

Code of Behaviour

The school community works in a holistic manner to ensure that dependence is gradually replaced by responsibility for self, society and the world. The dignity of each student, staff member and parent is respected and reflected in school policies and structures, including this policy. While educational excellence is promoted, it is the needs of the learner that direct the development of the school.

The Board of Management, the Principal and the senior management of the school will support teachers in their efforts to create a positive teaching and learning environment. Our Code of Behaviour has been developed in consultation with the Parents Association, the Student Council, teaching staff and the Board of Management. Teachers will endeavour to foster and promote a varied and positive learning environment enabling each student to maximise their individual potential. The school, through information sessions, meetings with parents and open nights and the student journal seeks to foster and promote a partnership between home and school.

Our Mission Statement:

Mountrath Community School will endeavour to provide an educational setting and experience within which each person is encouraged to grow academically, spiritually, emotionally, socially and culturally.

Mountrath Community School cherishes each member equally recognising his/her uniqueness, religious affiliation and cultural difference. Each member of the school community is entitled to be treated with respect and dignity. All members of the school community are encouraged to share in the responsibility of running the school.

Education lies at the centre of our purpose. Mountrath Community School will facilitate a positive learning and teaching environment. A learning environment should embrace the academic and cultural, leading to the development of the person as a whole. Students are expected to give due recognition and importance to their studies whilst striving towards educational excellence relative to their ability.

Curricular and extra-curricular activities help form a mature and well-rounded student.

Discipline in one's life forms an essential part in the pursuit of excellence.

The school ethos respects the dignity of each person in the school. Through our values we endeavour to reflect this.

Our Values

Value 1 – Respect for the Christian ethos of our school

- To respect religious areas, for example the prayer room and other designated places.
- To respect religious ceremonies, symbols and icons.
- To respect other denominations and traditions.

Value 2 – Respecting and Recognising the Rights of Others

- Teachers have the right to carry out their work in an atmosphere of cooperation and mutual respect.
- Every student has the right to be educated without disturbance from other students.
- Respect for others means treating others with courtesy and fairness (good manners).
- Respect for others means resolving difficulties and conflict in a responsible and fair manner.
- All staff employed in the school, parents and visitors to the school have the right to expect courtesy and cooperation from all students inside and outside class.

- Parents/guardians have the right to expect that their children will work to the best of their ability at all times.
- Everyone has the right to work in a supportive and safe environment without the fear of being bullied.

Value 3 – Recognising One's Own Responsibilities

- Every student has a duty to work to the best of his/her ability in school.
- Every student must attend regularly in order to derive the full benefits of teaching and learning.
- Every student has a duty to treat all others in a respectful manner
- Every student must understand that fighting, bad language, inappropriate comments, and rough behaviour show serious disrespect and shall not be tolerated.
- Every student has the responsibility to respect the authority of those charged with their care and education.
- Every student is responsible for his/her own personal property and has a responsibility to respect all school property and that of others.

Value 4 – Respect for the environment

Every student has a duty

- To show respect for school property and for the school environment and to treat school fittings and furniture with care and respect.
- To dispose of litter carefully and in the bins provided.
- To follow the procedures and requirements as outlined in the schools Health & Safety Statement and related legislation.

Value 5 – Respect for the law

Every student has a duty

- To abide by the law and to act as a responsible citizen.

We promote in a positive manner our values and our expectations of the students in Mountrath Community School. However when breaches occur sanctions may be applied. This is done in accordance with the principles of natural justice, to ensure fairness for all. We support the concept of parental partnership as outlined in the Education Act 1998 and take cognisance of The D.E.S. Circular M33/91.

The holistic education of each individual is of paramount importance in Mountrath Community School. Each student will be encouraged to pursue their studies to the maximum of their potential. Day to day learning and classroom work is supported and enhanced by field studies, projects and professional direction on study methods, homework and examination techniques. The academic needs of students are assessed and where learning support is needed every effort is made to provide it. Students are advised and helped to organise themselves for school, and to make good progress at school. In Mountrath Community School we endeavour to communicate effectively with parents(s)/guardian(s).

In living and reflecting its ethos, the school will raise awareness and develop concern and support for the vulnerable and disadvantaged in society. The school will promote an awareness of justice and equality establishing a positive attitude towards minority groups in a multicultural society.

The school ethos seeks to awaken spirituality in all members of the school community. It recognises gospel values reflecting the true Christian message in daily life. The school will nourish the Christian faith through timetabled religious education classes, annual retreats, prayer and spiritual engagement. All members of the school community are encouraged to lend their support.

Our Code of Behaviour complies with all current national legislation and Department of Education and Skills

circulars. This Code of Behaviour encourages all students within the school community to take responsibility for themselves, for their own learning and self-discipline. The school code will be updated regularly in consultation with all the stakeholders of Mountrath Community School. The fact that a particular matter may not be specified in the code will not exonerate a student from their responsibility should there be an infringement of another person's rights.

The rules are kept to a minimum and seek to emphasise personal responsibility, safety and respect for each member of the school community. The school acts in "loco parentis" and has a duty of care in upholding the school code. The code covers students when in school, within the school grounds at break and lunch time, while travelling to and from school, on school trips and when representing the school elsewhere. Students in school uniform shall abide by the code at all times.

