation.
- To outline the procedures to be implemented in the event of inappropriate/ unacceptable behaviour being manifested which contravenes the word or the spirit of this code.
- To outline the structure of agreed interventions and/or sanctions that will be used in response to inappropriate/ unacceptable behaviour.

DEFINITIONS

Parent

Parent includes a foster parent, a guardian appointed under the Guardianship of Children Acts 1964 to 1997, or other person acting *in loco parentis* who has a child in his or her care subject to any statutory power or order of a court and, in the case of a child who has been adopted under the Adoption Acts 1952 to 1998, or where the child has been adopted outside the State, means the adopter or adopters or the surviving adopter. (Education Act 1998)

Head of Year

Head of Year refers to the member of the teaching staff with overall responsibility for a particular year group in the school.

Pastoral Care Tutor

Pastoral Care/Class Tutor refers to the member of the teaching staff with overall pastoral responsibility for a class group in the school.

The School Care Team

The School Care Team consists principally of the Principal, Deputy Principal, Heads of Year, Class Tutors, Student Support Teacher/Councillor, Pastoral Care Co-ordinator and School Chaplain. In general, all members of staff may be deemed to be part of this Care Team.

The Board of Management

The Board of Management has overall responsibility for the management of the school and is the decision making body of the school.

The Board of Management consists of eight members – 4 nominees of the Trustees, 2 parents' nominees and 2 teaching staff nominees. The Principal is Secretary to the Board.

The School Staff

Unless otherwise specified, the term Staff implies all adults employed in the school community.

Special Needs Assistant (SNA)

A member of staff allocated to one specific student who has special educational needs.

Senior Prefect

Every senior cycle student is assigned the role of Senior Prefect for one year, subject to satisfactory behaviour and satisfactory performance of duties.

National Educational Welfare Board (NEWB)

The Board was established by the Education Welfare Act 2000. The general functions of the Board are to ensure that each child attends a recognised school or otherwise receives a certain minimum education, and to assist in the formulation and implementation of policies and objectives of the Government concerning the education of children.

Health Services Executive (HSE)

The Health Service Executive (HSE) is responsible for providing Health and Personal Social Services for everyone living in the Republic of Ireland.

National Behaviour Support Service (NBSS)

The NBSS partners schools developing programmes/approaches for a specific group of students. These approaches include:

- Identifying student needs around behaviour and learning
- Developing appropriate teaching and learning methodologies
- Accessing suitable social/behavioural improvement programmes
- Setting up network groups/clusters for support and continuous professional development.

National Council for Special Education (NCSE)

The National Council for Special Education was set up to improve the delivery of education services to persons with special educational needs arising from disabilities with particular emphasis on children.

General Report Sheet

General report sheets are used for a number of purposes:

- Recording student behaviour, both to commend positive behaviour and to record incidences of inappropriate behaviour
- Recording accidents or injury presented in school
- Recording student observations of certain events

Daily Report Sheet

Daily report sheets are used as and when required to monitor the daily class behaviour of the student, under the direction of the Head of Year.

The School Journal

The School Journal is the joint property of the school and the student and as such may be inspected regularly. The journal is used

- to record homework for the student
- record and explain student absences
- to record detentions allocated
- as a means of communication between the school and the parents.

It is the responsibility of parents to regularly inspect the school journal and sign any communication from a teacher. Parents are welcome to contact the school to discuss any matters arising. It is the responsibility of the student to have her school journal with her in all classes.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Loreto College, Cavan acknowledges the contribution of all members of the school community. Each member has responsibility for the promotion of good behaviour and a role in minimizing and responding to behaviour which contravenes this code in word or in spirit.

Students

The school expects that students will at all times uphold the Code of Behaviour.

Parents

The school acknowledges the role of parents in the development and implementation of the Code of Behaviour and expects them to support the Code.

Teachers

The school acknowledges the central role of all the teaching staff in developing and implementing the Code of Behaviour. It recognises that a teacher's main focus is in the area of teaching and learning and closely linked to this is their role in behaviour management.

Class Tutors and Heads of Year

The school acknowledges the role of Class Tutors and Heads of Year in promoting good behaviour and minimizing behaviour which contravenes the school's Code of Behaviour.

It also acknowledges the role of the Class Tutor and Head of Year in seeking interventions and/or imposing sanctions in response to behaviour which contravenes the school Code of Behaviour.

Members of the School Care Team

The school acknowledges the role of the school Care Team in relation to promoting good behaviour and in relation to interventions in the case of behaviour which contravenes the school Code of Behaviour.

Principal/Deputy Principal

The school acknowledges the role of the Principal in applying the school's Code of Behaviour on a day to day basis and the authority delegated to the Principal in this regard by the school's Board of Management. The school acknowledges the role of the Deputy Principal in supporting the Principal in these matters in a shared leadership capacity and the authority delegated to the Deputy Principal in this regard by the Board of Management in this regard. In the absence for any reason of the Principal, the Deputy Principal assumes the responsibility and authority of the Principal.

