

School Policy on Code of Behaviour

(Adopted by the BOM January 2015)

Definition of Code of Behaviour

The Code of Behaviour is the set of programmes, practices and procedures that together form the school's plan for helping students in the school to behave well and learn well

The Aims of Code of Behaviour:

The Code of Behaviour helps the school community to promote the school ethos, relationships, policies, procedures and practices that encourage good behaviour and prevent unacceptable behaviour. The Code of Behaviour helps teachers, other members of staff, students and parents to work together for a happy, effective and safe school.

Relationship to School Ethos/Mission/Vision/Aims

St. Mary's School is a community which is committed to developing each person's full potential in positive, supportive and Christian environment.

The Code of Behaviour is rooted in our fundamental aim to develop each member of the school community.

Through the implementation of this policy we strive to enact the stated Mission, Vision and Aims of St. Mary's Secondary School and of our Trustees CEIST.

Rationale for Policy

This Policy translates the expectations of staff, parents and students into practical arrangements that will help to ensure continuity of instruction to all students. It helps to foster an orderly, harmonious school where high standards of behaviour are expected and supported.

Goals of the Policy

The Code of Behaviour enables school authorities to strike an appropriate balance between their duty to maintain an effective learning environment for all and their responsibility to students whose behaviour presents a challenge to the teaching and learning process. The Code of Behaviour is a key tool in enabling the school authorities to support the learning of every student in the school.

Maintaining a harmonious environment can present a challenge to schools, given competing needs, time pressures and varying capacities or readiness to learn. A Code of Behaviour that has the support of the school community can go a long way to helping St. Mary's Secondary School to meet this challenge successfully.

Policy Content

In accordance with Section 23(2) of *The Education (Welfare) Act 2000* this Policy on Code of Behaviour specifies:

- a) The standards of behaviour expected from each student attending St. Mary's Secondary School
- b) The plan for promoting good behaviour
- c) The ways in which the school responds to unacceptable behaviour
- d) The plan for implementing the code of behaviour
- e) School procedures to be followed before a student may be suspended or expelled from the school

a) The standards of behaviour expected from each student attending St Mary's Secondary School

All students are expected to

- treat each person in school with respect
- co-operate with my teachers and classmates in doing work in class
- complete all homework – written and oral – set by teachers
- have all books, school journal and equipment as required for lessons
- wear full school uniform
- attend school punctually on each school day
- go directly and punctually from class to class during the school day
- respect the property of others and to make good any loss or damage caused
- do nothing inside or outside the school to bring the school community into disrepute
- follow the school regulations for safety and good order.
- keep the school environment clean

b) The plan for promoting good behaviour

In line with our Mission Statement it is policy to encourage and promote positive behaviour. Positive behaviour, genuine effort and achievements whether academic or otherwise are recognised and rewarded in the following ways: (this list is not exhaustive)

- Verbal praise by subject teacher.
- Positive comments on exercises and reports.
- Awarding of Merits for positive behaviour
- Displays of work in classrooms and around school.
- Acknowledgement of good behaviour by Year Head, Deputy Principal and Principal.
- Certificate of Commendation for consistent good behaviour
- Annual School awards night
- Awards for Student of the Year for all year groups

- Awards for Certificate Examination results
- Awarding of certificates of attendance.
- Acknowledgement of good behaviour at assembly.
- Public recognition of achievements on the intercom.
- Photographic record of student achievements displayed in school.
- Recording of achievements in parent newsletter, website and local media.

Further, good behaviour is promoted through the fair and consistent application of the school rules (Appendix 1) and the educational and pastoral roles played by class teachers, class tutors, year heads, deputy principal, principal and Board of Management. (Appendix 2)

c) The ways in which the school responds to unacceptable behaviour

The school responds to unacceptable behaviour through the application of sanctions in fair, consistent and timely ways. The purpose of these sanctions is to bring about a change in behaviour, to defuse and not escalate a situation and to preserve the dignity of all the parties. For a list of sanctions used to facilitate disciplinary procedures see Appendix 3.

Sanctions are used to

- help students to learn that their behaviour is unacceptable
- help students realise the effect of their actions and behaviour on others
- help students in ways appropriate to their age and development to understand that they have choices about their own behaviour and that all choices have consequences
- help students to learn to take responsibility for their behaviour.

d) The plan for implementing the Code of Behaviour

The Code of Behaviour is implemented through the set of programmes, practices and procedures that together form the school's plan for helping students in the school to behave well and learn well. These include:

1. School Rules (Appendix 1)
2. Educational And Pastoral Roles Played By School Staff (Appendix 2)
3. Sanctions Applied In Response To Unacceptable Behaviour (Appendix 3)
4. School Journal (Appendix 4)
5. Health and Safety (Appendix 5)
6. Operating a Merit System (Appendix 6)
7. Anti-Bullying/Harassment Policy (Appendix 7)
8. Attendance and Punctuality Strategy (Appendix 8)

e) School procedures to be followed before a student may be suspended or expelled from the school

The Code of Behaviour is implemented through a staged response aimed at resolving behavioural difficulties at the lowest possible level. (Appendix 9). In situations where persistent incidents continue, or extremely serious incidents occur, suspension will be considered.