Mountrath Community School aims to provide a caring environment for the entire school community. All staff share responsibility for good order in the corridors, school grounds and during school events. Teachers are primarily responsible for maintaining good discipline in their own classes. Affirming positive behaviour is in the remit of all staff in our school and the understanding that positive relationships between staff and students is a powerful influencer of good behaviour.

Pastoral structures and procedures to promote positive discipline

Mountrath Community School encourages the school community to respect all other people, the property of all other people and the environment in which we live. Through respect for others we aim to create a positive working environment. We support a positive focus on behaviour. To this end we will recognise and celebrate students' achievements (academic or otherwise). Our rewards system will be accessible to all students. Assemblies will be used to acknowledge achievements and to foster a sense of community. Rewards for positive behaviour include:

- Positive notes in the students journal and on VS ware
- Praise from staff
- Responsibilities given to students
- Certificates/prizes for achievements at Student Awards ceremony
- Public affirmation through school newsletters and in newspaper articles and on VDU screens in the school
- Display of students work in the school

Principles underpinning this Code of Behaviour

The principle of the Code of Behaviour is to establish clearly for students, their parents/guardians and their teachers, the areas of responsibility and the standards of behaviour that Mountrath Community School has set for, and expects from, its students. The principles of fairness and equality, promoting good behaviour, personal responsibility, recognising educational vulnerability, respect for all and promoting a safe and positive working environment conducive to Teaching and Learning and teaching are embedded in this code. The school undertakes to explain and clarify this Code of Behaviour to students at regular intervals at assembly during the school year. The Code of Behaviour is outlined in six main sections:

1. School Attendance
2. General Requirements/School Environment
3. Dress and Appearance and Property
4. Behaviour in the classroom and while representing the school
5. Roles and responsibilities
6. Discipline process

1. School Attendance

In order to derive meaningful benefit from their education, a key element of students' experience is the quality time they spend in school. It is expected therefore that students will attend school regularly and punctually. Under the Educational Welfare Act 2000, schools have a legal obligation to monitor attendance and report to the National Education Welfare Board students who have in excess of 20 days absence during the school year. Positive relationships between students and teachers and all staff are developed through regular interactions during the school day and these help establish good classroom and school routines. Habitual absence hinders a student from reaching their full potential. The following procedures are designed to facilitate the monitoring of attendance.

Attendance and Punctuality

Progress at school requires optimum attendance and punctuality. It is expected that students will attend school regularly, unless prevented from doing so by illness.

Lateness is only acceptable in cases of exceptional emergency. Students arriving late must sign in at reception and may receive a late stamp in their journal. A note explaining the lateness will be required.

When a student is absent from school, an absent note (fully filled out) from parent/guardian must be placed in the Absence box on the first day of return. **Please note that a slip for absences has been included in the back pages of the homework journal.** Persistent or unexplained absence will be investigated by the Attendance Officer/ Year Head. Medical Certificates should be supplied with the note if the student has attended a medical practitioner.

A student wishing to leave school temporarily during the school day, e.g. for a dental visit, must present a note of explanation to their Year Head, and must be signed out and on return by a Parent/Guardian at the Reception office. This is regardless of the age of the student. Students are not permitted to leave the school grounds during break times. Students may not drive any vehicle within the school grounds without permission from the Principal. This helps ensure that the health and safety of all students is paramount.

Students must be on time for school and each class. This demonstrates respect for both teachers and fellow students.

Students must not be on school grounds after school hours unless under the supervision of a staff member. Please refer to our Attendance policy.

2. General Requirements/School Environment

To foster an environment and culture of learning in the school, students are encouraged to set goals for themselves regarding how they relate with both their peers and with people in authority and their own progress in their academic and extracurricular work. Each student will be encouraged to seek excellence in achieving their best in these areas. The school has a very positive Pastoral Care System which encourages and supports the holistic development of students through personal and group contact. Teachers and staff recognise and give positive feedback about behaviour and involve students in the preparation and understanding of classroom rules.

Dignity and Respect

Our school ethos is based on dignity and respect for all members of the school community.

It is expected that all members of our school community show this through politeness, courtesy and cooperation to all school staff, students, visitors to the school and the wider school community. Mutually respectful relationships balance warmth and empathy with objectivity, professional detachment, fairness and consistency.

- All members of the school community are expected to move quietly throughout the school in an orderly manner.
- Students are expected to follow instructions from all staff members and to cooperate with

courtesy.

- Any form of aggression or harassment either physical or verbal to any member of the school community will be viewed as contrary to the school ethos.

Bullying

Our school complies with the Department of Education and Skills Anti Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post Primary Schools 2013. A stable secure learning environment is essential in order that students are educated to the highest possible standard and we recognise that every student has the right to an education in a safe, secure and happy environment. All members of our school are expected to behave with courtesy and good manners towards others. Any form of bullying undermines the quality of education and may impose psychological damage. Mountrath Community School will not tolerate bullying and is actively engaged in counteracting such behaviour. For measures in dealing with issues of bullying and raising awareness please refer to our Anti Bullying policy.