Board of Management

The school acknowledges the role of the Board of Management in the development and operation of the Code of Behaviour. All policies are developed with the authority of the Board of Management and must be approved by it before becoming official school policy. Permanent exclusion may be imposed only by the Board of Management. The Board of Management has the responsibility to deal with such issues in accordance with the principles of fairness and natural justice. The Board of Management is the body to which parents and students over 18 can first appeal in the case of suspension or permanent exclusion.

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CODE OF BEHAVIOUR

Learning

This policy has at its core the provision of a safe, secure and positive teaching and learning environment.

To promote this aim the following actions and understandings are expected:

- Students are encouraged and expected to be committed to study and work to the best of their ability.
- Students must be attentive in class and provide correct books/materials.
- Enrolment of a student in Loreto College, Cavan signifies acceptance by parents of this Code of Behaviour. On the enrolment of their daughter parents are required to commit in writing their agreement to support the Code of Behaviour. Parents are also required to sign teachers' notes throughout the year, to record student absences in the journal and to bring the journal to parent-teacher meetings.
- To maintain a positive teaching and learning environment. Preventing another student from learning or the teacher from teaching may result in an appropriate sanction.
- Homework, both oral and written, is an integral part of class work and reinforces learning. It is the responsibility of the student and it is to the benefit of the student, to accurately record homework in the school journal, and to complete thoroughly and present on time. (Ref: Homework Policy)

- The school acknowledges that students may unavoidably miss school occasionally for short periods of time. However, when a student is absent for a short period of time from school it is the student's responsibility to catch up on all schoolwork missed and complete relevant assignments as soon as possible outside of class time or at a time agreed with the teacher concerned.
- It is the student's responsibility to complete and submit exam coursework in accordance with the State Examinations Commission requirements and to meet State Examination Commission deadlines. Teachers may set their own deadlines in advance of State Examinations Commission deadlines with which students are required to comply.
- Class tests and end of term examinations are an integral part of study and every student is expected to perform to the best of her ability. Failure to present for examinations must be explained in writing by a parent. (Ref: House Exam Rules)
- Students found breaching house exam rules may have their examinations cancelled and the fact noted on school reports and on student records.

General behaviour

Courtesy, self-respect, respect for fellow students and all members of the school community is an essential element of the school's characteristic spirit.

All students are required to wear the approved school uniform. Any derogation from the school uniform is strictly at the discretion of the Principal or Deputy Principal. The school uniform helps promote a sense of pride in belonging to the school community. Students wearing our uniform should be aware that they represent the entire school community and as such their behaviour while in uniform should reflect the ethos and Code of Loreto College Cavan. (Ref: School Uniform Code)

- Students must not bring the school into disrepute through their behaviour while in school, representing the school or outside of school in person or through other media e.g. social networking websites etc.
- Students must be courteous to each other, to teachers and to all staff, to prefects, to visitors and to the general public in school and out of school.
- Students are expected to take direction and instruction from all members of staff. Students must cooperate with prefects. Prefects are entrusted with a responsible role and are expected to discharge their duties with courtesy and respect. Prefects are subject to the school Code of Behaviour and may be sanctioned or removed from office for breaches of same.
- Disrupting the learning and teaching environment, inappropriate conduct, bullying behaviour, harassment, sexual harassment, causing distress to other members of the school community, using inappropriate language, being insolent or insubordinate may result in a sanction. No form of physical altercation will be tolerated. (Ref: Anti-Bullying Policy)
- Falsification of any form of communication may result in a sanction.
- End of year misconduct will not be tolerated and may result in a serious sanction for the student.
- Permission to travel on school outings, tours or to participate in extra-curricular in-school activities etc. is subject to the student's record of co-operation and good behaviour. (Ref: Draft School Tours Policy)
- School references will take into consideration a student's behaviour record. A student's record of behaviour is taken into consideration in the selection of the Head Prefect and Deputy Head Prefect.

Pastoral Care

Loreto College, Cavan seeks to provide a holistic education for its students. Through our Pastoral Care structures and procedures we aim to promote and foster self-esteem, self-fulfilment and self-development in all students.

As part of our school's commitment to provide positive support, each student follows a Pastoral Care Programme from First Year to Sixth Year, where students learn how to become responsible for their own learning and behaviour. The programme also focuses on the holistic education of the student, helping each young person to mature into responsible participating citizens.

This programme helps build relationships of mutual respect and support between class members and between class members and their Pastoral Care Tutor, who is also the Class Tutor. The Tutor plays an integral role in the support of the student within her or his class.

Each student also has the added support of our on-site Student Support Teacher. Students are provided with the opportunity to attend sessions with the Student Support Teacher/Counsellor. The Counsellor is available to all students if they feel that they need some extra support.

Students are encouraged to take pride in their personal hygiene and presentation. This is fostered through our Pastoral Care Programme (Ref: Draft Pastoral Care Policy).

Adherence to the school's uniform policy is required of all students (Ref: School Uniform Code).

Punctuality and Attendance

Excellent punctuality and attendance are recognised as valued life skills. Students are encouraged to develop these skills as part of their overall development. It is expected that parents will take responsibility for the attendance and punctual arrival to school in the morning of their daughters.

