

School Policy on Code of Behaviour

June 2025

St. Mary's Secondary School, New Ross, is a Mercy Order Catholic all girls' school under the Trusteeship of CEIST (Catholic Education an Irish School's Trust). Our inclusive school community is committed to developing each person's full potential in a positive, supportive and Christian environment. We aim to work collaboratively to enact our Mission Statement:

St. Mary's is a community which is proud of its Catholic tradition and is committed to developing each person's full potential in a positive, supportive and Christian environment. We invite everyone to participate and we urge everyone to contribute.

Our Code of Behaviour includes a set of practices and procedures that together promote a positive learning and teaching environment conducive to the growth and development of each person. In choosing St Mary's Secondary School parents/guardians are committing themselves to uphold and cooperate with our Code of Behaviour.

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.

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
- recognise the right of each class member has to a positive learning environment
- recognise the right that a teacher has to do his/her work
- co-operate with 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 daily and punctually
- 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
- take pride in representing the school and in participating in school activities
- take responsibility for own work and actions
- follow the procedures for signing out and lateness

The plan for promoting good behaviour

In line with our Mission Statement it is policy to encourage and promote positive behaviour.

Positive Behaviour is supported by:

- Maintaining positive communication between staff and parents through personal contact, newsletters, website and social media.
- Explanation of the code of behaviour by class tutors and Year Heads.
- Support structures such as the breakfast club, Meitheal, Student support team.
- Providing a wide range of co-curricular and extra-curricular activities for the students.
- Providing a broad and varied curriculum.
- Discussions in subjects such as SPHE, Religion and CSPE.
- Creating awareness through initiatives such as Fair Trade, JP11, School of Sanctuary, People are People and social innovation.
- Inviting speakers and providing workshops on a variety of related subject matter.
- Encouraging positive contributions and opportunities for leadership through Student Council, Prefects, Meitheal and Library teams.
- Friendship Week
- Internet safety events
- Provision of Guidance Counselling

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 Principals and Principal.
- Annual School awards night
- Awards for Certificate Examination results
- Awarding of certificates of attendance and improved 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.

The ways in which the school responds to unacceptable behaviour

The school responds to unacceptable behaviour through the application of interventions in fair, consistent and timely ways. The purpose of these interventions is to bring about a change in behaviour, to defuse and not escalate a situation and to preserve the dignity of all the parties.

We use Restorative Justice practices to resolve conflict and repair harm. It encourages those who have caused harm to acknowledge the impact of what they have done and gives them an opportunity to make reparation. This restorative practice is based on four principles:

- Respect – listening to other opinions and learning to value them.
- Responsibility – taking responsibility for one's own actions.
- Repair – discussing how to repair harm.
- Re-integration – working through a process that solves the problem.

The approach allows the students an opportunity to understand and learn to manage their own behavior and have respectful relationships with others. It also recognises the need for providing support within clear boundaries and expectations.

At times there may be need to apply sanctions as a consequence for breach (es) of the school's code of behavior. The sanction applied will depend on the seriousness and frequency of the breach (es).

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 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 are included in the Appendices to the policy.

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

- The Board of Management is responsible for the adoption, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the Code of Behaviour.
- The Board is supported by the school's Principal, Deputy Principals and Middle Management teams in managing the policy and leading development of the policy.
- Teachers and other staff members bring their professional expertise in implementing and evaluating the policy.
- Parents' involvement in the development, monitoring and evaluation of the policy is welcomed. It is expected that all parents and guardians will support the Code of Behaviour and encourage their daughters to uphold it.
- Students are expected to do their utmost to uphold the Code of Behaviour and are also encouraged to voice their opinions on the policy
- Collaboration within the school community is encouraged so that a consistent approach is collectively agreed to make sure this school is a good place to teach and learn.

Review and Evaluation

In any review and evaluation, the policy will be checked by the following criteria:

- 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.

This review will take place within the term of each Board of Management, or earlier as the need arises.

Note: It should be understood that it is impossible to anticipate every single misdemeanour/unsafe action in any given context. Therefore, the school reserves the right to vary these procedures and sanctions, taking into account the particular circumstances of incidents, the individual record of students, health and safety considerations, the rights of other students to learn and of teachers to teach in a safe and respectful environment.