Smoking/Vaping

Arising from the Public Health (Tobacco) Act 2002 it is the policy of Mountrath Community School that all of its workplaces are smoke-free and that all staff, students and visitors to the school have a right to work and visit the school in a smoke-free environment. **Smoking/Vaping is prohibited within the entire school boundary and on all occasions where students represent the school.** Aside from its illegal aspect, students are endangering their health and the health of others.

Dangerous Objects- Students may not have dangerous objects or substances in their possession. Students may not partake of alcohol, prohibited substances on the way to and from school, in school or on school trips in the interests of Health and Safety the school.

Addictive Substances – Please refer to our policy on Substance Use

Mobile Phones/Multimedia Devices

The school advises that students should not bring mobile phones/ multimedia devices etc. to school. SEN students using devices approved by the school are an exception to this. The school is not responsible for phones or other multimedia devices that are lost, damaged or stolen. Phones and devices should not be used in any way between classes. Phones and devices are **never** to be brought to the sports hall, changing rooms or bathrooms. If a student needs to contact home urgently, they will be allowed to use the phone in the school Reception. If parents need to contact children urgently, they should phone Reception.

In exceptional circumstances such as school tours or trips which extend beyond the normal school hours the use of mobile phones may be permitted by the organising teacher. Phones should never be turned on or used during the class time. Where teachers form the opinion that the student's mobile phone causes a disruption, the student must hand up the phone to the teacher on request. Failure to comply with this may result in suspension. The teacher will leave the phone in Reception for collection from the Deputy Principal by the student (for a 1st offence) or by parent/guardian (for a 2nd offence) at a time convenient to school management. Subsequent offences will result in the phone being confiscated for two weeks. Recording or photographing of staff or students without their consent is strictly forbidden and carries a serious sanction because personal privacy and freedom from intrusion of students and staff is to be respected.

One-Way System

There is a one way system in operation in school at 8.55am, 11.15am and 1.55pm. Students are requested to walk in **single file** on the **left hand side** in a quiet disciplined manner for ease of movement on corridors at all times.

Behaviour in the School Grounds

Students are required to remain within clearly defined areas in the school. Social areas as defined at

student assemblies at the start of each year are to be adhered to.

Students are not permitted in the following areas:

- Staffroom
- Gardens and shrubbery areas, grass areas at front of school.
- Carpark
- Unsupervised classrooms
- Dugout at the side of the pitch & outside changing rooms
- Rear of rooms 20, 21 & 22
- On or behind the hill

All students are encouraged to participate in organised school extra-curricular activities. In doing so all students must adhere to the instructions given by staff regarding permissible areas to be in. This is in the interests of Health and Safety.

Property

All members of the school community are expected to respect the property of the school and property of others. Every item brought to school should be clearly marked with student's name. To support students in caring for their own property the school provides lockers. New students to the school are shown by student leaders and their Year Head how to look after and manage their locker. It is the responsibility of each student to ensure that his/ her locker is secured with a lock. Any form of theft or interference with the property of others will be treated as a serious offence.

- Access to lockers is only allowed before and after school and during 11am and lunch breaks. Students are encouraged to organise their lockers during these times.
- Every locker must have a lock and be kept in an orderly fashion.
- Compensation for any damage to school property will be the responsibility of the parents/guardians of the offending student.
- Breaches of the above may result in the loss of the use of the locker.

The school will not compensate students for articles lost or damaged.

Litter/Environment

In the interests of Health & Safety and the protection of our environment, every effort should be made to keep all areas inside and outside the school litter free. All litter must be disposed of in the bins provided. Chewing gum is not permitted in school. The support of all students and staff in using the bins provided and keeping the school litter free will promote a healthy, safe and respectful environment for all.

3. Dress and Appearance and School Uniform

All students are required to wear the correct uniform and be neat and tidy at all times while at school, representing the school or while travelling to and from the school. The official school jacket with school crest is compulsory for all students. **No other type of jacket is acceptable.**

- Boots/runners (outside of sports activities) are **not** acceptable for **any** students.
- Jackets, coats and outdoor clothing should not be worn in classrooms.
- Students may wear one pair of small silver/gold (only) stud earrings with one stud in each ear only.
- Facial jewellery/ obvious body piercing is not permitted in the interests of Health and Safety for any student.
- Unauthorised items will be confiscated and students may collect them after four weeks.
- Extreme hairstyles and hair colours are strictly forbidden for all students.
- The wearing of makeup is not allowed (with the exception of light foundation).
- The wearing of nail varnish/shellac/ false nails is not allowed.

For PE: All students must wear the Mountrath Community School tracksuit.

The wearing of the school uniform contributes much to the maintenance of order and discipline in the school and parents are asked to encourage their child to take pride in their dress and appearance while in school. In the interest of fairness to all, it will be necessary to take disciplinary action against those who breach these rules. The management will rule on the acceptability of individual cases in relation to any aspect of the uniform, dress or appearance.

4. Behaviour in the Classroom

All students deserve to be part of an effective learning environment. It is therefore essential that students cooperate with each teacher within the school.

