



**St. Patrick's Comprehensive School**

**Shannon, Co. Clare**

**Code of Good Behaviour & School Values**

**Ratified by**

**The Board of Management**

**15<sup>th</sup> December 2021**

**Amendment added 26<sup>th</sup> September 2022**

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## **1. Introducing the guidelines**

This policy covers the following areas:

- The standards of behaviour that shall be observed by each pupil attending the school.
- The whole school approach in promoting positive behaviour
- The measures that shall be taken when a pupil fails or refuses to observe those standards.
- The procedures to be followed before a pupil may be suspended or expelled from the school
- It includes standards of behaviour expected in relation to the use of mobile phones; dress code and substance misuse.
- It compliments and supports St Patrick's Comprehensive School Anti-Bullying Policy.

The Code of Behaviour of St Patrick's Comprehensive School has been developed in accordance with the National Educational Welfare Board's (2008 guidelines on "Developing a Code of Behaviour: guidelines for Schools.")

## **1.1 Aims**

The Code of Behaviour of St Patrick's Comprehensive School aims to: -

- build a school community where the rights of all students and staff are respected.
- encourage all members of the community to be aware of their responsibilities as well as their rights.
- 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.
- encourage all members of the school community to strive to create an atmosphere that encourages positive behaviour.
- employ the philosophy and techniques of Restorative Practice to encourage greater understanding of the impact of negative behaviours on the individual and others and through that greater understanding to promote empathy and community responsibility.

## **1.2 Scope**

This policy has been drawn up in consultation with the Board of Management, staff, students and parents and in the context of the school's aims and values. This policy applies to all students of St. Patrick's Comprehensive School, to their parents/guardians and to all members of the school staff and management; and relates to all school activities both during and outside of normal school hours.

## **1.3 Relationship to school's mission, vision, aims.**

### ***Mission Statement:***

*St Patrick's Comprehensive School is committed to excellence.*

*We provide equality of opportunity for all students in a disciplined and caring environment.*

*We encourage individual students to achieve their full potential and to relate positively to one another and to the community in which they live.*

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 and individual students are supported in achieving their full academic and personal potential. We strive to achieve this in a healthy, safe and inclusive environment where learning is valued and the rights and responsibilities of all are respected.

## **1.4 Rationale**

St. Patrick's Comprehensive School values the rights and responsibilities of all staff and students. In order that effective teaching and learning can take place the school has formulated this Code of Behaviour. Students are expected to always show respect and courtesy for each other, for their teachers, for the staff of the school and for all members of the wider community. Staff are expected to always treat the student body, parents/guardians and their colleagues with dignity and respect. Parents/guardians are expected to model the principles of the school's code of behaviour in all their engagements with the school and school staff.

## **1.5 Goals**

- To create a safe learning environment.
- To encourage positive behaviour.
- To correct unacceptable behaviour by offering guidance and support.
- To ensure that all members of the school community are treated with equity and fairness.

# **2. Policy Content**

## **2.1 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.

1. All members of staff have a responsibility to model good behaviour and to correct misbehaviour.
2. St Patrick's Comprehensive School have adopted a Restorative Practice approach to breaches of the Code of Behaviour. All staff have a responsibility to apply restorative practice techniques consistently when working with students.
3. All members of staff have a pastoral role; actively understanding and supporting student wellbeing promotes positive behaviour and negates negative behaviours.

4. The class teacher monitors behaviour during class, on the way to class and after class.
5. The class teacher is expected to address negative behaviour issues; persistent negative behaviour should be reported on the student's VShare Behaviour tab for parents and Year Heads to monitor – the report should also record the Action Taken by the class teacher to address the behaviour.
6. The Year Head has overall responsibility, in consultation with the Principal, for pastoral, academic and behavioural issues in their year group. The Year Head liaises with parents, class teachers, the Pastoral Care Team; the SEN Teams and with external agencies to support students in accessing teaching and learning and modifying their behaviour as needed. They also liaise with the Deputy and Principal regarding more serious breaches of behaviour.
7. The Deputy Principal may at any time be consulted regarding cases of misbehaviour but generally intervenes in more serious cases.
8. The Principal may intervene at any time and may issue suspensions and recommend students for expulsion.
9. Members of the SEN Teams advise staff members on the learning needs of students.
10. The Pastoral Care Team are available to support students experiencing difficulties or presenting with challenging behaviours. The Pastoral Care Team will support the work of Year Heads and will liaise with parents/guardians and external agencies as appropriate. Students who present with challenging behaviours and/or repeatedly breach the school's code of behaviour will be referred to the Pastoral Care Team to examine their behaviour and to support them in learning how to modify their behaviour.
11. Students are responsible for their own behaviour and must always endeavor to uphold the Code of Behaviour of our school.
12. 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.
13. Parents/Guardians are expected to monitor behaviour, attendance and academic reports on VShare regularly – these are critical communication links between school and home. Parents/Guardians are expected to monitor and address negative behaviour incidents reported on VShare with their students to support the school in preventing the repetition of such behaviours.
14. 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.