- It is the responsibility of students to be on time for class and all school activities.
- Students should arrive to school in good time to ensure adequate time to prepare for class. Students arriving late to school must sign in and enter the reason for such lateness before proceeding to class.
- Students may not leave the school grounds without the permission of the Principal, Deputy Principal, Head of Year or Class Tutor. Students leaving during the school day must present an explanatory note signed by a parent to the Principal, Deputy Principal, Head of Year or Tutor in advance. Students must sign out giving a reason for departure, the name of the person giving permission to leave and the name of the person collecting the student. The person collecting the student must present at reception and sign the student out. If a student returns to school during the course of the day she must sign in. (Ref: Sign Out Sheet)
- In the interest of student safety unexcused absence from class or study hall, or lateness to class or study hall is not permitted.
- Students who are ill must report to the Principal or Deputy Principal. If these are unavailable, any member of the teaching staff may attend to the student.
- Students returning after any form of absence must present an explanatory note in the school journal, signed and dated by a parent, to the Principal/Deputy Principal, Head of Year or Class Tutor. Subject teachers may also request to see relevant notes.
- Students' absences are recorded and absences of 20 days or more are reported to the NEWB (as per the Education Welfare Act 2000). The school reserves the right to contact parents regarding absences, in particular unexplained and/or unacceptable absences.

Health and Safety

The school is committed to ensuring the health and safety of each member of the school community. We aim to promote a positive and safe environment for both staff and students, including a safe and positive classroom environment for all teachers and students. In matters of Health and Safety the school adheres to the Department of Education Child Protection Guidelines for Post-Primary Schools and the school's own Health and Safety Statement (available for viewing on request). The school aims to help students experience the value of being responsible for their own health and safety and to pay particular attention to the following expectations.

- Students must remain in a supervised area at all times.
- Smoking is prohibited by law in school areas and on school buses. Smokers and students found in the company of smokers may be subject to sanction.
- All substances and materials that may be deemed to pose harm or potential harm to any member of the school community or the school environment are strictly prohibited. (Ref: Substance Use Policy)
- Audio or visual recordings may not be taken of staff or students without their permission. The use of such recordings on any website (e.g. social networking sites etc.), or any other medium, either as recorded or digitally altered, is expressly forbidden.
- Multimedia education and the safe use of modern technology are encouraged in Loreto College, Cavan. However, students may not be present in the Computer Rooms or use multimedia devices unless under the supervision of a teacher. Students should be aware of the school's Internet Acceptable Use Policy.
- In the interests of health and safety students must not be dropped off or collected at the school gate.
- School bags or books must not be left on corridors, steps or stairs etc.
- Lockers are provided for the safe storage of large schoolbags. Only light, in-house bags may be used during the school day.
- Health and Safety Regulations must be strictly observed.
- Fire drills are held on a regular basis. The importance of complying with fire-drill procedures is explained to students. Therefore, students understand that any interference with fire safety equipment is unacceptable on health and safety grounds and will merit sanction.

Care of Student and School Property

The school community of Loreto College, Cavan is respectful of school property, the property of all its members and that of visitors to the school.

- Students are responsible for looking after their own property. Names should be clearly written on personal belongings, books, clothing etc.
- School Journals are the joint property of the school and the student and should be maintained appropriately. Journals may be inspected by teachers at any time. Students must have their school journal in their possession for all classes. It is the responsibility of the student to get notes from teachers signed by a parent. Forging of a parental signature may result in a sanction.
- Students are encouraged to take pride in the presentation of their journals. Students are responsible for the content of their journals. School journals should not be defaced, pages removed or alterations made to teacher or parent input. School journals may be confiscated at the discretion of any member of the teaching staff, Deputy Principal or Principal. Students may be required to purchase a new journal if deemed necessary.
- The school authorities do not accept responsibility for lost or missing money or any lost property: books, uniform P.E. gear etc. Money and valuables should not be left in school bags, jackets, pencil-cases, open lockers etc.
- The taking of another student's property without her permission will be dealt with by serious sanction. Borrowing of another student's property is not allowed.
- Items such as books, magazines, newspapers, radios, mobile phones, cameras, MP3 players, I-pods, CDs, DVDs, non-uniform items and other items deemed inappropriate, etc., brought into school without permission may be confiscated. Confiscated items are generally retained by the school for one

week but may be retained for longer at the discretion of the Principal. Students are permitted to use the school phone with permission of the Principal, Deputy Principal or Head of Year.

- Mobile phones are not conducive to a positive teaching and learning environment. Therefore, mobile phones are not allowed at school. If any student has reason to bring a mobile phone to school, it should be handed into the Principal or Deputy Principal before 9.00.a.m. and collected 3.45 p.m. (Ref: Policy on Mobile Phones)
- Unattended property, books, articles of uniform, lunch boxes etc. may be taken into Lost Property. The school accepts no responsibility for unattended items or items taken into Lost Property.
- At the end of the school year all student property must be removed from the school. Property left behind at the end of the school year is disposed of as the school management deems appropriate.
- To facilitate a pleasant environment for teaching and learning, classrooms must be kept tidy. Students who damage school property (graffiti etc.) may be asked to pay for repairs or replacements. Where damage is caused by a group of students the group may be fined.
- Lockers are school property and may be inspected at any time. Students are allocated a specific locker at the beginning of each school year and lockers may not be shared or exchanged without permission. Students have access to lockers at break times only: 8.45 a.m., 10.55 a.m., 1.00 p.m., 1.30 p.m., and 3.45 p.m.
- In the interests of health and safety students may not sit on desks, tables, floors, stairs, storage heaters or window ledges.
- Chewing gum is not allowed in school.
- Students have a responsibility to fulfil their role in helping to keep school and grounds clean and tidy. Students are required to take part in litter patrol, canteen and other duties assigned on a roster basis.