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

- the student's behaviour has had a seriously detrimental effect on the education of other students
- the student's continued presence in the school constitutes a threat to safety
- the student is responsible for serious damage to property.

When proposing to suspend a student a preliminary assessment of the facts seeks to confirm whether the misbehaviour warrants suspension. Where this investigation finds that suspension is warranted the Principal will inform the student and their parents about the complaint and give parents and student an opportunity to respond.

The Principal will notify the parents and the student in writing of the decision to suspend. The school will help the student to take responsibility for catching up on work missed. The school will arrange for a member of staff to provide support to the student during the re-integration process.

The Principal is required to report suspensions in accordance with the NEWB reporting guidelines (*Education (Welfare) Act, 2000*, section 21(4)(a)).

Expulsion

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

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 of others 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.

The grounds for expulsion may be similar to the grounds for suspension.

Schools are required by law to follow fair procedures as well as procedures prescribed under the *Education (Welfare) Act 2000*, when proposing to expel a student.

During this time suspension will be considered where there is 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 students or staff.

A parent, or a student aged over eighteen years, may appeal a decision to expel to the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Science (*Education Act 1998* section 29). An appeal may also be brought by the National Educational Welfare Board on behalf of a student.

For fuller details on Suspension and Expulsion see Appendix 10

Roles and Responsibilities in developing, implementing, monitoring, evaluating this policy

1. Board of Management

The Board will ensure that the ethos and values of the Trustees are reflected in the formulation and implementation of this policy and that the Policy is submitted to *CEIST*. The Board will formally record the adoption of the Code of Behaviour, the commencement date and decisions about when the Code will be reviewed.

2. Principal and Deputy Principal

The Principal and Deputy Principal, under the direction of the Board, lead the work in developing, implementing, monitoring and evaluating the Code of Behaviour in St. Mary's Secondary School.

3. Teachers and other Staff Members

Teachers and other staff members bring:

- their professional expertise in understanding the links between behaviour and learning;
- their experience of what works to help students to behave well;
- their knowledge of the school and the school community

to the process of developing, implementing, monitoring and evaluating this Policy in St. Mary's Secondary School.

4. Parents

The meaningful involvement of parents in the development, monitoring and evaluation of this Policy will contribute to the successful implementation of this Policy. Parents have some responsibilities for their children's behaviour.

Parents can:

- Have a strong sense of pride in the school and ownership of its work.
- Reinforce at home the messages about learning and behaviour that are conducive to a happy and effective school.
- Give consistent messages to students about how to treat others

5. Students

Students are more likely to support this Code of Behaviour when they have helped to develop it. Through their involvement students can:

- Experience being part of a collective effort to make sure this school is a good place to teach and learn.
- Have their experience, insights and expectations recognised and used.
- Learn to take personal responsibility for their behaviour and for each other's wellbeing and the well being of others.

Success Criteria

The Code of Behaviour contributes to:

- The creation of a school climate that encourages and reinforces good behaviour
- The creation of a positive and safe environment for teaching and learning
- The encouragement of students to take personal responsibility for their learning and their behaviour.
- Helping young people to mature into responsible participating citizens
- Building positive relationship of mutual respect and mutual support among students, staff and parents
- Ensuring that the school's high expectations of the behaviour of all the members of the school community are widely known and understood.

Review and Evaluation

1. This will take place annually and will include teachers, students and the principal/deputy principal.

APPENDIX 1 **SCHOOL RULES**

Health and Safety

- The bullying or harassment of another will not be tolerated in St Mary's
- Students must always behave in ways that keep themselves and others safe
- Students must have prior written permission from principal, deputy principal or Year Head to leave the school grounds.
- Students leaving school during the school day must be signed out by a parent or guardian
- All contact to and from home during the school day must be through the school office
- Students leaving a class for any reason must bring their signed journal with them
- Students must obey all safety instructions given by school staff
- All safety and life saving equipment must only be used for the purpose intended
- All litter should be placed in the appropriate bin provided
- Aerosols, Tippex, solvents, indelible markers and lasers are not to be brought to school.
- Chewing gum is not allowed in school.
- Students must know and follow all fire drill instructions and fire notices
- Students must comply with all Lab and Specialist Room regulations

School and Personal Property

- Students are responsible for their own property
- Lockers must be locked.
- Be careful with all school property. Breakages or damage will have to be paid for.