Relevant Legislation

This policy adheres to the following legislation and will be updated to include amended/additional legislation

- *Age of Majority Act 1985*
- *Freedom of Information Act, 1997*
- *Non-Fatal offences Against the Person Act 1997*
- *Education Act, 1998*
- *Safety & Welfare at Work Act, 1998*
- *Education (Welfare) Act, 2000*
- *Equal Status Act, 2000*
- *Ombudsman for Children Act 2002*
- *Education for Persons with Special Education Needs Act 2004*
- *Disability Act 2005*
- *Education (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2007*
- *General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) 2018*

APPENDIX 1 **School Expectations**

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.
- 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.
- 6th Year students only may be given permission to sign out and leave unaccompanied provided that a request has been received from a parent/guardian via the school app before 9am that day.
- All contact to and from home during the school day must be through the school office
- 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. Students may be asked to tidy an area which has been littered and must comply with this reasonable request.
- Aerosols, Tippex, solvents, indelible markers and lasers are not to be brought to school.
- Chewing gum is not allowed in school.
- Caffeine and stimulant energy drinks such as Monster and Red Bull are 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.
- Breakages or damage of school property will have to be paid for.

Attendance and Punctuality

- Students must attend school every day, all day
- All absences from school must be explained by the parent/guardian in writing using the school app.
- Absences of 20 days or more will be notified to TUSLA.
- Students are expected to be in school before 8.50am to prepare properly for classes
- Students arriving late must get a late slip at the office

Classroom rules

- Have all books and materials needed for class ready.
- 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.
- Classrooms must be kept tidy at all times. Do your share.
- 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

1. Full uniform is expected on non-PE day (Blouse, jumper, skirt/ trousers, socks, shoes)

- Cream blouse, bottle green V-necked jumper with school crest, bottle green skirt, or bottle green school uniform trousers for Juniors and black-watch skirt or black-watch school uniform trousers for seniors. Skirts are not to be shortened.
- Bottle green knee socks / tights
- Plain black or very dark navy, low heeled flat soled shoes (no brown shoes)

2. PE Uniform is only to be worn on PE days, and only on active PE days for LCPE students

- Plain navy, plain black or plain grey track suit bottoms or leggings
- Runners (no casual shoes/UGGS etc.)
- The school's PE Uniform top.
- If not participating in PE then the full school uniform is expected.

3. Student appearance - jewellery

- Ear piercings – discrete studs are permitted, no hoops or dangling ear-rings
- Nose piercing – one, small, discrete, stud or hoop is allowed.
- No septum piercings or any other facial piercing
- Piercings may need to be removed, under health and safety regulations, for PE/Sport activities or for the needs of any specific subject area or activity.
- Facial jewellery other than what is allowed will have to be removed immediately and any excuse that it can't be removed will not be accepted

4. Student appearance

- Make up, if worn, must be neat, discreet and natural looking suitable for school.
- Natural hair colouring is preferred while discreet dyed hair colouring will be allowed – no extravagant or flamboyant colours.
- Nails – Students may wear nail varnish but it must be removed for cookery classes. No false nails/gel/acrylic/shellac nails permitted for health and safety reasons.
- Eyelashes – False eyelashes must not be worn to school on health and safety grounds.

5. General information

- No extras to be worn in classrooms/ around the corridors/in the school building (hats/scarves /sunglasses – whatever the trend may be)
- Students must remove coats when requested by a teacher.
- Demerits will be applied for breaches of school uniform rules.
- 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.
- 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 principals in exceptional circumstances. Permission must be secured before 8.55a.m.

Behaviour

- Students are expected to be mannerly and 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. Payment of a cost, through the school app, will be taken as consent.
- Students are expected to follow rules from transport and road safety organisations, such as seatbelt wearing, for safety purposes.
- Students are only allowed to participate in school trips/activities etc if their general behaviour is not a cause of concern.

Mobile Phones/Electronic Devices

Mobile phones must be powered off before accessing school property and locked in the student locker for the whole school day. If a student is found using a mobile phone (without permission of a teacher) it will be confiscated and returned, upon request to the principal, at the end of the school day. Such students will lose merits.