## **2.2 School Rules/ Behaviour Expectations**

The rules of the school are kept to a minimum and are based on common sense. They have been drawn up in accordance with the stated aims of the Code of Behaviour. We have high expectations of the

students in terms of their appearance, behaviour and courtesy. Parents/guardians are asked to co-operate with the school to make sure the rules are kept.

The rules of the school are designed to promote:

### **2.2.1 Respectful behaviour by all members of our school community. Respect for self, for others and for school facilities.**

#### **Students are expected to...**

- ... show respect by speaking courteously to each other and all members of the school staff.
- ... follow instructions calmly.
- ... know that speaking to staff in an aggressive or disrespectful manner is unacceptable.
- ... adhere to our school's **Bi Cinealta** Anti-Bullying Policy.
- ... take full responsibility for his/her personal property.
- ... pay for any damage done to school property.
- ... maintain their lockers in a clean and orderly fashion.
- ... only access their lockers at designated times – before 9 am; at small break; at lunch and at the end of the day.
- ...to recognise that lockers remain the property of the school and can be searched if deemed appropriate on health and safety grounds.
- ... move around the school in a calm and respectful manner recognising that excessive noise in corridors disturbs the teaching and learning in classrooms.

### **2.2.2 Positive and constructive engagement with teaching and learning.**

#### **Students are expected to ...**

- ... actively engage with the teaching and learning process.
- ... arrive at class fully equipped with books and materials appropriate to the particular subject.
- ... complete class work and homework assignments to the best of their ability.
- ... be attentive and behave in class so that they and others can benefit fully from the teaching and learning experience.
- ... 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. **You should not use the toilet during class as this disrupts teaching and learning for self and others. If you access the toilets during class time it is recorded on VShare. If a pattern emerges, parents will be contacted.**
- ... 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.

... bring a written explanation from parents/guardians regarding any absence. Any student missing 20 days or more or with a regular pattern of partial attendance will be reported to the Education Welfare Board in accordance with the Education Welfare Act. Students leaving school early must seek permission from their Year Head.

## **2.2.3 Adherence to school policies as formulated and agreed by all members of our school community**

### **2.2.3.1 Mobile Phone, Electronic Devices and Social Media**

#### **Rationale:**

Throughout the review process we have given much consideration to requests to amend the school policy on mobile phone use, specifically to permit the use of mobile phones at breaktimes. However, we have concluded that it is in the best interests of our students that the ban on mobile phone use in school should continue for the following reasons:

- It encourages face-to-face social interaction. Students already spend significant time in the technological world; our policy on mobile phones facilitates and encourages conversations where tone, body language and facial expressions facilitate greater understanding and communication.
- Students already spend considerable time on their mobile phones outside of school; our mobile phone policy gives students a break from their devices during the school day.
- Cyber-bullying is an unfortunate reality for many of our students – students can be both victims and perpetrators of cyber-bullying. Our mobile phone policy prevents cyber-bullying taking place in school during school time.
- Staff of our school have been targeted on social media; our mobile phone policy prevents students from using their devices to record or target school staff inappropriately.
- The misuse of mobile phones with integrated cameras, sound recording facilities and internet access can result in child protection and data protection issues and the invasion of privacy of individuals.
- The misuse of mobile phones can have a disruptive effect on teaching and learning in the classroom.
- The wearing of headphones/earphones etc are a risk to health and safety as they may prevent students from hearing staff &/or fire alarms etc.

#### **Therefore, students are expected to...**

... turn off their mobile phone and all electronic devices and store them out of sight while on school grounds.

... take off/out earphones/headphones when on school grounds.

...only use their mobile phones on school grounds when directed to do so by a staff member.

...never use their mobile phones or other audiovisual equipment to hurt or embarrass others.

... immediately hand over their mobile phone, earphones and other audio-visual/electronic equipment if requested to do so by a staff member.

... adhere to three simple guiding principles when engaging online/through social media with other students:

1. To only post a comment they would be happy to see in reference to themselves.
2. To only post a comment that they would be prepared to say to another student in person.
3. To only use language that is appropriate and respectful.

### **Online privacy**

Circulating, publishing or distributing (including on the internet) material associated with school activities including but not limited to material in relation to staff and students where such circulation undermines, humiliates or causes damage to another person is considered a serious breach of school discipline and may result in disciplinary action. As part of such disciplinary action the Board of Management reserves the right to suspend or expel a student or students where it considers the actions warrant such sanctions.

### **2.2.3.2 Substance Misuse - please see full policy details in the Appendix**

#### **Rationale**

St Patrick's Comprehensive School is a health promoting school and is committed to addressing the needs of the whole school in relation to drugs.

We believe that students, teachers, parents/guardians and the Board of Management need to work together and that co-operation is essential to the acceptance and implementation of this policy.