Attendance and Punctuality

- Students must attend school every day, all day
- All absences from school must be explained in writing using the 'Explanations for Absence' notes in the journal. These must be given to the Year Head.
- Absences of 20 days or more will be notified to the Area Education Welfare Officer
- Students are expected to be in school before 8.50am to prepare properly for classes
- Students arriving late must get their journal signed by principal or deputy principal
- Lockers can only be accessed before lessons 1,4 and 7
- Vending machines are only to be used at morning break, lunchtime and after school

Classroom rules

- Have all books and materials needed for class ready when the teacher arrives.
- Be in full and proper uniform.
- Sit at the desk that has been assigned to you.
- Be ready to learn and participate in class.
- Co-operate with teacher's instructions.
- Raise your hand when you wish to speak and wait to be invited.
- Behave in ways that allow the teacher to teach and your classmates to learn at all times
- Record all homework in your journal.
- Only the teacher dismisses the class. Wait until this happens.
- Only students moving to class in another room may leave their classroom between classes
- Classrooms must be kept tidy at all times. Do your share.
- Following an absence ask to rejoin each class as a courtesy.

- Students must catch up on work following an absence.
- Homework should show your best effort both in content and in neatness.
- Homework must be handed up on the day it is due.

Uniform

- The regulation uniform is to be worn to and from school at all times.
- The regulation uniform is to be worn on school trips and when representing the school.
- The regulation uniform is to be worn during school and State exams.
- All students must be in the regulation uniform before they are admitted to class.
- Students who come to school out of uniform will be supplied with the proper articles from a stock of laundered uniforms in school. These must be washed and returned to the school.
- Permission to attend school without full uniform may be granted by the principal/deputy principal in exceptional circumstances. Permission must be secured before 8.55a.m.
- All students must have a neat, clean and natural looking appearance suitable for school.
- Facial jewellery is not allowed and will have to be removed immediately.

Behaviour

- Be mannerly. Speak and behave respectfully to everyone in the school community.
- Behave in a friendly and orderly manner in corridors, canteen and school campus.

School Trips/Tours/Outings

- Students must return a signed consent form in advance in order to participate in trips tours etc
- Students are only allowed to participate in school trips/activities etc if their general behaviour is not a cause of concern.

APPENDIX 2 ROLES

Role of Subject Teacher

The Subject Teacher has responsibility for the maintenance of good order and discipline within his/her class while sharing a common responsibility for good order within the school premises. The Subject teacher is the key to achieving high standards. It is vital then, that Subject teachers should make clear demands on pupils at the outset and that every effort should be made to have these demands met.

Demands which are reasonable and fair and which are carefully explained to pupils will normally be met by pupil co-operation with the teacher's demands and should be praised and rewarded.

Role of Class Tutor

The Class Tutor takes a particular interest in the activities and progress of the pupils in their class; helps their pupils to be positive in their behaviour and work; encourages students to maintain a tidy classroom and establishes a classroom cleaning system. In addition, the Class Tutor monitors pupils journals and liaises with the Year Head

Role of Year Head

The Year Head has general responsibility for the welfare of a year group. The Year Head oversees their attendance and punctuality, academic performance and behaviour and liaises with the parents of the year group. The Year Head works closely with subject teachers, tutors, guidance counsellor, deputy principal and principal

Role of Deputy Principal

The Deputy Principal assists the Principal in the planning, organising and day-to-day running of the school; is in charge of the school in the absence of the Principal; is responsible for teacher substitution, recording of school absences and implementation of the disciplinary system in the school.

In the absence of the Principal and Deputy Principal, an Assistant Principal will be in charge of the school.

Role of Principal

The Principal is responsible, in conjunction with the Board of Management, for school policy; is responsible for the overall management, organisation, administration and discipline of the school – including the development and supervision of staff, the organisation of curriculum, the management of the school finances, communicates with the Department of Education and Science, Parent Body and the wider community

Role of Board of Management

The Board of Management gives formal approval to the Code of Behaviour and supports the Principal and teaching staff in the just implementation of the Code.

The Board of Management hears appeals by parents/guardians against the decision of the Principal to suspend a student.

The Board of Management decides on a recommendation from the Principal to expel a student following a hearing at which the Principal gives the reasons for his recommendation and the parents/guardians of the student may give reasons why the recommendation should not be approved.

APPENDIX 3 SANCTIONS

Use of Sanctions

Sanctions are used to

- help students to learn that their behaviour is unacceptable
- help students realise the effect of their actions and behaviour on others
- help students in ways appropriate to their age and development to understand that they have choices about their own behaviour and that all choices have consequences
- help students to learn to take responsibility for their behaviour.

The purpose of a sanction is to bring about a change in behaviour. It should defuse and not escalate a situation; preserve the dignity of all the parties; be applied in a fair and consistent way and be timely.