- Authority within the classroom rests with the teacher in charge of the classroom. Every teacher/student has the right to teach/ learn in an environment which is conducive to Teaching and Learning. The teacher's authority also extends beyond his/her classroom to include the entire school grounds and school activities
- Punctuality and proper preparation are essential for the smooth running of each class and everyone is expected to be on time to class, have all equipment needed and to engage fully. These are the optimum conditions for teaching and learning.
- Homework must be completed to the best ability of each student.
- A neat and tidy environment in the classroom is to be maintained so as to be conducive to a healthy safe space for teaching and learning because every student and teacher deserves a pleasant working environment.
- Students should enter and leave the classroom in an orderly and respectful manner when instructed to do so by the teacher.
- Courtesy and respect must be shown towards all members of the school community.
- Students must not disturb the teaching and learning process of others in the classroom.

Homework - Please refer to our Homework Policy

Homework Journals are a compulsory requirement for all students. They form a means of communication between parents and the school. Homework assigned by each teacher should be entered in the student's journal each day. **Parents should check and sign this journal at least once a week.** Homework Journals are checked on a regular basis by the Class Tutor/Year Head. Journals, which have been defaced or are in poor condition will have to be replaced at a cost to the student. Appropriate sanctions will be imposed on students who repeatedly fail to hand up completed / good quality homework. This is with a view to encouraging responsibility for their learning.

- Homework, written and oral exercises, learning, revision and review, is given on a regular basis and students are required to complete it neatly and to the best of their ability.
- Students are required to note all homework assigned in their School Journal.
- Parents/Guardians are required to ensure that when the homework, written and oral, is completed, the homework journal is then signed by them when required by the teacher.
- If for some reason, homework or part of it cannot be completed, parents/guardians are required to note this in the School Journal. This allows the teacher the opportunity to discuss this further with the student.
- Parents/guardians are asked for their support to ensure that their son/daughter makes good progress. Cooperation in using the journal as described here ensures that this important aspect of the student's education receives the time and attention it requires.

Representing the School

Students representing the school are required to uphold by their courtesy and good behaviour, the good reputation and ethos of the school, their family and themselves.

- Directions from the person(s) in charge must be complied with at all times.

- School rules apply at all times when representing the school.

5. Roles and Responsibilities

Students

All students on all occasions and in all circumstances are expected to uphold the Code of Behaviour. Students, parents/guardians must sign the contract pages in the school journal as a declaration of support to uphold the code. It is accepted that by virtue of the fact that a student joins our school community (by wearing the uniform and attending school) that they and their parents are in agreement with the Code of Behaviour. Any breach of our School Code that brings the reputation of the school into disrepute will be treated as serious.

Class Teacher/Tutor/Year Head/Deputy Principals/Principal/ Board of Management

The Class Teacher/ Tutor/ Year Head/ Deputy Principals/ Principal/ Board of Management will support positive behaviour efforts in the school and will implement fairly and justly the Code of Behaviour.

Parent(s)/Legal Guardian(s)

Parent(s)/Legal Guardian(s) have a vital role in promoting positive behaviour and for this reason effective home school liaison is very important. Parents/guardians are asked to instil in their children an acceptance of the Code of Behaviour and are asked to ensure that the code is upheld. Parents/guardians must sign the contract pages in the school journal to support their child in upholding the code. We request that Parents/Guardians inform the school of any difficulties that may affect their child's performance or behaviour at school, that they check the journal each week and reply to any correspondence from the school and that they keep the school informed about changes to contact information (phone numbers, addresses etc.). We aim to promote a welcoming environment for parents/guardians.

6. Discipline Structure/ Procedures

The Subject/Class Teacher

The most important person in developing a friendly, open atmosphere with mutual respect between teacher and student in the school is the class teacher. He/ she is responsible for discipline within the class and will model positive behaviour and will attempt to rectify/modify behaviour to ensure a positive, respectful, learning environment within the classroom. The class teacher will deal with routine incidents of misbehaviour through classroom management strategies thus minimising the need for other interventions.

The accepted procedure for dealing with discipline issues should include:

- Appropriate classroom management practices - informal stage.
- Meeting and discussion with student.
- Verbal warning
- Additional work or exercises
- Record behaviour in journal.
- Note to parent/ guardian(s) in journal.
- Supervised lunchtime detention (supervised by the teacher).
- During break times the supervising teacher has the authority to place a student in detention on the grounds of Health and Safety.
- Written report (Blue Sheet) to be given to the Year Head for persistent misbehaviour or a once-off serious incident.

The Class Tutor

The class tutor has particular responsibility for his/her assigned class group. The tutor's role is mainly a caring one. The class tutor routinely checks the student's journals. The class tutor may speak informally with a student if appropriate to do so.

The Year Head

The Year Head has overall responsibility for the students in the year group and works cooperatively with the Tutor. Together they may identify if any student is experiencing any difficulty and design a suitable intervention. Serious incidents and recurring minor incidents concerning any student must be referred to the Year Head. The Year Head may meet with the student to help/advise/correct any behavioural difficulties, make contact with home, put students on report, monitor their progress and impose sanctions such as detention or other appropriate sanction. They liaise with Tutors, teachers and Deputy Principals and maintain up to date records on each student in their year group. When a student is referred to the Year Head he/she will decide on a course of action.