#### **For the purposes of this policy a drug is:**

**Any substance which changes the way the body functions – mentally, physically or emotionally.**

**As well as the whole range of illegal substances this includes over the counter and prescribed medicines, tobacco, e-cigarettes & vapes, alcohol and solvents.**

#### **Students are expected to ...**

... accept fully that smoking (including vaping and e-cigarettes), alcohol and illegal substance use is forbidden.

... understand and accept that they are not permitted to share, exchange or sell drugs in the school.

... understand and accept that if found in the possession of drugs or drug paraphernalia in school it will be considered a serious breach of school discipline and may result in disciplinary action. As part of such disciplinary action the Board of Management reserves the right to suspend or expel a student or students where it considers the actions warrant such sanctions.

... understand and accept that if they are suspected or found to be promoting the use of drugs in school it will be considered a serious breach of school discipline and may result in disciplinary action. As part of such disciplinary action the Board of Management reserves the right to suspend or expel a student or students where it considers the actions warrant such sanctions.

... understand and accept that students suspected of drug misuse in school may have their lockers searched and/or may be asked to empty their schoolbags and/or pockets. Refusal to comply with such request will be considered a serious breach of school discipline and may result in disciplinary action. As part of such disciplinary action the Board of Management reserves the right to suspend or expel a student or students where it considers the actions warrant such sanctions.

... accept that chewing gum is strictly forbidden within the school building.

### 2.2.3.3 Dress Code

#### Rationale

St Patrick's Comprehensive School has been a non-uniform school since it opened in 1966. Our status as a non-uniform school is a cherished part of our identity and often cited has being fundamental to our ethos of inclusion and the promotion of personal identity and self-expression among our students.

**However, the liberty afforded to students by not having a uniform brings with it significant personal responsibility to dress appropriately.** Instead of having a uniform dictated to our students we expect our students to choose clothing that is appropriate to a professional teaching and learning environment. Our school is a place of learning but also a place of work for all our staff. Beyond delivering subject curricula schools have a responsibility to teach 'life lessons'; as a non-uniform school our students should know what is and is not appropriate to wear in a school and/or work environment.

#### Students are expected to ...

... wear clothes that are appropriate for a professional teaching and learning environment.

... wear clothes that are clean, modest and appropriate for daily school life.

#### What to wear:

- Clothes that are suitable for a professional learning environment.
- Clothing that is clean, modest, and appropriate.
- PE gear for PE classes
- Jewellery that is safe and suitable for school (you may be asked to remove anything unsafe)
- Makeup in moderation, if you choose to wear it.
- Maintain good personal hygiene — clean clothes and clean hair.
- Tie up long hair in practical classes.

The following items are not appropriate:

- See through clothing
- Low cut tops or off the shoulder tops including strapless or thin strap tops. Shoulders and chest must be covered.
- Tops which reveal the midriff
- Inappropriately short shorts (minimum length mid thigh)
- Hats and hoods worn up in the school building
- Clothes may not display offensive slogans or images.

... wear appropriate sportswear for PE

...wear jewellery that is appropriate to daily school life. Students will be asked to remove any item of jewellery or decoration that is considered a health and safety concern for them and/or others.

... to apply makeup in moderation, for those who choose to wear makeup.

... to maintain a good standard of personal hygiene. Hair should always be clean and should be tied up in practical classes.

**Clothing, jewellery, hair and nails should not interfere with class/school activities.**

### **3. 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 students either in class or individually.
- Positive comment to class Tutor/Year Head
- Positive note/Merit to parents posted on students VShare profile.
- Display of student's work.
- The individual teacher may adopt an award system for his/her class.
- Year Heads may adopt an award/reward system for their particular year group.
- Comp Postcard may be sent to individual students in acknowledgement of a particularly positive contribution to our school community.
- Merits help to inform the discussion at Disciplinary Committee Meetings.
- If a student assigned a Red Support Card demonstrates engagement with the process and a genuine effort to amend their behaviour scoring all 1s in the first week on Red; the 3<sup>rd</sup> week on Red will be suspended pending the continuation of the positive scoring in Week 2.

### **4. Sanctions**

Sanctions are used to help students learn that certain types of behaviours are unacceptable. The school favours the restorative approach to discipline. By that we mean that we help students recognise the effect their behaviour has on other people and in so doing students can take responsibility for their behaviour and make appropriate amends. Students will be helped to understand that they have choices regarding their behaviour and that choices have consequences.

Sanctions are also used to establish boundaries and to protect the wellbeing of staff and students. Should a serious breach of discipline occur, sanctions will be used to prevent serious disruption to teaching and learning and to keep students and staff safe.

