

St. Patrick's Comprehensive School, Shannon, Co. Clare.

Code of Behaviour

Scope:

This policy applies to students of St. Patrick's Comprehensive School and relates to all school activities both during and outside of normal school hours. This policy has been drafted by the Board of Management, in collaboration with staff, students and parents and in the context of the school's aims and values.

Relationship to schools mission, vision, aims

This policy has been developed in line with our mission statement which has the care of students at its core. The school believes that respect for the individual is essential to the smooth and efficient running of a school where effective teaching and learning can take place.

Rationale

St. Patrick's Comprehensive School is a place where many people work together and therefore pupils are expected to show co-operation, good manners and respect to all members of staff, visitors as well as to each other. They are expected to address each other in an appropriate manner and refrain from the use of offensive language. In applying the Code of Behaviour it is necessary to reach a balance between the interests of the individual student and the general welfare of the wider school community.

Aims

The Code of Behaviour as set out in this document aims to: -

- promote understanding of the rationale behind the rules governing acceptable behaviour
- create a safe and caring environment conducive to effective teaching and learning
- foster a spirit of self-discipline crucial to the development of the young person
- assist in the maintenance of a clean and orderly environment
- enlist the co-operation and involvement of parents /guardians in supporting the Code of Behaviour and its sanctions

Roles and Responsibilities

St. Patrick's Comprehensive School acknowledges the contribution of all members of the school community. Each member has responsibility for the promotion of good behaviour and a role in dealing with and minimizing negative behaviour.

Parents

The co-operation of parents/guardians is considered fundamental to the implementation of the school's Code of Behaviour. By enrolling their children in the school parents/guardians indicate agreement with and support for the aims and ethos of the school.

Students

Students are responsible for their own behaviour and must at all times endeavour to uphold the Code of Behaviour of our school.

Teachers

St. Patrick's Comprehensive School acknowledges the role of teachers in the development and operation of the Code of Behaviour. The school recognises that a teacher's main focus is in the area of teaching and learning, but that they also have a pivotal role to play in classroom management; that pivotal role forms a core element of this code. There are teachers assigned to each class and year group with special responsibilities for operating the code. Tutors/Year Heads/Guidance Counsellor, Learning Support Teacher, Psychological Services, Chaplain, Other Agencies, Deputy Principal and Principal all have specific roles to play in upholding the code.

Other Staff

The school acknowledges the contribution of administration and caretaking staff in the day to day running of the school. They too have a part to play in the successful operation of our Code of Behaviour. In particular they have a responsibility to report incidents of misbehaviour and examples of positive behaviour they witness.

Board of Management

The Board of Management is the ultimate decision making body of the school. The school acknowledges its role in the development and operation of our Code of Behaviour. All policies are developed with the authority of the Board of Management and must be approved by its members before becoming official school policy. While members of the Board of Management are not involved in the day-to-day procedures, they are the body to whom parents and students over 18 can initially appeal in cases of suspension or expulsion.

School Rules

The school rules are drawn up in accordance with the stated aims of the Code of Behaviour. They will be regularly evaluated and revised as deemed appropriate. Students with their parents/guardians are required annually to read the school's Code of Behaviour. Parents/guardians are invited to liaise with Year Head on all aspects of their son's/daughter's progress. In this way it is hoped, by early intervention, to avoid problems escalating. Parents/guardians are welcome to consult with staff members and should do so by appointment.

Rules:

1. Students must fully accept the authority of each member of staff.
2. Students are required to actively engage with the teaching and learning process. To this end each student is expected to attend school regularly, in accordance with the Education (Welfare) Act 2000 between 9 am and 4 pm on Monday and Tuesday and 9 am and 3.20 pm on Wednesday, Thursday and Friday.
3. Attendance at all classes must be punctual and regular and students are expected to arrive at class fully equipped with books and materials appropriate to the particular subject. Sanctions for poor attendance and punctuality are at the Year Heads discretion.
4. A student must bring a written explanation from parents/guardians regarding any absence. Any student missing 20 days or more will be reported to the Education Welfare Board in accordance with the Education Welfare Act. Students leaving school early must seek permission from their YearHead.
5. Class work and homework assignments should be completed to the best of the student's ability.
6. Each student is expected to behave in a respectful and dignified manner at all times. Bullying will not be tolerated. Students must not disrupt classes or prevent other students from receiving the education to which they are entitled.
7. Each student must take full responsibility for his/her personal property.
8. Where a student brings a mobile phone to school, the device must be switched off and out of sight once students are on school grounds. (See Mobile Phone Policy).***
9. Smoking (including e-cigarettes), alcohol and illegal substance use is forbidden.
10. Chewing gum is strictly forbidden within the school building.
11. Students are expected to avail of breaks and lunch time to use the toilet. Permission to leave class to use the toilet is at the teacher's discretion. *** (Suspended for duration of COVID-19 Response Plan).
 - ❖ Toilets will be assigned to year groups according to the Year Group Zones – students will be encouraged to access the facilities during class time to avoid congestion during breaktimes. Students will be required to only access their assigned toilet to minimize interactions between year groups.
12. Students leaving class for any reason must be in possession of a hall pass or a sign out form. ***
13. Students who damage school property will be required to pay for the damage.
14. Lockers are the property of the school and as such may be searched if deemed appropriate under health and safety grounds. ***
15. Students are expected to be presented in a manner that is acceptable to the teaching staff. (See Dress Code). ***
16. Students must have their Student Journal with them and must use it to record homework/revision. The Student Journal must be checked and signed by a parent/guardian each week.

❖ COVID-19 Additions to Code of Behaviour

Face Masks:

As of 7th August all students and staff have to wear facemasks in school where a social distance of more than 2 m cannot be maintained. While we anticipate the cooperation and good will of all our students if a student persists in refusing to comply with wearing a face

mask their parent will be contacted and the student will be sent home. This will not be recorded as a suspension and the student will return to school the following day once they comply with wearing a face mask. Students who cannot comply with the wearing of facemasks for medical or sensory needs will have to apply for a Face Mask Exemption.

Teaghlach Based Classrooms:

We have moved to student rather than teacher-based classrooms and year group zones to minimize movement and interactions between students. Students are expected to remain in their designated seats and maintain social distancing, to respect the room, equipment, facilities and other students' materials. Students found to behave in an inappropriate manner will be required to reimburse the school for the cost of any repairs or replacements. Students will face a serious sanction for inappropriate or disrespectful behaviour and must follow teachers' instructions and the Code of Behaviour at all times.

Movement of Students:

Students will have to move within their zone for different classes and throughout the school for specialist subjects. They will also be able to access the canteen at break and lunchtime – please note that due to the limited seating available in the canteen only those students who have applied for lunchtime in the canteen will be permitted all other students will have to leave the premises. Students are not permitted in the corridors at break or lunch. Student Toilets are zoned and must be accessed during class time with the teacher's permission. Students are required to walk on the left in single file and to use sanitizer when entering a classroom. Student's will be required to wipe down tables, chairs and equipment which will be used by another student after them.

Entering and leaving school:

Separate access points are designated by year groups, students must enter and leave only by these access points. If a student arrives late or has to leave early, they go through the front door and sign in/out at the front office.

Contacting Home:

If a student needs to contact home they go to the front office and the staff in the front office will call home for them, it will not be possible to allow students to use the phone. It will also not be possible for the front office to receive items for distribution to students eg forgotten home economics ingredients etc. In the event a student has forgotten materials they must alert their teacher of same at the start of class. Being prepared for class with all necessary materials is a necessary life skill, repeatedly forgetting materials or books etc will result in sanctions being imposed.

Detention:

Detention is assigned by Year Heads for persistent misbehavior or failure to comply with school rules. With current restrictions and staggered lunch breaks it will not be feasible to operate a detention facility. Students who would normally qualify for detention will now be placed on an on-line report for a comparable period, any further deterioration in behaviour will move to the next stage in the discipline process – suspension.

Schoolwork & Homework:

For the duration of the COVID-19 Response Plan teachers will not be collecting copies or homework; they will not be giving handouts or photocopying notes. All resources will be made available through Teams. Students will submit homework for correction at the teacher's request through Teams. Students will need access to IT facilities at home to either type and submit work or photograph and upload work to teams. Any student with IT challenges at home should alert their Year Head.