The accepted procedure for dealing with discipline issues may include:

- Meeting and discussion with student (record kept) and possible referral for guidance or to the care team. (Record kept).
- Informal behaviour improvement plan
- Additional homework.
- Lunchtime detention.
- Contact with Parent(s)/Guardian(s).
- On report for an assigned period of time.
- Detention assigned.
- Meeting with parents.
- Individual contract of behaviour signed by student and parent/guardian
- Withdrawal of privileges (such as exclusion from sports events, school trips or tours etc) in consultation with parents.
- Referral to Discipline Committee/Deputy Principals/ Principal
- May recommend suspension.
- The Year head may invite parents/guardians to a meeting, if deemed necessary, at any stage in the above process.

The above list is not exhaustive.

Assemblies

Assemblies are held at the start of every school year and at intervals throughout the year when necessary, where the year group and the Year head attends. At assembly, students are encouraged to develop positive relations with staff, fellow students and the whole school community. They are also encouraged to achieve and maximise their potential in all areas of school life.

At assembly, student involvement in school activities is acknowledged, promoted and positive behaviour endorsed.

Mountrath Community School recognises the importance of assisting students in upholding the Code of Behaviour. Students will be encouraged to uphold the code by being asked to read and sign their journals. Parents/guardians will be asked to read and sign the code. By doing so they acknowledge and agree to give their support and to cooperate with it.

If student is in breach of a rule he/she may be asked to explain (orally or in writing) why he/she has breached it, what effect this breach has had on other members of the school community, and how he/she could act differently in future to avoid being in breach of the rule. This is to develop the student's sensitivity and consideration for others and to assist them in upholding the Code.

Reward System

To acknowledge behaviour that is valued and wanted we reward good behaviour, commitment to school life,

positive attitude and a strong work ethic in the following ways:

- Verbal praise
- Positive Behaviour note in journal/on Compass
- Visual display notices in the school
- Daily announcements/newsletter/reports to the BOM
- Awards ceremony

Discipline Committee

The discipline committee will consist of a Deputy Principal and up to two Year heads. The disciplinary committee will review reports from the Year head and may:

- Offer internal supports to a student
- Recommend a restructuring of the day for the student to accommodate a positive outcome.
- Recommend that a parent/guardian seek external supports for the student.
- Place a student on report for a period of time and inform the parents/ guardian(s) of same.
- Remove student privileges
- Recommend an Individual Education Plan(IEP) or an Individual Behaviour plan (IBP)
- Recommend suspension
- Recommend exclusion

The school authorities reserve the right to bring any serious incident(s) straight to the point of suspension and/or engage in the process of exclusion.

The Principal/Deputy Principals

Referrals by the Year Head to the Principal/Deputy Principals must be submitted along with all relevant documentation regarding the student. These referrals should be reserved for very serious misbehaviour or continuous misbehaviour. In serious situations, however, the Principal/Deputy Principals may be directly involved from the outset (e.g. substance abuse, health and safety issues). The school reserves the right to investigate any or all incidents.

Additional Support Staff

The Guidance Counsellors and Chaplain are available to meet students and parents/guardians by appointment. The Guidance counsellors are always ready to help with student problems, worries or difficulties, which may be personal or study related. If parents/ guardians wish to make an appointment with the school counsellors or the Chaplain, they should contact the main office. All staff members can refer to the Chaplain or to the Guidance counsellors re any students requiring support.

The school Special Educational Needs Department also provides support for students with a range of learning and behavioural difficulties. Class teachers, Year Heads, Senior Management can refer any student they are concerned about to the Resource/Learning Support teacher. A written explanation should accompany any such referrals.

School Completion Officer

The School Completion Officer acts in a supportive role liaising with other support services and visiting the home of students who need support.

Management of Information

All staff members are encouraged to be sensitive to information with regard to the personal background and circumstances of individual students and to bring such information to the attention of school personnel as appropriate.

The accepted procedures at this stage may include:

- Meeting to discuss the serious nature of the issue with student.
- Letter home.
- Meeting with student and parent/guardian(s). Individual contract of behaviour to be signed by student and parent/guardian.
- Referral to BOM under Discipline Item on Agenda.
- Suspension.
- Referral to BOM for exclusion from school.

The Board of Management

The authority to suspend a student rests with the Board of Management. The Board delegates this responsibility to the Principal, formally and in writing and to the Deputy Principals in the Principal's absence. This authority to suspend is subject to the right of the parents (or of a student who is over 18 years of age) to appeal to the Board of Management. The parents/guardians must be informed in writing of the decision of the reason for the suspension, and of their right to appeal the decision. Appeals to the Board of Management can be made personally by the parent/guardian of the student. The Board of Management will comply with all elements of the Education Act 1998 and the Education (Welfare) Act of 2000. Both suspensions and exclusions are subject to appeal under section 29 of the Education Act.

Suspension may take the form of:

- A student may be suspended from particular classes or activities, but must be present on the school premises, where she/he may be allocated alternative duties.
- A student may be suspended from all school activities because of a serious breach of the Code of Behaviour. It will be the responsibility of the student to make up any loss of instructional time.