Transport

Students are expected to take responsibility for their own safety while travelling to and from school and while on school grounds. Students are reminded of the importance of adhering to road traffic legislation.

- As parking space in the grounds of Loreto College is limited, student parking spaces cannot be provided by the Board of Management within the College grounds.
- In the interest of student safety, Students may not cycle or walk on the Bus Park or Main Avenue.
- Students are responsible to their Bus Prefect and to their Bus Driver and Inspector. Students are expected to show courtesy to all fellow passengers.
- Parents collecting students during the school day must sign their daughter out at the school reception desk. In the event of a student being collected by Taxi with parental permission, the Taxi driver must present at the school reception desk and sign the student out. Students awaiting collection must wait in a designated area until called by the school Secretary.

Healthy Eating

The school expects and encourages students to engage with the Healthy Eating Policy (Ref: Draft Healthy Eating Policy).

Specialist Subject Area Regulations

Specialist room regulations (e.g. computer room, internet use) are also school rules. (Ref: Specialist Subject Area Regulations)

REWARDS AND SANCTIONS

Every effort is made by the staff of Loreto College to use a positive and encouraging approach in all our interactions with students.

Students who are well behaved and adhere to the Code of Behaviour are acknowledged for their positive contribution. This acknowledgement may take many forms.

- Verbal praise
- Written commendation on homework and tests
- Positive comments in school journal or on general report sheets

- Positive comments on the three School Reports issued each year
- Commendation over public address system
- Positive acknowledgement of student contributions at year assemblies
- Positive feedback to parents at parent teacher meetings
- Acknowledgement of student achievements in school newsletter and/or on school notice boards
- School References based on student reference profile records
- Acknowledgement and celebration of local, regional and national wins
- Acknowledgement of excellent attendance record.

Interventions

The Staff and Board of Management of Loreto College Cavan recognise the right of all students to an education. The school provides the following supports and interventions to protect the learning environment for all and to give specific help to those who find it challenging to uphold the Code of Behaviour. These interventions are applied if and when judged appropriate. The lists below are not exhaustive and may not necessarily be applied in strict numeric sequence.

1. A meeting may be held between the student and class teacher:
 - To enable the student understand the unsatisfactory nature of her behaviour
 - To make the student aware of the possible consequences if that behaviour continues
 - To advise the student on how she might improve her behaviour
2. Meeting between Student and Class Tutor and/or Head of Year.
The purpose of this meeting is
 - To ensure student understands the unsatisfactory nature of her behaviour
 - To help the student understand the implications of her behaviour for herself and others.
 - To help the student understand how she might respond differently and in accordance with the school's Code of Behaviour.
 - To administer a sanction, if one is required and to help the student to see the need for one.
3. Putting the student on daily report.
4. The student may be referred to the Guidance Counsellor or any of the following people:
 - (a) NEWB in cases of unexplained or cumulative absences.
 - (b) NEPS Psychologist for assessment and/or appropriate interventions, subject to the availability of DES resources.
 - (c) To the HSE if deemed appropriate by the Principal (ref: Child Protection Guidelines).
 - (d) To An Garda Síochána in the case of allegations of criminal behaviour, who in turn may recommend the appointment of a Juvenile Liaison Officer as a source of support for the student and the school.

Sanctions

From time to time sanctions are necessary to safeguard the right of every student to learn in an orderly and safe environment. These sanctions are designed to be fair, appropriate to the misdemeanour and to minimise the disruption to teaching and learning for all students.

The following sanctions are used so that our students understand the consequences of inappropriate behaviour and acquire the skills to interact with others in an appropriate manner. These sanctions are scaled so as to take account of the nature of the incident and are applied by the staff of our school in accordance with our 'ladder of referral'. The basic principle of this ladder of referral system is that the higher up the ladder an incident is referred, the more seriously it is viewed. However, the lists below are not exhaustive and may not necessarily be applied in strict numeric sequence. The Principal and/or Deputy Principal may intervene at any time and take whatever action she/he deems necessary at any stage of the process. In particular, please note that the Principal, Deputy Principal or any of the Heads of Year may assign Lunchtime Detention and/or Evening Detention at any time they consider such action necessary. Please also note that failure to present for Evening Detention is a serious breach of the Code of Behaviour which may result in Suspension from school. (Ref: Suspension and Permanent Exclusion Policy)

1. Teachers are responsible for maintaining a positive learning environment in their classrooms. Teachers will indicate, as appropriate, to students that they are disrupting the learning and/or teaching environment for other students and/or they are not engaging positively with the learning process. The teacher may take one of a number of actions, including but not exclusively the following:

- The teacher may speak to the student and offer advice on how to improve.
- The teacher may assign constructive extra work.
- The teacher may assign the student a different seat in the classroom.
- The teacher may write a note in the student's journal to be signed by the parent. It is the Responsibility of the student to promptly present this signed note to the relevant teacher. Any falsification of signatures may merit sanction.
- The teacher may ask the student to complete a general report form.
- The teacher may request that a homework letter be sent to the student's parents.