Sanctions are issued graded so as to take account of the nature of the incident, the circumstances preceding the incident and how it has impacted on any of our Behaviour Expectations/Principles:

**2.2.1 Respectful behaviour by all members of our school community. Respect for self, for others and for school facilities.**

**2.2.2 Positive and constructive engagement with teaching and learning.**

**2.2.3 Adherence to school policies as formulated and agreed by all members of our school community**

4.1 Sanctions are issued by way of a **ladder of referral** and may include:

- 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 Negative Behaviour incident is recorded on VSware.
- Detention – see below
- A referral of the incident on to the Year Head.
- Student assigned a Support Card – see below.
- An appropriate community task after consultation with parents/guardians
- A telephone call to parents/guardians by Year Head/Deputy Principal or Principal
- A Disciplinary Committee Meeting with parents/guardians - Disciplinary Committee Meeting to be called if a student is escalating from a Yellow to Red Support Card.
- Exclusion from a favoured activity
- 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.

## **4.2 Detention -**

### 4.2.1 Informal Detention

- Class teachers may assign a short detention period (maximum 15 minutes) over a break or lunch time to address persistent negative behaviour in class.
- The class teacher will personally supervise the detention and it will be assigned with immediate effect, without notice being sent home.
- The class teacher must inform the Year Head if they have assigned informal detention – through Action Taken tab on VSware.

### 4.2.1 Formal Detention

- After school Detention on Friday afternoons from 3.30-4.30 pm.
- Notice for this detention will be given to parents no later than 4pm on Wednesday i.e. 48 hrs before Friday detention.
- Formal Detention can only be assigned by the relevant Year Head. Class teachers will have applied several interventions designed to support the student to amend their behaviour prior to the referral to the Year Head who will apply the Support Card System prior to assigning Detention.
- Such interventions include but are not limited to:
  - Restorative conversation with the student regarding their behaviour.
  - Assigning additional homework.
  - Informal detention.
  - Behaviour note on VShare.
  - Conversation with parents, with the Year Head's knowledge.
- Parents/Guardians are responsible for students' transport home after detention.
- The fact that it may be inconvenient to do detention on a Friday evening will not excuse the student from this sanction.
- A student may be required to do a double detention if he/she fails to attend at the date and time assigned.
- If a student fails to attend Formal Detention and accept responsibility for their behaviour then they will move on to the next stage in the disciplinary process.

#### **4.3 Support Card System - see Appendix for card templates.**

##### **Rationale**

Our Support Card System is designed to support students in modifying negative behaviour. The Support Card System is colour coded to reflect the intensification of the levels of support. The tiered nature of the card system means there is a fluidity of movement from one tier to another depending on the behaviour of the student.

Parents/Guardians must sign the daily record on the Support Card. Students must submit their Support Card to their Year Head for review at the end of each week.

##### **Year Head 'Green' Support Card:**

This is the first level of Support Card. It may be assigned by the Year Head following a period of persistent misbehaviour in one or more classes/school activities and where interventions by class teachers have not addressed the negative behaviour. The Year Head, in consultation with the student, identifies the target actions for the week eg behaviour; work ethic; homework; in class engagement etc. The student presents the report card to every class teacher for one week; each class teacher records the student's score in relation to the stated target:

1= Excellent

2=Fair

3=Poor

**Year Head 'Yellow' Support Card:**

This second level of Support Card follows the same principles as described above, however the student is assigned a Yellow Support Card for two weeks. If at the end of the two-week period they have not scored any 3s they move back to the Green Support Card for one week.

**Year Head 'Red Support Card.**

This is the third level of support, and it follows the same principles as described above. However, the student is assigned a Red Support Card for a 3-week period. If at the end of the three-week period they have not scored any 3s they move back to the Yellow Support Card for two weeks. If at the end of that two-week period they have not scored any 3s they move back to the Green Support Card for one week.

**Amendment 26<sup>th</sup> September 2022:**

If a student is assigned a Support Card and loses it either accidentally or on purpose they will be given 1 replacement Support Card at that level. If they misplace/lose a Support Card again they will move up to the next stage in the Support Card process ie if a student loses 2 Green Support Cards they are escalated to a Yellow Support Card. Support Cards are designed to support students in amending their behaviour – not taking care of their Support Card is not indicative of a willingness to amend behaviour issues.

**Amendment 20<sup>th</sup> June 2025:**

Any student who is on a Yellow or Red card at the time of a tour/event may not be permitted to travel on any school tours and/or other events for example Sports.