Any serious breach of the Code of Behaviour can result in an immediate suspension. A student may be removed from the premises on the grounds of Health and Safety. On returning to the school after a suspension the student and a parent/guardian must meet with the Principal to discuss the issues and work together in a constructive and a positive manner to support the upholding of the Code of Behaviour. Guidance and support will be offered to the student. The student returning to school may be required to undergo a period of probation, may be put on report and will have to sign that he/she will adhere to the Code of Behaviour. Improvements in behaviour will be monitored in conjunction with the Year Head and/or a Deputy Principal.

For a subsequent suspension (or a suspension for a serious incident) further conditions will apply. The student returning to school will be required to undergo a period of probation in conjunction with the Year Head and/or a Deputy Principal. An Individual Behavioural Plan will be drawn up in consultation with the student, the parents/guardians and the school. Guidance and support will be offered to the student with the intention of remedying the behaviour, reintegrating the student and impressing on the student and their parents/guardians the seriousness of the behaviour. Every effort will be made to promote a positive approach by all parties involved. However parents/guardians and students should be aware that recurring suspensions may ultimately lead to exclusion.

Procedures to be followed in the event of a suspension being applied.

1. The matter will be serious; either a pattern of persistent misconduct or a serious once-off incident. The Disciplinary committee having considered the case may recommend in writing to the Principal the suspension of a student.
2. The issue will be reviewed by the Principal (or Deputy or a person with delegated responsibility) A written record of the review will be kept.

3. The student, against whom the complaint is made, will be given an opportunity to present their side of the incident in a written document.
4. The parent(s)/guardian(s) will be contacted. Where a suspension is being considered a student may be required, subject to parental discussion, to stay at home until their parent(s)/ guardian(s) visit the school.
5. Parent(s)/guardian(s) will be advised in writing of a decision to suspend.
The letter will include the following
 - Notification of the decision & reason(s) for same.
 - The effective date and duration of the suspension.
 - The rights of appeal (if any) under the provisions of the Education Act 1998.
 - The requirements and arrangements for returning to school which must be fulfilled to gain reinstatement (e.g. Parents and students will be asked to reaffirm their commitment to the Code of Behaviour).
6. All suspensions will be reported to the Board of Management at the next ordinary meeting.
7. Suspensions for a period longer than three days will be considered by the Board of Management, except in the case of a very disruptive student who has already been suspended. In this case the Board may delegate authority to suspend such a student for a longer period. Prior to a decision being made to suspend a student in this category parent(s)/ guardian(s) will be given an opportunity to discuss the issue
8. Where the Board of Management suspends a student, and the cumulative number of day's suspension for that student exceeds twenty in any one school year, parents will be informed of their right to appeal the decision to the Board and/or the Department of Education and Science.
9. Where a proposal to suspend is before the Board of Management and a student is involved in a further serious disciplinary incident, that student may be required to stay at home with parental/guardian agreement or be suspended for a period up to three days until the matter is decided upon by the Board of Management, whichever is the earlier. In that event the Board will take the further incident into account in reaching its decision.
10. Grounds for removing a suspension: Following a suspension the parent(s)/ guardian(s) (or student over 18 years) may seek a meeting with the Principal to discuss the matter further and to make further representations. Where the school is satisfied that new circumstances have come to light that have a bearing on the matter, the decision to suspend may be reviewed (by those who made the decision) and an alternative sanction imposed if deemed appropriate.
11. When considering a long-term suspension the Board will ensure that the following factors are given due consideration:
 - the seriousness of the misbehaviour
 - the likelihood of a recurrence
 - the impact the misbehaviour is having on the learning of others
 - the Health and Safety of any member of the school community
 - the degree to which the behaviour was in violation of written school rule(s) and the relative importance of the rule(s)
 - whether the incident was perpetrated by the individual on his/her own or whether as part of a group; if as part of a group, the extent to which the individual is responsible for the misbehaviour
 - the extent to which parental, peer or other pressure may have contributed to the misbehaviour
 - the frequency of misbehaviour from the student
 - the cumulative discipline record of the student
 - what other sanctions /positive interventions have been tried and the level of success of such
 - the responses of the student and his/her parents or guardians to any previous misbehaviour
 - the academic, attendance and extra-curricular record of the student
 - the age of the student- whether the student is of school-leaving age

- whether the student is due to sit for any State Examinations in the near future
- the damage to the good name and reputation of the school

Appeals Process for Suspension

- Oral hearing of parent(s)/guardian(s) regarding student at Board of Management meeting
- Principal makes presentation to the Board of Management.
- Both parties leave.
- Board takes a decision on the basis of the case.
- Decision may be appealed to the Trustees and/or D.E.S.
- Notification of long term suspension or consideration of exclusion will be reported by the school authorities to the National Education Welfare Board. (NEWB)
- Parent(s)/guardians will be informed of their right to appeal the decision under the provisions of the Education Act 1998 and information about the Appeal process. Titles, phone number(s) and addresses of the relevant authorities will be supplied.

Exclusion:

Procedures to be followed in the event that exclusion is being considered.