The following is a list of sanctions used to facilitate disciplinary procedures:

- Verbal warning.
- Reminder of school rules, classroom standards and expectations
- Reasoning with student (including advice on how to improve).
- Separation from peers e.g. temporary or permanent change of seating arrangement.
- Assigning additional homework.
- Requirement for an apology.
- Loss of privileges.
- Temporary confiscation of non-uniform items.
- Demerits issued.
- Detention during lunchtime, supervised by the subject teacher.
- Referral to Year Head.
- Written communication with parent/guardian in school journal.
- Requirement for written apology.
- Loss of position of responsibility.
- Community service on the school premises.
- After school detention.
- Put on Report.
- Removal from representing school in any activity for a nominated period of time.
- Non-participation in extra-curricular activities.
- Payment for, or replacement of, damaged or stolen property.
- In-house suspension
- Temporary or permanent change of class.
- Formal letter to parent/guardian
- Written undertaking of good behaviour, signed by both parent/guardian and student.
- Referral to Principal
- Suspension.
- Expulsion as per section 23 of the Education welfare Act 2000.

APPENDIX 4 SCHOOL JOURNAL

THE STUDENT JOURNAL

The journal is designed to help you to organise your work. It is a record book for students and it acts as a reference book and a direct line of communication between students, parents and teachers in the school. It must be available at all times for inspection by teachers. Therefore you must have it with you everyday and produce it when required.

Defacing your journal in anyway is prohibited and there is a cost incurred for replacement of journal. Students are not allowed to write in other students' journals and all journals are to be kept free of graffiti. Parents must sign the journal each week. You are required to have your journal on the desk in all classes.

Any student who arrives in school without her journal must report to the Principal or Deputy Principal.

Students use the journal to record:

- Classwork and homework
- Comments on performance and behaviour
- Explanations for absences
- Explanations for late arrivals
- Permission to leave class

Subject teachers use it to:

- Highlight achievements in all areas of school life
- Record incidents of poor behaviour
- Record permission to leave a class
- Record missing books/materials
- Record homework undone or no reasonable attempt made
- Inform parents/guardians of student progress
- Seek clarification/further information/explanations

Year Heads use it to:

- Check that work is completed and up to standard
- Give praise where deserved
- Act on negative comments received

Parents/Guardians use it to:

- Check on student progress on a daily basis
- Check and sign journal on a weekly basis
- Check and sign punctuality and behaviour records
- Provide explanations for absences
- Seek clarification/further information/ comment on an issue

APPENDIX 5 HEALTH AND SAFETY

Students must never behave in a way that endangers the health or safety of any person in the School. Serious disciplinary sanctions will apply to any student who breaches any of these safety regulations.

In particular :

- Students must at all times take reasonable care to ensure their own safety and that of others
- Students must not leave the School grounds without prior permission in writing from the Principal, Deputy Principal or Year Head. A student who does so will be suspended from School until an application from her parents/guardians to re-admit her to the School is accepted by the School Management.
- A student who has been granted permission to leave school during the school day must be collected by her parents/guardians at the school office and must “Sign Out” before leaving. If that student returns to school later in the day she is required to sign in at the school office.
- Students who may need to leave class for a short period of time must get their Journal signed by their teacher before leaving the classroom and bring the journal with them.
- Students are expected to familiarise themselves with the exit route from each room that they use.
- Students must obey ALL safety instructions given to them by School staff members.
- Students must not interfere with safety equipment such as fire alarms, fire extinguishers and hose reels.
- Please read the substance misuse policy in this booklet for information in relation to cigarettes, alcohol & drugs.
- Students should not litter the School building or grounds as this can be a serious hazard. All litter must be placed in the bins provided. Students may be asked to tidy an area which has been littered and must comply with this reasonable request.
- St. Mary’s is a Green School. Students will always be expected to assist in keeping the school clean tidy and environmentally friendly.
- Aerosols, tippex, solvents, indelible markers and lasers are not to be brought to school.
- Chewing gum is not allowed in school.

Mobile Phones

Camera/Picture phones interfere with a person’s right to privacy and are therefore not allowed in school under any circumstances. Any camera phones found in a student’s possession will be confiscated and will be returned only to parents/guardians. Having a camera phone in school will involve the loss of merits.

Ordinary mobile phones may to be brought to school when parents/guardians can demonstrate that their daughter must have access to a mobile phone on the journey to or from school, but it must be:

- a) Powered off before accessing school property
- b) Locked in the student locker for the whole school day

If an ordinary mobile phone is found in a student's possession during the school day, it will be confiscated. It may be returned, upon request to the principal, at the end of the school day. Such students will lose merits.