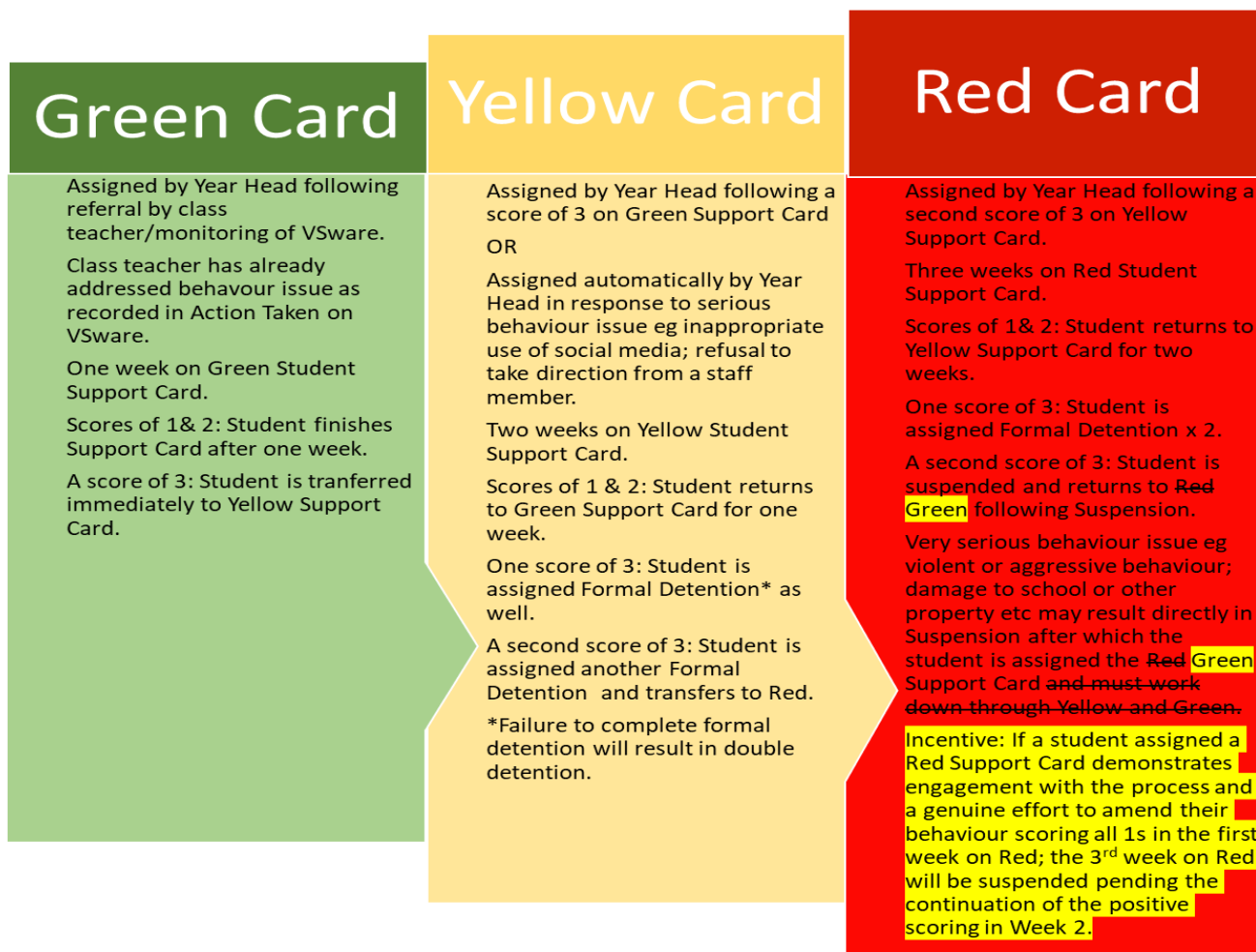
Any student who has amassed 15 or more negative notes on VSware may not be permitted to travel on any school tours and/or other events for example Sports.

Any student who has been suspended may not be permitted to travel on any school tours and/or other events for example Sports.

Deposits paid for such trips may be forfeited.

Any student who has less than 75% attendance may not be permitted to travel on any school tours and/or other events eg sports.

## Support Card System Overview:



## 5. Interventions

If the misbehaviour is relatively minor, then it is dealt with immediately by the classroom teacher. When misbehaviour is of a more serious nature – continuously disruptive, inability to learn or interfering with the ability of others to learn, then some or all of the following interventions are made:

- Interview between the student and a member of staff, usually the Year Head initially.
- Year Head contacts parents/guardians.
- Behaviour letter sent to parents/guardians to ensure awareness of negative records in VSware – see appendix 10.4
- SEN team consulted.
- Pastoral Care team consulted.
- Student Support Team devise a strategy in consultation with parents/guardians, Year Head, SEN &/or PC teams, Deputy Principal and Principal.
- Referral by the school to an out centre for assistance in behaviour modification
- Referral to the school's psychologist for testing and/or help in behaviour modification

## **6. Suspension and Permanent Exclusion**

### **6.1 Suspension**

The Board of Management of St Patrick's Comprehensive School has formally and in writing delegated the responsibility to impose a 'Suspension' to the Principal. Suspensions may be for a period of one to three days; suspensions up to five days may be imposed in consultation with the Chair of the Board of Management; suspensions in excess of five days may be imposed following a Board of Management Meeting to discuss the issue.

Suspension from school is a very serious sanction and is generally reserved for cases where unacceptable behaviour persists despite the application of other sanctions. However, a single incident of serious misconduct may be grounds for suspension.