The teacher may also recommend, on a general report form, Lunch Time Detention(s) for cumulative misdemeanours or an individual serious incident within that teacher's class. This recommendation should be presented to the Deputy Principal who administers lunchtime detentions. Lunch time detentions are recorded in the school journal. The student may be asked to complete a general report form. Attendance at detention is compulsory. On completion of detention the detention request is returned to the Head of Year for filing in the student's record. If the situation does not improve, or if a serious incident occurs at any time, the matter is referred to the Class Tutor.

Repeated lunchtime detentions, allocated by one or more teachers, are noted and reported to the Head of Year by the Deputy Principal. The Head of Year may speak to the student and may decide on further action.

2. The Class Tutor takes whatever action she/he judges necessary and appropriate to respond to the situation.

The Class Tutor may

- Speak to the student or students, separately or together, and may ask the student or students to write a report.
- Offer advice on how to improve and may recommend Lunch Time Detention(s), if appropriate.
- In consultation with the Head of Year, contact the parents of the student(s) and, if appropriate, arrange a meeting with the parents and/or representatives of other agencies.
- If appropriate, in consultation with the Head of Year, offer a referral to the Guidance Counsellor.

This list is not exhaustive and may not necessarily be applied in the sequence outlined above.

If the situation does not improve, or if a serious incident occurs at any time, the matter is referred to the Head of Year. The Class Tutor gives a detailed written report to the Head of Year.

3. The Head of Year takes whatever action she/he judges necessary and appropriate to respond to the situation.

The Head of Year may

- Meet with the student(s).
- Meet with the student(s) in the company of the Class Tutor or other members of staff, if considered appropriate.
- Request the student(s) to write a written report.
- Advise the student(s) that the situation is becoming serious and that a significant improvement in behaviour is required to avoid further sanction.
- Offer advice on how to improve.
- Assign Lunch Time Detention(s) and/or Evening Detention(s). Please note that attendance at Lunchtime and/or Evening Detentions is compulsory.
- Determine that cumulative lunchtime detentions merit evening detention(s).
- Assign the student(s) to a supervised area for one or more classes.
- Assign the student(s) to a designated supervised area at lunch and/or break times.

This list is not exhaustive and may not necessarily be applied in the sequence outlined above.

Parents are notified of Evening Detention(s) by letter.

Where judged appropriate by the Head of Year one or more of the following may occur:

- A meeting of the student's teachers may be called.
- The Head of Year may assign the student a Daily Report Form which parents are required to sign at the end of the week and return to the school.
- The Head of Year may contact the parents and, if appropriate, arrange a meeting with the parents and/or representatives of other agencies.
- The Head of Year may offer a referral to the Guidance Counsellor.
- The Head of Year may report to the Deputy Principal or Principal.

This list is not exhaustive and may not necessarily be applied in the sequence outlined above.

Alternatively, the Head of Year monitors the situation and if a significant improvement in behaviour is not observed within a reasonable time refers the matter to the Principal or Deputy Principal who may take further action.

4. If a very serious incident occurs at any time the matter is referred to the Deputy Principal or Principal immediately. The Head of Year, in consultation with the parties involved, gives a written summary report to the Deputy Principal or Principal.

5. The Deputy Principal and/or Principal meets with the student. The Head of Year and/or other teacher(s) may be present. The situation is reviewed and the Deputy Principal or Principal takes whatever action is judged necessary and appropriate to respond to the situation, in the best interest of the student and the whole school community. The Deputy Principal or Principal may contact parents if judged necessary and appropriate. The Deputy Principal or Principal may assign Lunch Time Detention(s), Evening Detention(s) or may remove the student from class for a period of time. The Principal may suspend a student from school. (Ref: Policy on Suspension and Permanent Exclusion)

6. The Board of Management is informed of the suspension at its next meeting.

7. The Principal and/or Deputy Principal may intervene at any time and take whatever action she/he deems necessary at any stage of the implementation of the code of behaviour.

8. Thereafter, the situation is monitored by the student's teachers, Class Tutor, Head of Year, Deputy Principal and Principal and reports are made to the Board of Management as appropriate.

9. Every reasonable effort will be made to encourage and support the student and to help her improve her behaviour, attitude and/or application to work. However, if a significant improvement in behaviour is not observed the Principal may refer the matter to the Board of Management for review. Cognisance may be taken of the impact of the student's behaviour on the teaching and learning environment, and the right of all students to feel safe at school. Among the sanctions available to the Board are suspension and the ultimate sanction of permanent exclusion. (Ref: Policy on Suspension and Permanent Exclusion)

Record Keeping

Records of student attendance and behaviour will be kept in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1988 and the Data Protection (Amendment) Act 2003.