Preventative Measures

In St. Patrick's Comprehensive School, students will be encouraged in their endeavours to uphold the Code of Behaviour by use of the following measures:

- a) The Code of Behaviour is circulated to the parents of all new entrants to the school. Parents are required to sign that they have received and read the code and by doing so, acknowledge their support and co-operation with it. This is to ensure that parents and students understand what the rules are, why they must be adhered to and what procedures will be followed if the rules are not upheld.
- b) At the beginning of the academic year, as part of our induction process, each class is brought through the Code of Behaviour and any amendments to it are highlighted. This is done to remind students of the content and to take account of the fact that they have been out of school for the summer holidays.
- c) If a student is in breach of a rule, he/she is spoken to by a teacher and is clearly informed of what rule has been breached. Appropriate action will be taken by the teacher in each case.
- d) Recognising the pivotal role played by all teachers in the development and operation of the school's Code of Behaviour, it is reinforced by each teacher in all subject areas. In addition the school rules and the reasons for them are discussed as part of the school's pastoral care programme and as part of RSE/SPHE. The notion of tolerance for others, self-control, a sense of fairness and the principles of natural justice are discussed as part of the Religious Education programme in the school. Some of this work also takes place in CSPE class since it seeks to consider the foundation of good citizenship
- e) Issues such as bullying, racism, sexism, harassment, violence, and substance misuse are discussed with the students during their time in our school, using the Pastoral Care, CSPE and SPHE programmes. This is to help students understand these issues so that they can base their thinking, understanding and behaviour on factual information.

Awards and Affirmations

In St. Patrick's Comprehensive School teachers use the following methods to reward students for upholding the Code of Behaviour.

- Verbal praise to student either in class or individually.
- Positive comment to class Tutor/Year Head
- Positive note to parents posted on students VShare profile.***
- Display of student's work.
- The individual teacher may adopt an award system for his/her class.
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Each student receives an individual report on his/her progress twice a year.

Sanctions

Sanctions are needed to show disapproval of and to discourage unacceptable behaviour. Sanctions will be graded according to the particular circumstances. They will however, be sufficiently flexible to take account of individual circumstances. Sanctions will make the distinction between minor and more serious misbehaviour clear to pupils.

The following sanctions are used so that our students experience the consequences of their behaviour. They are graded so as to take account of the nature of the incident and the circumstances preceding the incident.

- A firm reprimand from a member of staff is expected to be sufficient to correct inappropriate behaviour
- Time out – removal of the student from the scene of the incident, e.g. the student is assigned work in a different place within the classroom or is assigned work in another classroom by arrangement with the teacher.
- A note home to parents in the homework journal
- A referral of the incident on to the class Tutor/Year Head.
- Detention
- An appropriate community task after consultation with parents/guardians
- A telephone call to parents by Year Head/Deputy Principal or Principal
- A meeting with parents
- Exclusion from a favoured activity
- Student put on Monitoring Report
- In-house suspension from a particular subject for a limited time
- Suspension
- Expulsion

Where there has been a case of serious indiscipline or where an accumulated pattern of offences has emerged, additional penalties may be imposed.

Serious Breaches of Discipline

Serious breaches of school discipline include the following:

- being disrespectful to staff and/or visitors
- bullying
- harassment/sexual harassment
- theft
- forging Parents/Guardians signatures
- defacing school property
- smoking/misuse of substances
- absence from school/class without appropriate authorisation
- copying at exams
- refusal to hand up mobile phone
- failure to attend detention
- refusal to produce a journal

Minor Breaches of Discipline

Minor breaches of school discipline include the following

- failure to do homework
- copying homework
- failure to have correct books for class
- lateness
- failure to provide relevant notes
- failure to have a journal signed

Please Note

These lists are not exhaustive and only illustrative of breaches of discipline that may occur. Persistent repetition of a minor offence will lead to its being considered a major offence.