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)

### **6.2 Exclusion**

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

#### **Procedures in Respect of Expulsion**

Where a preliminary assessment of the facts confirms serious misbehaviour that could warrant expulsion the following procedures will apply:

- A detailed investigation will be carried out under the direction of the Principal (or a Nominee of the Board if appropriate).
- As part of the investigation a written letter to the parents/guardians will include the following information:
- Details of the alleged misbehaviour, details of the investigation process, and notification of the Principal's Recommendation to Expel.
- An invitation to a Board of Management Hearing, to be scheduled no later than 5 school days from the date of the letter, where parents/guardians are provided with an opportunity to respond.
- The Principal (or Board of Management Nominee) will then make a recommendation to the Board of Management providing the Board of Management with the same comprehensive records as were given to parents/guardians.

Where the Board of Management, having considered all the facts of the case, is of the opinion that the student should be expelled the Board:

- Will notify the Educational Welfare Officer in writing of its opinion and the reasons for this opinion.
- Will not expel the student before the passage of 20 school days from the date on which the Educational Welfare Officer receives this written notification.
- Will in writing notify the parents/guardians of their decision and inform them that the educational Welfare Officer is being contacted.
- Will be represented at the consultation to be organised by the Educational Welfare Officer.
- Will suspend the student, if it is deemed likely 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.

Where the twenty-day period following notification to the Educational Welfare Officer has elapsed, and where the Board of Management remains of the view that the student should be expelled, the Board of Management will formally confirm the decision to expel.

Parents/Guardians will be notified in writing that the expulsion will now proceed. They will also be informed of their right to appeal to the Secretary General of the department of Education and Skills under section 29 or the Education Act 1998 and will be provided with information on the submission of such an appeal.

## **7. 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 enroll.

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.

## **7.1 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.

## **8. 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 email and parents/guardians, or students over 18 will be required to provide an acknowledgement of receipt of the policy - parents/guardians will be sent a link to complete an online form confirming they have received the Code of Behaviour. 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 via the school website and by text. When a major review is carried out, the resulting amended Code of Behaviour will be circulated to all the stakeholders in digitally.

## **9. 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.

Ratified by the Board of Management:

Date: \_15<sup>th</sup> December 2021 Signed: S T Ruane Chairperson, Board of Management

Amendment Ratified by the Board of Management:

Date: 26<sup>th</sup> September 2022 Signed: Sean T Ruane\* Chairperson, Board of Management

Amendments Ratified by the Board of Management:

Date: 20<sup>th</sup> June 2025 Signed: Sean T Ruane\* Chairperson, Board of Management

*\*Actual signed version is available in the Principal's Office*

## **10. Appendix**

### **10.1 Substance Misuse Policy**

St. Patrick's Comprehensive is a health promoting school and is committed to addressing the needs of the whole school in relation to drugs.

We believe that students, teachers, parents and the Board of Management need to work together and that co-operation is essential to the acceptance and implementation of this policy.

**For the purposes of this policy a drug is:**

**Any substance which changes the way the body functions – mentally, physically or emotionally.**

**As well as the whole range of illegal substances this includes over the counter and prescribed medicines, tobacco, e-cigarettes & vapes, alcohol and solvents.**

The school acknowledges that it has an important role to play in drugs education especially in terms of prevention. This school also recognises that drugs – both legal and illegal – are available in the local community and that the school being part of this community may have drug incidents. These will be handled in a sensitive and consistent manner with the welfare, care and protection of the students and the school community as its central concern.

This policy applies to students, teachers, parents, the Board of Management and all visitors to the school.

### **The use of drugs in St. Patrick's Comprehensive School**

St. Patrick's Comprehensive School does not accept the possession, use or supply of drugs in the school, on school trips or in non-school time by any member of the school community. The only exception is for legitimate medicinal use and the school has to be informed.

**This policy is focused on four key areas: -**

- 1.) Alcohol, Tobacco and Drug Education Programmes
- 2.) Managing Drug Related Incidents
- 3.) Training and Staff Development
- 4.) Monitoring, Review and Evaluation

### **Alcohol, Tobacco and Drug Education Programmes**

This school is committed to providing a comprehensive and timetabled drug education programme for all students, which at Junior Cycle level will be incorporated into the Social, Personal Health Education Programme (SPHE) and the Civic, Social and Political Education Programme (CSPE) currently running in the school. At Senior Cycle level this will be incorporated into the Religious Education programme until SPHE/CSPE are introduced to all years.

Our education aims in relation to Drug Education are:

- To increase the self esteem and confidence of our students.
- To equip our students with personal and social skills.
- To enable our students to make informed, healthy and responsible choices.
- To provide honest and age-appropriate information on drugs.
- To minimise any harm which might be caused by involvement in a drug incident by offering supportive interventions.

**These aims will be met through the following actions:**

- All teachers who wish to be involved with SPHE/CSPE will be actively encouraged to seek appropriate training and will be given the opportunity to avail of it.
- Any teacher teaching any Drug Education Programme will be given the opportunity to avail of training.
- All teachers will be offered Drug Information and Drug Awareness training through regular in-service training.