Review of the Code of Behaviour

This Code of Behaviour will be reviewed periodically.

SUSPENSION AND PERMANENT EXCLUSION POLICY

This policy relates to sanctions that the school management may adopt when dealing with serious breaches of the Code of Behaviour.

This policy was drawn up in consultation with all the school partners – the Board of Management, teaching staff, parents and students.

This policy has been developed in line with the mission of our Trustees, the Loreto Education Trust, whose ethos and philosophy has at its core the care and wellbeing of every student and the provision of a safe and secure learning environment for all members of the school community.

Rationale

All students have a right to learn in an orderly and caring environment. All members of the school community have a right to be treated fairly and with dignity in an environment free from disruption, intimidation, harassment and discrimination. The Code of Behaviour aims to provide a safe, secure learning free from disruption for all our students by promoting a sense of respect for oneself, for others and for our environment. By enrolling in this school, each student and her parents agree to uphold the Code of Behaviour in detail and in spirit.

There will from time to time be cases of unacceptable behaviour where it will be in the best interests of the school community that the student(s) involved are removed from the school for a period of time or permanently.

Objectives

The aims of our suspension and permanent exclusion policy are:

- To maintain a safe, secure learning environment free from disruption for all the members of our school community.
- To outline the strategies to be used where students are in serious breach of our Code of Behaviour.

Roles and Responsibilities

Principal

The Principal or, in the Principal's absence, the Deputy Principal has authority to suspend any pupil for a limited period of time (see below) and may recommend a longer suspension or consideration of the permanent exclusion of a student to the Board of Management.

The Board of Management

Permanent exclusion is the ultimate sanction imposed by the school for behaviour problems and may be imposed only by the Board of Management. The Board of Management has the responsibility to deal with such issues in accordance with the principles of fairness and natural justice.

Suspension

Definition

Suspension is defined as a sanction requiring the student to absent herself from the school for a specified limited period of school days.

Grounds for Suspension

The decision to suspend a student requires serious grounds such as that:

- The student's behaviour has had a seriously detrimental effect on the learning environment and/or education of other students
- 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.

A single incident or first offence of serious misconduct may be grounds for suspension. Examples of such behaviour would include:

- A serious threat of violence against a member of the school community
- Actual violence or assault against a member of the school community
- Gross defiance

- Drug or alcohol or illegal substances or harmful substances offences.

This list is not exhaustive.

Such incidences of serious misconduct may also incur the sanction of permanent exclusion (see Permanent Exclusion below), following a period of suspension.

Rationale for Suspension

Suspensions can provide a respite for staff, other students and the suspended student, give the suspended student time to reflect on the link between her action and its consequences and give staff time to plan ways of helping the student to change unacceptable behaviour to meet the school's expectations in the future.

Suspension is most effective when it highlights the parents' responsibilities for taking an active role in partnership with the school in working with their daughter to help her improve her behaviour as required.

The Period of Suspension

The Principal may suspend a student for up to three school days or for up to five school days having informed the Chairperson of the Board of Management. A longer term of suspension will require approval from the Board of Management.

Where a student is suspended for a period of 6 (six) or more continuous days or for a cumulative total of 20 (twenty) days in one school year, the Principal is required to inform the Education Welfare Officer who may contact the family.

Suspension during a State Examination

If the Principal or in the Principal's absence the Deputy Principal forms the opinion that a student's behaviour constitutes a threat to good order during the conduct of the State examination or a threat to the safety of other students and personnel or a threat to the right of other students to do their examination in a calm and disruption free atmosphere, then the Principal may suspend that student, having informed the Chairperson of the Board of Management.

Procedures in respect of Suspension

As a general rule, suspension will be applied only after other sanctions in our Code of Behaviour have failed to change the behaviour problem.

Where a preliminary assessment of the facts confirms serious misbehaviour that could warrant suspension, the student and her parents will be informed about the complaint, that it will be investigated in accordance with school procedures and that it could result in suspension, should the decision be taken at the conclusion of the investigation to uphold the complaint.

The parents will be informed usually in writing although there may be circumstances where, following a preliminary investigation, an immediate suspension is warranted for the safety of the student, other students, staff or others.

The formal investigation of the complaint should commence as soon as possible after the alleged misbehaviour has occurred.

Opportunity to Respond

Parents and student will normally be given an opportunity to respond to the complaint before a decision to suspend is made. Ideally this response will be made at a meeting involving the student, her parents and the Principal (or in the Principal's absence, the Deputy Principal). If a student and her parents fail to attend a meeting, the Principal should write advising the parents of the gravity of the matter, the importance of attending a re-scheduled meeting and, failing that, the duty of the school authorities to make a decision to respond to the negative behaviour. The school will record the invitations made to parents and their response.

Right to Appeal

Where a decision is made by the Principal to suspend a student the parents have the right to appeal the decision to the Board of Management. The suspension will not normally be implemented until after such an appeal unless the behaviour in question warrants an immediate suspension (see above).

If the appeal is heard after the suspension has been implemented and if the appeal is upheld, then the record of the student will not include the suspension.