Electronic devices such as iPads, Apple Watches etc. must not be used for communication with others during the school day. Such devices will also be confiscated and returned, upon request to the principal, at the end of the school day. Such students will lose merits.

Mobile phones must never be used to take, obtain or transmit photographic or video images either in school or on school related activities without the permission of a teacher. Any such use that violates privacy or used for bullying/harassment will be viewed as a serious breach of the Code of Behaviour.

Students should also familiarise themselves with the school's Acceptable Use Policy.

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. Subject teachers should clearly outline the school's expectations at the outset of each school year and every effort should be made to encourage students to attain these expectations.

Role of Class Tutor

The Class Tutor takes a particular interest in the activities and progress of the students in his/her tutor class; helps their students 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 liaises with the Year Head in relation to students in his/her tutor group.

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 Principals, 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

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.
- Loss of privileges.
- Temporary confiscation of non-uniform items.
- Demerits issued.
- Confiscation of mobile phone/electronic device/inappropriate material
- Referral to Year Head.
- Written communication with parent/guardian in school journal.
- Loss of position of responsibility.
- After school detention – one and half hour duration after school on a specified date notified in advance to parents.
- Put on Report.
- Removal from representing school in any activity for a nominated period of time.
- Payment for, or replacement of, damaged or stolen property.
- In-house suspension
- Temporary or permanent change of class.
- Formal letter to parent/guardian
- Introduction of a Behaviour Plan.
- Written undertaking of good behaviour, signed by both parent/guardian and student.
- Suspension.
- Expulsion as per section 23 of the Education Welfare Act 2000.

Note: It should be understood that it is impossible to anticipate every single misdemeanour/unsafe action in any given context. Therefore, the school reserves the right to vary these procedures and sanctions, taking into account the particular circumstances of incidents, the individual record of students, health and safety considerations, the rights of other students to learn and of teachers to teach in a safe and respectful environment

Some examples of inappropriate behaviour:

- 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
- Constantly talking in class
- Disruptive behaviour
- Challenging a teacher's authority
- Possession of aerosols
- Deliberate damage to school property including writing of graffiti
- Careless behaviour with the potential to cause bodily injury
- Unauthorised absence from a class
- Use of foul language
- Stealing
- Intimidation or threat of violence
- Bullying/Harassment or violent behaviour
- Abusive language to a teacher or member of staff
- Found in the possession of, involved in the supply of, or under the influence of alcohol or other illegal substances or materials
- Smoking or Vaping
- Crowding in toilet cubicles

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.

Defacing your journal in any way 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.

Students use the journal to record:

- Classwork and homework
- Comments on performance and behaviour
- Permission to leave class

Subject teachers may 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

APPENDIX 5 OPERATING A MERIT SYSTEM

Rewards

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

Class teachers and Year Heads will operate a merit system to recognise positive contributions to school life.

Individual achievement awards will be presented at an Annual Awards ceremony.

APPENDIX 6 ANTI-BULLYING/HARASSMENT POLICY

See our current Bí Cineálta policy

APPENDIX 7 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.
- Students are required to have all books and materials needed for their lessons and should use lockers at break times only.
- Any latecomers at lesson one must report to the office and get a late slip to record her punctuality before attending class. The student should present this slip to her teacher.
- Student absences in excess of 20 days must be notified to TUSLA. 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 school app.
- Appointments with a doctor, dentist etc, should be arranged outside of 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 school app before 9am.
- Absence from class, including for school activities, 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

APPENDIX 8 STAGES OF RESPONSE

The school responds to unacceptable behaviour through the application of interventions in fair, consistent and timely ways. The purpose of these interventions is to bring about a change in behaviour, to defuse and not escalate a situation and to preserve the dignity of all the parties.

We use Restorative Justice practices to resolve conflict and repair harm. It encourages those who have caused harm to acknowledge the impact of what they have done and gives them an opportunity to make reparation.

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
- 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.
- After school detention.
- Contacting parents.

Stage Three.

For persistent or extremely serious incidents, the Year Head may consider

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

Stage Four.

In situations where extremely serious or persistent incidents continue, the Year Head 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.

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.

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 an immediate suspension will be imposed. 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.

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 warrants suspension, the school 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

The Board of Management may determine that a particular behaviour can 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.