Procedures for Dealing with Misconduct

1. Misconduct will be dealt with by the class teacher in the first instance
2. A note to parents may be written in homework journal. Teacher may contact parents by phone. A 'report' of the incident may be given to the Tutor/Year Head and kept on file.
3. Repeated misbehaviour will result in referral to the Tutor
4. Persistent misbehaviour will be reported to the Year Head.
5. A student may be put on report to closely monitor his/her attendance, behaviour and /or work.
6. Detention may be imposed at the discretion of the Year Head /Deputy Principal/Principal.
7. If a student is to be detained, 24 hours notice will be given to parents via the homework journal
8. If misbehaviour continues the Year Head will inform the Principal or Deputy Principal. Parents will be informed by letter and may be invited to attend a meeting. Suspension may also occur at this stage at the discretion of the Principal.
9. In the event of a serious breach of discipline the process of sanctions may start at stage eight.
10. Suspension from class may occur when a pupil has been uncooperative, disrespectful or consistently disruptive.
11. Suspension from school can be imposed at the discretion of the Principal/Board of Management.

Interventions

In St. Patrick's Comprehensive School we use the following interventions to assist students from re-offending and to give specific help to those students who find it particularly difficult to uphold the Code of Behaviour. We do so in consultation with parents/guardians.

- Interview between the student and a member of staff, usually the Year Head initially
- Referral to the Guidance Counsellor
- Referral to the School Chaplain
- Referral by the school to an out centre for assistance in behaviour modification
- Referral to the schools psychologist for testing and/or help in behaviour modification

Suspension and Permanent Exclusion

Suspension from school is a sanction generally reserved for cases where unacceptable behaviour persists despite the application of other sanctions or in cases of a very serious breach of discipline. Students may be suspended only by decision of the Principal or in the absence of the Principal, by the Deputy Principal. All cases of suspension will be brought to the attention of the Board of Management.

Parents will be informed in writing of

- the reason for suspension
- the period of suspension
- the right of appeal (Internal/Section 29 Appeal)

School management reserves the right to permanently exclude pupils in extreme circumstances in accordance with the Education (Welfare) Act, 2000, (24-(1))

Appeals Procedures

Section 29 of the Education Act 1998 gives parents (and students who have reached the age of 18) the right to appeal certain decisions made by a school Board of Management, or a person acting on behalf of the board, to the Secretary General of the Department of Education & Science.

The following decisions may be appealed:

- (i) permanent exclusion from a school
- (ii) suspension for a period of time which would bring the cumulative period of suspension to 20 school days in any one school year, or (iii) refusal to enrol.

Appeals must generally be made within 42 calendar days from the date the decision of the school has notified to the parent or student. Accordingly, parents are advised of this right of appeal and associated timeframe when informing them of any of the above categories or decisions.

There are basically three layers to these procedures:

- (a) both parties will be asked in the first instance if an accommodation can be reached at local level
- (b) should that fail, and where the Appeals Committee considers that it may be possible to facilitate agreement between the appellant and the school, a facilitator will be appointed to contact the parties at the earliest opportunity
- (c) finally, an appeal may be referred for hearing by an Appeals Committee established by the Minister for Education & Skills.

Internal Appeals

In the case of an internal appeal, a parent/guardian may write to the Board of Management indicating that he/she wishes to appeal a decision. This request should be addressed to the Secretary of the Board of Management. The Secretary shall inform the parent/guardian of

the date of the next meeting, whether imposition of the sanction will be postponed and what procedures will be followed in the appeal process.

Implementation

As the official Code of Behaviour policy of St. Patrick's Comprehensive School, all registered students of the school will receive a copy of it by hand and parents/guardians, or students over 18 will be required to provide a written acknowledgement of receipt of the policy. The Code of Behaviour is also available on the school web site or from reception by request. Amendments to the Code of Behaviour will be communicated to the stakeholders in writing. When a major review is carried out, the resulting amended Code of Behaviour will be circulated to all the stakeholders in written format.

Review

The Code of Behaviour which was drawn up in consultation with the staff, students, parents and management of our school and was ratified by the Board of Management, will be reviewed one year after its implementation initially.

Any amendments which need to be made will be in keeping with the general philosophy of our Code of Behaviour and will be communicated to the members of the school community in writing.

A major review will be carried out no later than five years after the date of implementation and will involve consultation with the parents, students, staff, management and Board of Management of our school.

S T Ruane
Chairperson, Board of Management.
18/8/20

***Amendment 14/11/2019: Following amendments to other school policies, to reflect changes to school practices and in the interest of protecting the health and safety of our students minor additions/adjustments were made to this policy. The revised changes will remain in place until a full review of this policy can take place during this school year.

❖ Amendments 18/8/20 to facilitate COVID-19 Response Plan.