1. The matter will be very serious; either a pattern of persistent misconduct or a serious once-off incident. The Disciplinary committee having considered the case may recommend in writing to the Principal to exclude the student.
2. The issue will be reviewed by the Principal (or Deputy or a person with delegated responsibility, other than the offended party.) A written record of the review will be kept.
3. The student against whom the complaint is made will be given an opportunity to present their side of the incident in a written document. Parent(s)/guardian(s) may be present.
4. The parent(s)/guardian(s) may be contacted. Where exclusion is being considered a student may be required, subject to parental consent, to stay at home until their parent(s)/guardian(s) visit the school.
5. An emergency meeting of the Board of Management, with a single item agenda will be called, as soon as practicable and normally within 6 school days to determine the issue. A minimum of three days' notice, sent by registered post will be given to parents in such a case.
6. Written documentation will be supplied to parents and Board Members with the notice of the Board meeting. Such documentation will include
 - The details of the allegation against the student
 - A copy of the case to be presented against the student at the Board hearing
 - A copy of any supporting documentation that may be used by the school in support of its case
 - A clear statement that exclusion is being considered as a sanction in this instance.
 - An invitation to make a written submission and/or to be present and heard at the hearing
 - A clear statement that the student if suspended is under the care of the parent(s)/guardian(s) for the duration of the suspension and shall not enter the school grounds unaccompanied by parent(s)/guardian(s)
 - If the NEWB has been or will be informed
 - The rights of appeal under the provisions of the Education Act 1998.
 - At the start of the meeting the Chairperson shall enquire whether any member has a conflict of interest in respect of the matter being considered by the Board. Where the Board is satisfied that a conflict of interest exists, the member(s) involved shall withdraw from the meeting at the same time as the parent(s) or guardian(s), student (if over 18 and representing himself or herself) and the Principal.
8. Parents may be accompanied at the Board hearing but, as this is a lay forum; legal representation is not the normal practice.
9. The Principal will present the case against the student and will be available to answer questions

from parents and Board Members.

10. The parents/guardians (or student over 18) will present their case and will be available to answer questions from the Board Members.
11. Once the Principal and the parents have made their presentations they will withdraw from the meeting.
12. Should the Board require the professional advice of the Principal, the principal may be invited to return to the meeting briefly for that purpose. While the Principal is present, there will be no discussion on the merits of the particular case being considered.
13. When considering an exclusion the Board will ensure that the following factors are given due consideration
 - The seriousness of the misbehaviour
 - The likelihood of a recurrence
 - The impact the misbehaviour is having on the learning of others
 - The safety of students and teachers in the school
 - The degree to which the behaviour was in violation of written school rule(s) and the relative importance of the rule(s)
 - Whether the incident was perpetrated by the individual on his/her own or whether as part of a group; if as part of a group, the extent to which the individual is responsible for the misbehaviour
 - The extent to which parental, peer or other pressure may have contributed to the misbehaviour
 - The frequency of misbehaviour from the student
 - The cumulative discipline record of the student
 - What other sanctions/positive interventions have been tried and the level of success of such
 - The responses of the student and his/her parents or guardians to any previous misbehaviour
 - The academic, attendance and extra-curricular record of the student
 - The age of the student
 - Whether the student is of school-leaving age
 - Whether the student is due to sit for any State Examinations in the near future
 - The damage to the good name and reputation of the school.
14. The Board will reach its decision and will record the reasons for the decision.
15. Where the Board of Management decides to exclude a student, the parents/ guardians (and/or a student over 18) will be informed by letter delivered by registered post. The letter will include the following:
 - Notice of the decision to exclude and the effective date of the exclusion (this shall not be before the passing of 20 school days following the receipt by an educational welfare officer of the notification to exclude). During this time the NEWB will examine alternative education provision for the student.
 - The reasons for the exclusion
 - Their right to appeal the decision under the provisions of the Education Act 1998 and information about the Appeal process including the titles, phone number(s) and addresses of the relevant authorities.
 - A statement that the National Education Welfare Board (NEWB) has been informed
 - Expectations of the student while under the care of his/her parent(s)/guardian(s)

Appendix 1

Abridged Code of Behaviour in Student Journal:

Conduct in Class

1. I will come to class on time.

(Because it disrupts the class if I come late)

2. I will put my hand up if I want to ask a question.

(Because only one person may speak at a time)

3. I will not eat or drink in class.

(Because it is disruptive, disrespectful and can cause a mess)

4. I will not disturb the class.

(Because it is unfair to others who wish to learn)

5. I will not use bad language in school.

(Because it is disrespectful and disruptive)

6. I will listen to the teacher and follow instructions given by the teacher.

(Because I am in school to learn and it is my responsibility to do so)

7. I will come to school with my journal, pens, books, copies and any other equipment required.

(Because I must take responsibility for my own learning)

8. I will not use electronic devices e.g. tablets, laptops, mobile phones etc. during the school day except when allowed or instructed by the school.

(Because it causes too much disruption)

9. I will do my homework both written and learning every night.

(Because it helps me to learn what I have studied in class)

STUDENT CODE OF BEHAVIOUR

1. I will treat all school staff and all students with respect

This means:

I will treat everyone with consideration and courtesy

I will have regard for other people's rights and feelings

Why:

Because it makes the school day more pleasant for all

Because it creates a better Teaching and Learning environment

2. I will cooperate and follow the instructions of all staff members

This means:

I will follow instructions given by staff members when requested

Why:

To maintain order and avoid disruption

To create a better Teaching and Learning environment for all

3. I will come to school and class on time every day

This means:

I will come to school and class on time every day.