Operating a Merit System

It is very important to remember that in school we must create the right environment in which pupils can learn. The vast majority of pupils are interested in their work and set high standards for themselves. They respect and value the necessity for firm school discipline in order to achieve their potential.

Rewards

It is the policy of the school to recognise and reward excellence in conduct, effort and achievement.

As part of our merit system each student will start each year with 50 merits. Extra merits can be earned during the year as suitable situations materialise, eg. teachers may award 1 merit each month to students who do not interfere with teaching and learning in their classes.

Students who at the end of the school year have accumulated a certain number of merits will be given appropriate recognition for this. Individual achievement awards will be presented at an Annual Awards ceremony.

Students who have a good behaviour record may be rewarded with school tours/outings or other special school activities.

Curricular options that require a high degree of commitment and the possession of certain skills and attributes are available for students who display a good record of application to school work and/or a good behavioural record.

Any form of misbehaviour is unacceptable to the school and may involve loss of merits.

Breaches of code of conduct

Teachers may record details of breaches of the code of conduct or the loss of merits in the Pupil's Journal for the information of parents. Parents are required to sign their daughter's journal each week thus becoming aware of teachers' comments. If bad behaviour persists then parents will be contacted and invited to the school to discuss the problem.

We cannot tolerate a situation whereby any pupil's persistent misbehaviour (constantly calling out of turn, distracting other students and the teacher, constantly seeking to be noticed, acting as a class clown etc.) interferes with the rights of the other pupils to achieve their potential. To ensure our continued success it is essential that all parents support the school in its efforts and that they are seen and heard to do so by their daughters.

Any student who is interfering with or disrupting the smooth running of the class is delaying/preventing the teacher from teaching his/her class or covering the course. Likewise other students in the class are prevented from receiving the education to which they are entitled. Any student who persists with this negative behaviour may be withdrawn from such classes indefinitely. She will only be reinstated after a firm undertaking from both the student and her parents/guardians that she will behave in a proper manner and allow the teacher and all the other students in the class to carry on with their work.

The school recognises that students and their families, at times, experience difficulties/illness that may adversely affect a student's conduct or progress. We may not be aware of these difficulties so in the best interest of the student we ask parents/guardians to contact the principal or deputy principal if a student is going through a difficult time. Every effort will be made to be sensitive and sympathetic towards such difficulties and to give appropriate personal support. However, in the interest of whole school teaching and learning, such difficulties will not be accepted as an excuse for unrestrained negative behaviour or serious or sustained disruption of class teaching and other school routines or activities.

Sanctions

While we recognise and reward excellence in Conduct, Effort and Achievement we apply sanctions for misbehaviour. Sanctions will vary depending on the seriousness and frequency of the offence. Sanctions applied in the school include, Loss of Merits, Additional Homework, School Community Service, Detention, being placed "On Report", Withdrawal from Class, Being in school on days/times when other students are off, Suspension and Expulsion.

School Community Service may include cleaning desks, refreshing notice boards, weeding flower beds, picking up litter, cleaning windows or tasks of a similar nature that will improve school environment for everyone.

School Community Service and Detention take place on Friday evenings after school. Parents will be notified in advance if their daughter is to be involved in any of these events.

Under The Merit system a file will be kept on each student. This file will be in the care of the Year Head who will award an increase or reduction of Merits on the student's file following the receipt of an official Student Record Form from teachers. This Student Record form will detail why merits were earned or lost.

CONSEQUENCES OF LOSING MERITS.

On losing 10 merits a student will be detained in school under supervision from 3.20 p.m. – 5.00.m on a specified Friday. Parents will be informed of this beforehand in a letter from the school.

A student who loses a further 5 merits will be placed on detention for a second time.

A student may be placed on report after losing 20 merits or at any time deemed necessary.

At the discretion of the Principal or Deputy Principal, School Community Service may be granted instead of Detention.

On accumulating a loss of 30 merits a student will be suspended from school. The school will contact parents and the Board of Management will be informed. An undertaking of good behaviour, signed by the student and her parents must be received by the school when the student returns after suspension.

If a student is suspended twice expulsion will be considered.

Students are only allowed to participate in school trips and outings if their general behaviour is not a cause for concern.

Curricular options that require a high degree of commitment and the possession of certain skills and attributes are available for students who display a good record of application to school work and/or a good behavioural record.

A positive attitude is a big help in learning any subject. If you have to be corrected for negative behaviour, accept your correction graciously. Teachers correct you because they care about you and how you develop and they want to help each girl to achieve her potential.

Conclusion

St. Mary's Secondary school has a proud tradition in education earned over countless generations of students. Current students must not bring the good name of St. Mary's Secondary school into disrepute. The school Principal and Deputy Principal reserve the right to suspend students where it is felt that the overall good name of St. Mary's is affected.