A decision by the Board of Management to suspend a student cannot be further appealed unless the total number of days for which the student has been suspended in the current school year reaches twenty days. In such a case, the parents, or a student aged over eighteen years, may appeal the suspension under section 29 of the *Education Act 1998*, as amended by the *Education (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2007*. This appeal must be made within 42 days of receipt of the notification of the suspension.

At the time when parents are being formally notified of such a suspension, they and the student will be told about their right to appeal to the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Skills under section 29 of the *Education Act 1998*, if relevant and should be given information about how to appeal.

Implementing the Suspension

The Principal will notify the parents and the student in writing of the decision to suspend. The letter will confirm:

- The period of the suspension and the dates on which the suspension will begin and end
- The reasons for the suspension
- Any study programme to be followed
- That the student will be in the care of her parents during the period of her suspension from school
- The arrangements for returning to school, including any commitments to be entered into by the student and the parents (for example, parents and the student may be asked to reaffirm their commitment to the Code of Behaviour)
- The provision for an appeal to the Board of Management
- The right to appeal, if appropriate, to the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Skills (*Education Act 1998*, section 29).

Students are advised to use the period of suspension for serious study and revision. School work may be assigned to be completed during the period of suspension.

Grounds for Removing a Suspension

A suspension may be removed from a student's record if the Board of Management decides to remove the suspension for any reason or if the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Skills directs that it be removed following an appeal under section 29 of the *Education Act 1998*.

Procedures for the Re-Introduction of the Student into the School

The parents and the student may be requested to attend a meeting with the Principal or another staff member delegated by the Principal before the student returns to class. The purpose of this meeting is to emphasise the seriousness of the misbehaviour that gave rise to the suspension and to ensure parental support for the school's Code of Behaviour. It is also an opportunity to stress parental responsibility in supporting the school in its efforts to help their daughter to behave well when she returns to school. In addition, the supports that the school intends to put in place to support the student on her return may be outlined at such a meeting.

The parents and/or the student may be requested to sign their commitment to the Code of Behaviour or other conditions as deemed appropriate by the Principal or Board of Management. The parents and the student will be informed in advance of any such other conditions.

When the suspension is completed, the student will be given the opportunity and support for a fresh start.

Although a record is kept of the behaviour and any sanction imposed, once the sanction has been completed the school will expect the same behaviour of this student as of all other students.

Records and Reports

Formal written records will be kept of:

- The investigation (including 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 to the suspension.

The Principal will report all suspensions to the Board of Management with the reasons for and the duration of each suspension.

The Principal is required to report to the Educational Welfare Officer all suspensions of 6 (six) days and longer, or any suspension where the total number of days for which the student has been suspended in the current school year reaches 20 (twenty) days.

Review of Use of Suspension

The Board of Management will review the use of suspension in the school at regular intervals to ensure that its use is consistent with school policies, that patterns of use are examined to identify factors that may be influencing behaviour in the school and to ensure that use of suspension is appropriate and effective.

Permanent Exclusion

Permanent exclusion is the ultimate sanction imposed by the school and may be exercised only by the Board of Management.

Grounds for Expulsion

Expulsion of a student is a very serious step, and one that will be taken by the Board of Management only in extreme cases of unacceptable behaviour.

The school will usually have taken significant steps to address the misbehaviour and to avoid expulsion of a student including, as appropriate:

- Meeting with parents and the student to try to find ways of helping the student to change her behaviour.
- Making sure that the student understands the possible consequences of her behaviour, if it should persist.
- Ensuring that all other possible options have been tried.
- Seeking the assistance of support agencies (e.g. National Educational Psychological Service, Health Service Executive Community Services, the National Behavioural Support Service, Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services, National Council for Special Education) if appropriate.

A proposal to expel a student requires serious grounds such as that:

- The student's behaviour is a persistent cause of significant disruption to the learning environment of other students or to the teaching process.
- The student's continued presence in the school constitutes a real and significant threat to safety.
- The student is responsible for serious damage to property.

There may be exceptional circumstances where the Board of Management forms the opinion that a student should be expelled for a first offence. The kinds of behaviour that may result in a proposal to expel on the basis of a single breach of the code could include:

- A serious threat of violence against another student or member of staff
- Actual violence or physical assault
- Supplying illegal drugs or other harmful substances to other students in the school
- Sexual assault.

This list is not exhaustive.

Determining the appropriateness of expelling a student

Given the seriousness of expulsion as a sanction, the Board of Management will undertake a very detailed review of a range of factors in deciding whether to expel a student. These factors will include:

- 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 a proportionate response.
- The possible impact of expulsion.

Procedures in respect of expulsion

Where 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 Management 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.
6. Confirmation of the decision to expel.

Step 1: A detailed investigation carried out under the direction of the Principal

In investigating an allegation, in line with fair procedures, the Principal will:

- Inform the student and her parents about the details of the alleged misbehaviour, how it will be investigated and that it could result in expulsion.
- Give parents and the student an opportunity to respond to the complaint of serious misbehaviour before a decision is made and before a sanction is imposed.

Parents will be informed in writing of the alleged misbehaviour and the proposed investigation.