If I miss school I will bring in a note of explanation in my journal and put it in the absence note box and explain to the teacher at 9am.

If I must leave school during the day, I will have a note in my journal from my parent/guardian(s). I will get my note signed by my Year head.

I will not waste time between classes

Why: To do well in school it is necessary to attend every day
The school is legally entitled to an explanation for absences
Being late causes disruption to the teacher and other students trying to learn

4. I will have my journal, books and all equipment that I need for each class

This means: I will carry my journal with me at all times
I will have the books and equipment required for each class
I will keep my books and journal in good condition

Why: So that I can benefit fully from each class
It is my responsibility to make sure I am prepared for my class
It disrupts class time if I have not got them

5. I will do my homework and my class work

This means: I will listen to the teachers
I will not disturb the class and I will do all the homework that I get, both written and learning
I will always carry my journal and write my homework in it
I will get my journal signed weekly by my parents/guardian
I will attend all of my exams and Block teaching classes

Why: The teacher is there to help me
It is unfair to others who wish to learn if I disrupt the class
Getting my journal signed allows my parents to see how I am getting on
Doing my class work and homework helps me to learn and do well in examinations.
My exam results will show my progress and where I may need support.
Block teaching classes help me prepare for exams

6 I will respect all property and equipment in the school

This means: I will not damage my own, other students' or teachers' property in any part of the school or its grounds
I will not litter
I will not take anything that does not belong to me.
I will not bring hot drinks out of the canteen.
I will put my bags safely on the bag racks provided.
I will keep my locker tidy and locked.

Why: Damage to property costs money to repair, which may be better spent on other school items
This equipment is needed in order to learn in class
Damage to fire equipment could risk lives
Health and Safety Reasons

7 I will agree not to chew gum, smoke/vape or bring banned substances to school

This means: I will not chew gum at any time
I will not smoke/vape, or be in the company of those who do, within the school grounds when in school uniform or representing the school
I will not bring dangerous or illegal items or substances to school
I will not bring, engage with or distribute dangerous items or substances to/in school or be in the company of those who do.

I will not bring the good name or reputation of the school into disrepute
I will not engage in the sale/procurement or trade of any items without the permission of school management in keeping with our Healthy Eating Policy.

Why: Chewing gum damages property
For health and legal implications
For my own safety and the safety of others

8 I will agree to have my mobile phone switched off during class time

This means: I will switch off my mobile phone
I will only use my mobile phone at designated times
I will not use my phone or any other device to record any sound or picture of students in the school, in school uniform, on school grounds or during school activities.

Why: Mobile phones cause too many disruptions in school
Camera phones or any recording device can impinge on the privacy of others

9. I will act responsibly and appropriately while using social media

This means: I will not use social media to insult, bully or demean any other person.
I will not circulate, publish or distribute (including on the internet) material in relation to staff or students where such circulation undermines, humiliates or causes damage to another person or may bring the good name or reputation of the school into disrepute
I will not post, circulate, publish or distribute images of any staff.

Why: Because it is hurtful to others
Because it is considered a serious breach of school discipline

Code of Dress

10. I will wear my full uniform every day coming to school, in school, on school activities and going home.

This means: I will enter and leave school in my full, well maintained uniform.
I will have the official uniform jacket – no jacket other than the school jacket may be worn coming to or going from school
I will wear official uniform shoes to and from school and in school at all times except when actively participating in sport
I will wear the official PE uniform for all PE activities
When representing the school full MCS uniform must be worn

Why: It makes everyone equal and eliminates competition.
It gives students a sense of belonging and identity
Proper shoes provide safety on school stairs
I know I am representing the school at all times

11 If I wear earrings I will wear small silver/gold stud earrings only.

Jewellery, face piercings, bars etc are not allowed. One small stud earring in each ear only and a wristwatch may be worn.

Why: Health and Safety reasons

12. Students may wear light natural colour foundation only. Hair colours, or patterns that may be deemed by management to cause a distraction will not be accepted. Tattoos must not be visible. Nail varnish

(including false nails and shellac) is not allowed.

Sanctions

We are proud of our school uniform. Failure to wear the correct school uniform is a disciplinary matter. Uniform is checked regularly. A student may be given lunchtime detention and /or a note in his/her journal if he/she is not in correct uniform and a student may also be brought/sent home. Students with false/shellac nails or facial jewellery may be sent home until the items are removed. Failure to wear the official school jacket will lead to confiscation of non-uniform jackets. Other sanctions may apply. Only the school jacket is allowed when coming to school, in school, going home or whenever you represent the school.

Detention

Students who do not abide by the Code of Behaviour may face sanctions up to and including exclusion. As a general guide in relation to journal entries the following sanctions may apply:

Lates, No Homeworks, No Books and/ or up to 3 x Disruptive behaviour (at the discretion of the Year Head)

or any combination of any of the above may incur either a Friday after school or Lunchtime detention. Failure to attend an assigned detention will be treated as a major disciplinary issue, which may lead to suspension or other sanctions as designated by the school.

This Code of Behaviour has been reviewed in consultation with teachers, parents and students - 2018

Ratified by the Board of Management	Date:11th September 2018
Signed: Chairperson of the Board	Review Date: 2021