Students are reminded that their conduct on the way to and from school is as important as within the school. Students in school uniform are ambassadors of the school and any misbehaviour while in school uniform will be acted upon.

Parents who wish to make enquiries or representations on any school matter should do so by making an appointment through the school office.

Under Section 23 of the Education(Welfare) Act 2000, the Board of Management is obliged to prepare a Code of Behaviour for its students. The Code of Behaviour is prepared in accordance with Guidelines issued by the National Education Welfare Board (NEWB). The NEWB Guidelines state that a student may be suspended if

- The students behaviour has had a seriously detrimental effect on the education of the other students.
- The student’s presence in the school at this time constitutes a threat to safety.
- The student is responsible for serious damage to property.

The loss of 20 merits for behaviours listed in the Suspension column below or a single incident of serious misconduct may be grounds for suspension.

Loss of merits	Suspension	Detention
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Constantly talking in class • Bullying behaviour deemed to warrant loss of 2 merits 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No reasonable attempt at homework • No text book in class • Littering • Breach of uniform and appearance regulations • Late for school or class without adequate explanation • Failure to promptly notify school of reason for absence • Copying • Writing notes in class • Disobeying exam rules • Chewing gum • In possession of personal electronic entertainment and communication equipment during the school day • Any other misdemeanour deemed to warrant loss of 2 merits
5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disruptive behaviour • Challenging a teacher’s authority to check inappropriate behaviour • Bullying behaviour deemed to warrant loss of 5 merits 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Failure to produce a punishment exercise • Possession of aerosols • Any other misdemeanour deemed to warrant loss of 5 merits
10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deliberate damage to school property including writing of graffiti • Careless behaviour with the potential to cause bodily injury • Bullying behaviour deemed to warrant loss of 10 merits 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unauthorised absence from a class • Use of foul language • Using personal electronic and communication equipment during the school day • Stealing • Any other misdemeanour deemed to warrant loss of 10 merits
20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intimidation or threat of violence • Bullying/Harassment or violent behaviour • Abusive language to a teacher or member of staff • Threat of act of serious violence • Serious damage to property • Found in the possession of, involved in the supply of, or under the influence of alcohol or other illegal substances or materials 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unauthorised absence from school • Smoking • Found in possession of or involved in the supply of cigarettes • Any other misdemeanour deemed to warrant loss of 20 merits

APPENDIX 7

ANTI-BULLYING/HARASSMENT POLICY

- 1. Bullying is the repeated physical, verbal, non-verbal or psychological behaviours that threaten and intimidate another student or staff member.**
2. Bullying includes any behaviour which reflects in an insulting fashion on the members of the school's community regarding:
 - Sexual Orientation
 - Gender
 - Travellers
 - Disability
 - Age
 - Race
- 3. The bullying or harassment of another will not be tolerated in St. Mary's Secondary School.**
4. Each student and staff member in St. Mary's Secondary School has the right to work in a safe and happy environment where we allow each other to work in an atmosphere of mutual respect.
5. We aim to create an atmosphere where students will feel free to report a bullying incident to an adult at school or at home.
6. It is the policy of St. Mary's Secondary School that all incidents of bullying will be calmly, confidentially and fully investigated, and be followed up appropriately.
7. The management of St. Mary's Secondary School will impose serious sanctions on any person who behaves in a bullying fashion towards another student or staff member.
8. Through our pastoral care system we aim to assist and support the victim of the abuse. The bully too needs help to acknowledge his/her problem and modify his/her behaviour.

GUIDELINES ON WHAT TO DO IN A SITUATION OF BULLYING

- If you feel you are being bullied or you are aware of someone else being bullied, pass on that information to your parents or to someone in the school.
- All kinds of bullying is serious – we will treat what you say in a serious manner.
- It's ok to feel afraid – bullying can be very frightening.
- If you are uncomfortable talking to a teacher, ask your parents to phone us on your behalf.
- Report the facts – Then we can help.
- **When you report bullying** we will always proceed very carefully. We will always let you know what we are going to do to sort out a situation.

APPENDIX 8 ATTENDANCE STRATEGY

In St. Mary's Secondary School we value punctuality and regular attendance at school. To ensure these, the following rules apply to all students:

- All students are expected to be in school before 8.50 a.m. to properly organise themselves for their morning classes. Students are expected to prepare for afternoon classes at 1.50p.m. Students must be punctual for all classes during the school day. Persistent lateness is regarded as a serious matter which will result in contact with home. Sanctions will include detention and possible suspension.
- Before the start of lessons 1, 4 and 7 students are required to have all books and materials needed for the next 3 lessons. Lockers are out of bounds at all other times.
- Any latecomers at lesson 1, 4 and lesson 7 must report to the Principal and present her Journal to record her punctuality before attending class. The Principal will sign her journal. An attendance and punctuality record will be maintained for all pupils. Parents are urged to monitor and sign their daughters' punctuality record in the journal as required.