Parents and the student will be given an opportunity to respond to the complaint of serious misbehaviour before a decision is made about the veracity of the allegation and before a sanction is imposed.

Where expulsion may result from an investigation, a meeting with the student and her parents will be arranged so that parents and their daughter will have the opportunity to give their side of the story and to ask questions about the evidence of serious misbehaviour, especially where there is a dispute about the facts.

This meeting will also be an opportunity for parents to make their case for lessening the sanction and for the school to explore with parents how best to address the student's behaviour.

If a student and her parents fail to attend a meeting, the Principal will write to the parents advising them of the gravity of the matter, the importance of attending a re-scheduled meeting and failing that, the duty of the school authorities to make a decision to respond to the inappropriate behaviour.

The school will record the invitation issued to parents and their response.

Step 2: A recommendation to the Board of Management by the Principal

Where the Principal forms a view, based on the investigation of the alleged misbehaviour, that expulsion may be warranted, the Principal will make a recommendation to the Board of Management to consider expulsion.

The Principal will:

- Inform the parents and the student that the Board of Management is being asked to consider expulsion.
- Ensure that parents have records of: the allegations against the student, the investigation, and written notice of the grounds on which the Board of Management is being asked to consider expulsion.
- Provide the Board of Management with the same comprehensive records as are given to parents.
- Notify the parents of the date of the hearing by the Board of Management and invite them to that hearing.
- Advise the parents that they can make a written and oral submission to the Board of Management.
- Ensure that parents have enough notice to allow them to prepare for the hearing.

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

The Board of Management will review the initial investigation and satisfy itself that the investigation was properly conducted in line with fair procedures. The Board will undertake its own review of all documentation and the circumstances of the case. It will ensure that no party who has had any involvement with the circumstances of the case is part of the Board's deliberations.

Where a Board of Management decides to consider expelling a student, it will hold a hearing.

At the hearing, the Principal and the parents, or a student aged eighteen years or over, put their case to the Board in each other's presence. Each party will be allowed to question the evidence of the other party directly. The parents may also use the occasion to make their case for lessening the sanction.

Parents may wish to be accompanied at hearing and the Board may facilitate this, in line with good practice and Board procedures.

After both sides have been heard, both the Principal and the parents will leave the meeting while the Board considers the issue.

Step 4: Board of Management deliberations and actions following the hearing

Having heard from all the parties, it is the responsibility of the Board to decide whether or not the allegation is substantiated and if so, whether or not expulsion is the appropriate sanction.

Where the Board of Management, having considered all the facts of the case, is of the opinion that the student should be expelled, the Board will notify the Educational Welfare Officer in writing of its opinion that the student should be expelled and the reasons for this opinion. (*Education (Welfare) Act 2000*, s24(1)).

The Board of Management will follow the National Educational Welfare Board reporting procedures for proposed expulsions. While the Board may be of the opinion that the student should be expelled, the actual decision to permanently exclude the student cannot be taken before the passage of twenty school days from the date on which the Educational Welfare Officer receives written notification of the Board's opinion that the student should be expelled and the reasons for this opinion. (*Education (Welfare) Act 2000*, s24(1)).

The Board will inform the parents in writing about its conclusions and the next steps in the process. Where expulsion is proposed, the parents will be told that the Board of Management will be informing the Educational Welfare Officer of the Board's opinion that the student should be expelled and the reasons for this opinion.

Step 5: Consultations arranged by the Educational Welfare Officer

Within twenty days of receipt of a notification from a Board of Management of its opinion, the Principal and /or other school staff delegated by the Principal may meet the Educational Welfare Officer to plan for the student's future education in the interests of the educational welfare of the student.

Pending these consultations about the student's continued education, the Board of Management may take steps to ensure that good order is maintained and that the safety of students is secured (*Education (Welfare) Act 2000*, s24(5)). The Board may consider it appropriate to suspend a student during this time especially where there is a likelihood that the continued presence of the student during this time will seriously disrupt the learning of others or represent a threat to the safety of other student(s) or staff.

Step 6: Confirmation of the decision to expel

Where the twenty-day period following notification to the Educational Welfare Officer has elapsed, and where the Board of Management remains of the view that the student should be expelled, the Board of Management will formally confirm the decision to expel the student. The Board of Management may delegate this task to the Chairperson and the Principal, at the earlier meeting that considered the issue of permanently excluding the student.

Parents will be notified immediately that the expulsion will now proceed. Parents and the student should be told about the right to appeal within 42 days and supplied with the standard form on which to lodge an appeal.

A formal record should be made of the decision to expel the student.

Appeals

A parent, or a student aged over eighteen years, may appeal within 42 days a decision to expel to the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Skills.

An appeal may also be brought by the National Educational Welfare Board on behalf of a student.

Review of use of expulsion

The Board of Management will review the use of expulsion in the school at regular intervals to ensure that its use is consistent with school policies, that patterns of use are examined to identify factors that may be influencing behaviour in the school and to ensure that expulsion is used appropriately.

Approved by Board of Management: Wednesday 13th November 2013

Proposed by: _____

Seconded by: _____

Sheila McManamly, Chairperson.