### **Outside Speakers**

We believe that trained teachers are in the best position to carry out drug education but sometimes it may be appropriate to use an outside speaker to supplement or reinforce the work done in class.

## **Managing Alcohol, Tobacco and Drug related incidents.**

We acknowledge that in all situations involving drugs, there needs to be a balance between the needs of the student, the needs of the school community and the reputation of the school.

As with all situations, listening, separating fact from myth and support will be the school's initial approach.

Disciplinary procedures detailed below will be invoked if school rules are broken and expulsion will be considered as an option when these have failed. Procedures are in place and outlined below to handle specific drug incidents.

### **Examples of a drug incident include:**

- Emergencies when the person may be unconscious
- Intoxication/unusual behaviour
- Suspicion/rumour of drug use, possession or dealing
- Disclosure by another person
- Failure to disclose knowledge of a drug incident to the appropriate authorities
- Possession of a legal/illegal drug on the school premises or on a school related activity
- Selling/supplying legal/illegal drugs
- Person seeking help from a member of staff
- School grounds being used for drug activity
- Drug paraphernalia found on school property
- Misuse of aerosols, including spray deodorants
- Possession of Tippex thinners, petrol, lighters, or any other solvent
- Possession of steroids, stimulants, etc.

### **Assessing a Drug Incident**

Where there is an immediate danger a doctor and the emergency services should be contacted without hesitation and the Principal/Deputy Principal informed . Parents/Guardians should be informed as soon as possible. In all cases where there is no immediate danger to the student/s, it is important to assess the situation thoroughly.

An incident report form should be completed and given to the Principal/Deputy Principal.

### **Confidentiality**

The prime focus in dealing with any incident is the well being of the student, the teacher and the reputation of the school. Teachers can never offer total confidentiality. The need for care in this area is recognised as the student may approach a teacher because they trust her/him and need help. How this

situation is handled will have an important bearing on the outcome. Information will remain private and only disclosed strictly on a “need to know” basis. The student will be informed about what is happening and why.

St. Patrick’s Comprehensive recognises that the issue of confidentiality is complex.

### **Recording Procedures**

Insofar as possible staff are always alert to changes in behaviour. Adolescence is a period of great change and rumour will not be taken as evidence of drug use. In situations of confirmed possession/use/distribution, all details will be recorded and acted upon. A written recording procedure will be used to ensure that a fair process of challenging the student about behaviour of concern is in place.

### **Managing a Drug Incident**

It is important that in all suspected or confirmed drug incidents that a limited number of people are involved in managing the incident. People will be informed on a “Need to Know” basis. The Principal, Deputy Principal, Chaplain, Guidance Counsellor, Year Head and person/s directly involved in the case will be informed and all written documentation will be held confidentially by the Principal.

**Parents/Guardians** Parents/Guardians will always be involved if there is a substance misuse incident in the school. In the case of tobacco the parents/guardians will be involved after a preliminary investigation. In all other cases involvement will be immediate. This will be handled in a sensitive manner and whenever possible support will be offered. In the first instance, this support will be offered by the Guidance Counsellor or Chaplain.

### **Gardai**

It is agreed that the principal or a designated person will contact the Juvenile Liaison Officer (JLO) in the event of a confirmed incident involving illicit substances and any drugs found on the premises will be dealt with by the JLO.

### **Counselling and Pastoral Care**

It is a natural reaction when faced with an incident to feel a range of emotions: anger, anxiety, disappointment with those involved etc. It may also appear very urgent to resolve the situation very quickly. The pastoral care of all students, parents/guardians, staff involved with a drug incident must be a primary concern. In response to all incidents pastoral support will be offered and in some cases referral to a substance misuse counsellor may be required.

### **The Media**

A drug incident in a school can draw adverse media attention. The Principal or his/her representative will act as spokesperson. No comment will be offered on individual cases but clarification where necessary will be given, for example:

“The school has a policy in place to deal with any substance misuse related incidents and in all cases the appropriate support services will be provided or accessed.”

### **Disciplinary Procedures**

Drug incidents are complex and in situations where the school rules regarding substance misuse are broken, the following sanctions and punishments will be implemented:

- 1.) Any student found smoking or in possession of cigarettes/ matches/lighters will be suspended. Any student found selling or offering cigarettes to others will be suspended.
- 2.) Any student found in possession of or under the influence of or selling/offering alcohol will be suspended.
- 3.) Any student found in possession of or under the influence of illicit substances (drugs) will be expelled.

The school may ask that other agencies be involved once confirmation of an incident has taken place: i.e. drug testing; counselling; health board; G.P. etc.

### **Administration of Medicines**

An increasing number of students are being prescribed a range of medications during the school day. Common examples are treatments for asthma and diabetes.

On school trips a teacher will be designated as the first aid provider. Paracetamol is not allowed in the school. All medication is kept under lock and key in the school office. All asthma sufferers are expected to be independent inhaler users. Parents/guardians should inform the Principal if their son/daughter is ill or receiving any medication.