Where a student arrives late for classes other than L 1,4 and 7 she is required to enter the details in the **Punctuality Record** page in the journal and have it signed by her Teacher and Parents.

- Student absences in excess of 20 days must be notified to the Education Welfare officer for the area. To comply with the Education Welfare Act, all absences from school must be explained in writing by parents on the day the student returns to the school. This is done by entering the details in the **Explanations for Absence** section in the Journal. The student must show this to her class Tutor during her first tutor group class after she returns to school.
- If a student is to be absent for more than one school day, parents should contact the school office by telephone. The usual written entry in the student journal will be required upon the student's return to school.
- If an appointment with a doctor, dentist etc, is to be arranged, it should where possible, be arranged after school time. If this is not possible or if parents need to collect their daughter for any reason during the school day a request for permission to leave school should be entered in the "Message to and from parents" page in the student journal. **No student has permission to leave school during the school day without being authorised in writing to do so by the Principal / Deputy Principal / Year Head. She must be collected at the school office by her parent/guardian and she must sign "The Out Book" prior to leaving. If the student returns later she must sign in at the school office.**
- Absence from class cannot be used by students as an excuse for falling behind in their work.
- When a student has been absent for any length of time, it is important that on return to school, she finds out what work / study she has missed so that she can "catch up" with her classmates.
- If a student is ill in the morning, please do not send her to school as we have no medical personnel to attend to her. When a student feels unable to continue in school due to illness she must complete the **sick slip** section of her Journal and have it signed by her Teacher before going to the school office where all reasonable attempts will be made to contact her parents or guardians. In this effort it is imperative that parents keep the school informed of all current telephone contact numbers including mobile numbers
- When a student returns to school following an absence it is a matter of courtesy to seek her Teachers' permission to rejoin each class.

APPENDIX 9 STAGES OF RESPONSE

Stage One.

The classroom teacher is responsible for dealing with issues at stage one. Support options may include:-

- Reasoning with the student
- Reprimanding the student.
- Communicating with home (by note, phone call or meeting).
- Assigning extra written work.
- Issuing demerits
- Sending student to principal/deputy principal's office
- No student is to be removed from class without a prior arrangement with the Principal/Deputy Principal.

Stage Two.

In incidents where the class teacher and Year Head deem that more serious action is required, the following additional sanctions may include:-

- Placing the student 'on report' for a specific period.
- Friday afternoon detention.
- Contacting parents.

Stage Three.

For persistent or extremely serious incidents, the Year Head may report the student to the Deputy Principal. Further sanctions are available to the Deputy Principal, including:

- Exclusion from school trips and events.
- A ban on involvement and representing the school in extra-curricular activities.
- Apply community service
- Detention
- Contact parents

Stage Four.

In situations where extremely serious or persistent incidents continue, the Deputy Principal may report the student to the Principal. At this stage, the Principal may:

- Meet parents
- Suspend the student from class
- Suspend the student from school.
- Refer for counselling.

Stage Five.

Any one or more of the above four steps may be bypassed for what are deemed serious breaches of the code. The Principal on behalf of the Board of Management will act as a final step in the disciplinary process.

The student, together with his parent(s) will be called to a meeting with the principal. The Principal reserves the right to recommend excluding a pupil in the interests of the health and safety of staff and students.

Expulsions

The Board of Management, after due process and consultation may expel a student.

Expulsions may be appealed to the Board of Management. A student may leave herself open to expulsion by reason of accumulation of disciplinary incidents. There are certain circumstances which may automatically lead to the permanent expulsion of a student from St Mary's. The following is a non-exhaustive list of grounds for expulsion:-

- Consumption of alcohol or illegal drugs while under the care of the school;
- Threatening or intimidating behaviour or verbal abuse or acts of physical violence or serious harassment towards a member of staff or fellow students;
- Bullying fellow students;
- Persistent unruly or disruptive behaviour in class.

The Principal shall decide whether to expel a student from the school in accordance with the following procedures:-

- The Principal shall convene a meeting of the Year Head, Deputy Principal and Principal with the student and parents concerned;
- The student and her parents/guardians shall have the right to state her case and examine the student's record in the school.
- The Principal shall consider all representations made by or on behalf of the student concerned before making a decision on the appropriate sanction.
- Should the Principal decide that expulsion is the appropriate sanction he shall notify the parents that he is recommending expulsion to the Board of Management. He will offer the Parents the opportunity to address the board of management on the issue prior to a decision being taken.
- A decision of the Board to expel a student along with the reasons for same will be forwarded to the relevant educational welfare officer in writing. The expulsion shall not take effect before the passing of twenty school days following the receipt of this written notification by the educational welfare officer.
- The Principal of St Mary's Secondary School is entitled to suspend a student from the school during the process in order to ensure that the learning environment is preserved and that there is no threat to welfare of the students and staff in the school.
- In accordance with the Education Act, 1998, a decision of the Board of Management to expel a student may be appealed to the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Science in accordance with the procedures of the Department

Appendix 10

Suspension

Suspension is defined as: *requiring the student to absent himself/herself from the school for a specified, limited period of school days*. During the period of a suspension, the student retains their place in the school.

Authority to suspend

The Board of Management has the authority to suspend a student. This authority is delegated to the Principal in writing. The Principal is accountable to the Board of Management for his or her use of that authority.

The 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 education of other students
- the student's continued presence in the school constitutes a threat to safety
- the student is responsible for serious damage to property.

A single incident of serious misconduct may be grounds for suspension.

Forms of suspension

Immediate suspension

where the continued presence of the student in the school at the time would represent a serious threat to the safety of students or staff of the school, or any other person. Fair procedures must still be applied.

Suspension during a State examination

where there is:

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

'Automatic' suspension

The Board of Management have decided that the following behaviours incur suspension as a sanction.

Procedures in respect of suspension

St Mary's follow fair procedures when proposing to suspend a student. Where a preliminary assessment of the facts confirms serious misbehaviour that warrant suspension, the school should will:

- inform the student and their parents about the complaint
- give parents and student an opportunity to respond.

The period of suspension

A student will not be suspended for more than three days, except in exceptional circumstances.

If a suspension longer than three days is being proposed by the Principal, the matter will be referred to the Board of Management for consideration and approval, giving the circumstances and the expected outcomes.

Appeals

The Board of Management offers an opportunity to appeal a Principal's decision to suspend a student. In the case of decisions to suspend made by the Board of Management an appeals process may be provided by the Patron.

Section 29 Appeal

Where the total number of days for which the student has been suspended in the current school year reaches twenty days, 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*. At the time parents are being formally notified of a suspension, they and the student will be told about their right to appeal to the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Science under section 29 of the *Education Act 1998*, and will be given information about how to appeal.

Implementing the suspension

Written notification

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 dates on which the suspension will begin and end
- the reasons for the suspension
- any study programme to be followed
- arrangements for returning to school, including any commitments to be entered into by the student
- the provision for an appeal to the Board of Management
- the right to appeal to the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Science (*Education Act 1998*, section 29).

Engaging with student and parents

Where a decision to suspend has been made, it the Principal or another staff member delegated by the Principal will meet with the parents. Where parents do not agree to meet with the Principal, written notification will serve as notice to impose a suspension.

Grounds for removing a suspension

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

After the suspension ends

A period of suspension will end on the date given in the letter of notification to the parents about the suspension.

Re-integrating the student

The school will help the student to take responsibility for catching up on work missed. The school will arrange for a member of staff to provide support to the student during the re-integration process.

Clean slate

A record is kept of the behaviour and any sanction imposed, however, once the sanction has been completed the school expects 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 suspensions in accordance with the NEWB reporting guidelines (*Education (Welfare) Act, 2000*, section 21(4)(a)).

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.

Expulsion

A student is expelled from a school when a Board of Management makes a decision to permanently exclude him or her from the school, having complied with the provisions of section 24 of the *Education (Welfare) Act 2000*.

Authority to expel

The Board of Management has the authority to expel a student.

The grounds for expulsion

Expulsion of a student is a very serious step, only taken by the Board of Management in extreme cases of unacceptable behaviour. The school will 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 their behaviour
- making sure that the student understands the possible consequences of their 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).

Expulsion

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 of others 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.

The grounds for expulsion may be similar to the grounds for suspension. Where expulsion is considered, school authorities will have tried a series of other interventions, and believe they have exhausted all possibilities for changing the student's behaviour.

'Automatic' expulsion

As part of the school's policy on sanctions, and following the consultation process with the Principal, parents, teachers and students, the Board of Management has decided that particular incur expulsion as a sanction. This does not remove the duty to follow due process and fair procedures.

Expulsion for a first offence

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 might 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 to other students in the school
- sexual assault.

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.

Procedures in respect of expulsion

Schools are required by law to follow fair procedures as well as procedures prescribed under the *Education (Welfare) Act 2000*, when proposing to expel a student. 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.

During this time suspension will only be considered where there is 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 students or staff.

Appeals

A parent, or a student aged over eighteen years, may appeal a decision to expel to the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Science (*Education Act 1998* section 29). An appeal may also be brought by the National Educational Welfare Board on behalf of a student.

The appeals process

The appeals process under section 29 of the *Education Act 1998* begins with the provision of mediation by a mediator nominated by the Appeals Committee (Department of Education and Science)

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.