### **Training**

The Board of Management of St Patrick's Comprehensive School has a strong commitment to ongoing staff training. Up to date information and resources need to be available to the whole school community. We will provide:

#### **Staff**

- The school will make available training to staff involved in delivering Social and Personal Health Education Programmes.
- First-Aid training will be made available to all staff.

#### **Parents/Guardians and Board of Management**

- The school will continue to provide opportunities to attend information evenings and workshops on issues relating to drugs and the school policy. As part of the induction for parents/guardians of students new to the school this policy will be examined in detail.

#### **Students**

- We will continue to offer all its students drug education programmes within the context of their SPHE/CSPE classes and other classes.

### **Monitoring, Review and Evaluation of Substance Misuse Policy**

#### **Monitoring**

Monitoring this drug policy is an ongoing process, which will take place on a regular basis. The Principal will monitor the policy once a term to ensure that it is of practical benefit to the school.

**The three areas are:**

- Drug Education Programmes
- Managing Drug Related Incidents
- Parent, Staff and Management Training

**Review**

The policy will be reviewed in conjunction with any Code of Behaviour Review and will involve consultation with the wider school community.

**Evaluation**

Teachers, Parents, Students and Board of Management will be involved in the evaluation of this policy. Any changes will be incorporated into the amended policy.

**Three main areas of the policy to be evaluated are:**

- Drug Education Programmes
- Managing Drug Related Incidents
- Parent, Staff and Management Training and courses offered to the school community.

## **10.2 Support Card Templates**

**Cover Page:**



Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Year Head**

**Support Card**

**This week I will be trying to:**

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Please mark my Card from 1-3**

**1=Excellent 2=Fair 3=Poor**

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Class:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Year Head:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Sample Daily Record:**

Period	Teacher Initials	General Behaviour Comment	1/2/3
1			
2			
3			
4			
5			
6			
7			
8			
9			
Parent's/Guardian's Signature:			

**10.3 Restorative Practice**

Restorative practice is based primarily on a set of core values and the explicit promotion and enhancement of particular skills such as the ability to empathise and to find solutions to specific problems.

This practice allows for building trust between and with people.

It provides a structured approach in the form of a scaffold, which helps build and sustain relationships, and provides a focus which allows for the potential growth of positive relationships to become established between people.

The development of each relationship is based on a set of core values.

These values include respect, and being respectful of everyone, including towards people someone maybe doesn't always see eye to eye with or even like.

Through the development of empathy, and promoting understanding of perspective taking, people can learn to respect each other and where someone is coming from in terms of their own expression of thought and feelings.

In our efforts to show empathy, as human beings we are able to harness the notion of fairness into our relationships, and therefore can also account for our own actions and hold others to account for theirs.

PDST

**Restorative Questions to Address Harm**

- What happened?
- What were you thinking of at the time?
- What have you thought about it since?
- Who has been affected and in what way?
- How could things have been done differently?
- What do you think needs to happen next?

**Be Fair: Everything will work much better!**

- **ENGAGE** with everyone who is affected by the decision.
- **EXPLAIN** why the decision needs to be made and any contributing factors.
- **Make sure everyone knows** what is expected of them in the future.

**PDST**  
Professional Development Service for Teachers | Improving and Sustaining Learning in the Classroom

<https://www.pdst.ie/post-primary/health-wellbeing/restorative-practice>

#### Appendix 10.4 : Behaviour Letter to Parents/Guardians



Dear parent/guardian,

I wish to inform you that \_\_\_\_\_ has \_\_\_\_\_ negative behaviour notes on VSware since \_\_\_\_\_.

This is a worrying trend which we are anxious to address for the benefit of all in our school community as this behaviour is having a detrimental effect on teaching and learning in the classroom for \_\_\_\_\_ and their peers.

We are a Restorative Practice school and our aim is to support our student sin reflecting on their misbehaviours, taking responsibility for these behaviours, and changing them.

It is not working as well as we would like in the case of \_\_\_\_\_ and to this end, we would like to make you aware of \_\_\_\_\_'s behaviour in school if you have not been monitoring VSware. We would like to alert you to the strategies we use so that you may employ them yourself.

Central to our behaviour modification approach are our restorative questions:

**Each student who comes to our attention is asked:**

- What happened?
- What were you thinking at the time?
- What have your thought about it since?
- Who has been affected and in what ways?
- How could things have been done differently?
- What do you think needs to happen next?

**This strategy is based on fairness:**

- You engage with everyone who is affected by the decision.
- You explain why the decision needs to be made and any contributing factors.
- You make sure everyone knows what is expected of them in the future.

Please discuss this VSware records with \_\_\_\_\_ so that a satisfactory outcome for all parties involved can be reached.

Kind regards,

\_\_\_\_\_  
Year Head

Code of Good Behaviour & School Values

Signed:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Sean T Ruane, Chairperson

\_\_\_\_\_  
MAry Costello, Secretary

Date: \_\_\_\_\_