

Code of Behaviour



St. Michael's Community College

Ratified by the Board of Management

29 September 2020

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Code of Behaviour

Introduction

The aim of the Code of Behaviour is to promote good behaviour and respect for all members of the school community. This is achieved when the whole school community works in partnership to promote good behaviour, which will involve regular planning and reviewing of the behaviour policy.

Principles of Managing Behaviour

- To create a climate where learning can flourish
- To protect the basic rights of safety, learning and respect
- To set boundaries where students feel safe and secure
- To set boundaries in which students can feel successful and achieve
- To teach students about socially appropriate and acceptable choices
- To promote a positive working environment for all

The School Plan for Promoting Positive Behaviour

The key features of a positive approach are:

- An emphasis on positive rather than negative statements
- Regular and sustained use of praise and rewards
- Teaching children the social skills they need to be successful
- Redirecting children towards success rather than highlighting their mistakes

Standards of behaviour are set out in the school rules below

School Rules

1. That you come to school every day, arrive on time and attend all classes
2. That you come to school in full uniform, clean and tidy including appropriate footwear.
3. That you come to school properly prepared for your subjects
4. That you co-operate in the classroom and have a positive attitude to classwork, homework and all extra-curricular activities
5. That you show respect and consideration for other students
6. That you show respect, consideration and good manners in your dealings with teachers, other staff members, visitors and local residents
7. That you respect the school environment and school property
8. That you switch off you mobile phone/other mobile technology during school hours and at break time
9. That you do not use addictive/intoxicating or banned substances
10. That you do not bring into the school or have on your person objects that likely to cause injury or harm

Rules provide a framework for reasonable and responsible behaviour. All rules apply while in school, during examination time and while away from school on official school trips, matches or overnight trips. All rules apply to all students including those who are over 18 years of age.

Expectations

1. That you come to school every day and arrive on time and attend all classes

This means

- That you attend every day unless it is absolutely unavoidable
- That you arrive on time for class at 8.55 a.m., that you are punctual for all remaining classes and do not delay on the way to another class
- That you sign in at the office if you arrive late, and present a note from home
- That absences be explained by note in your journal from parents / guardians to the Year Head when you return to school
- That if you must leave school during the day, you bring in a note to the Year Head, Deputy Principal or Principal to get permission to leave and then sign out at the office on departure. You must sign back in if you return that day
- That you do not leave class to work on other tasks without prior permission of the teachers involved. You must have a note in your diary to be out of class
- That you remain within the school grounds during school hours and may only leave the school grounds at lunch time or other times with express prior permission

Because

- Time missed is hard to make up
- Attendance for roll call is essential for school records and communication
- Good attendance and good timekeeping helps everyone to do well and are important life skills
- The school must be given a written explanation for your absences for legal purposes
- The school is responsible for you during school time
- Punctuality displays courtesy to your teachers and fellow students
- The school management needs to know that all students are safe and on the school property at all times

2. That you come to school in full uniform as set out in the uniform policy, clean and tidy, including appropriate footwear.

This means

- That you wear the school shirt tucked in and collar neatly outside the jumper
- That you wear discreet jewellery, (as deemed by management) earrings are limited to one pair of stud earrings
- That you do not display visible piercings or visible tattoos. Facial piercings are banned
- That you do not wear non uniform tops, scarves, jackets and accessories
- That makeup, when used, is discreet.
- That your hair is neat and tied back for all practical classes
- That you follow specific rules about clothing and jewellery in practical classes

Because

- The school uniform is agreed to by parents/guardians and the school authorities.
- We all have a right and a responsibility to maintain the image of the school.
- We must all contribute to and maintain high standards of Health and Safety in the school.
- Uniform contributes to equality in school
- Many workplaces and professions require uniforms and school uniform is good training

3. That you come in properly prepared for your subjects

This means

- That you have correct books, completed homework, pens and copies
- That you bring any special equipment needed e.g. school Physical Education gear, technical drawing equipment
- That you co-operate fully in the work of the class and do whatever homework the teacher requires
- That you use the seat/place assigned to you by the teacher and that you should not move about the classroom without teacher's permission
- That you leave and enter the classroom in single file and only with the teacher's permission.
- That all books, school bags, copies and diaries must be maintained in good condition, properly covered, without graffiti and should be stored in school lockers when not in use

Because

- You waste class time if you have not got the items needed for class
- You cannot participate fully without them
- Keeping your school books and school bag organised and in good condition makes it easier for you to use them

4. That you co-operate in the classroom and have a positive attitude to classwork, homework and all extra-curricular activities

This means

- That you listen to your teachers
- That you do not disturb the class
- That you do not prevent other students from learning
- That you always have your journal in class and write your homework into it
- That you hand up your journal when requested to do so
- That you do your homework each night and hand in assignments on time
- That you are required to participate in all formal and recreational curricular activities. Students who, for health or other reasons, are prevented from so doing must provide a note signed by his/her parent/guardian to that effect. In the event that a student is unable to participate on an on-going basis, a medical certificate is required
- Access to computers, printers and the Internet is allowed only with direct supervision of staff
- While in school uniform, or on official out of school activities (e.g. tours, matches) students are expected to behave in a way that will reflect positively on themselves and the school

Because

- The teacher has a right to teach
- The other students have a right to learn
- You must do your homework so that you will succeed
- Not handing up your diary is regarded as a serious challenge to the teachers classroom authority and general order, and will not be tolerated
- Homework builds on the work done in class
- Internet safety is very important
- The school has a right to maintain its reputation

5. That you have respect and consideration for other students

This means

- That you are fair and honest with everyone
- That you help other students if they need support e.g. younger students finding a classroom
- That you abide by the Anti-Bullying Policy
- That you do not pick on, victimise or bully others and that you report any incidents of bullying to the teacher, Year Head, Deputy Principal or Principal. Bullying is widely agreed to be behaviour that is sustained or repeated over time and which has a serious negative effect on the well-being of the victim
- That you do not engage in cyber-bullying. Cyber-bullying refers to a situation where anyone is repeatedly tormented, threatened, harassed, humiliated, embarrassed or otherwise targeted by another person using text messaging, email, instant messaging or any other type of digital technology. This also includes the circulation of humiliating / damaging material online
- That you do not make offensive remarks
- That you do not use foul, offensive language
- That you do not fight or threaten to fight in or out of school
- That you respect the property of others and that of the school
- That you walk at all times on the right-hand side of the corridors and stairways and do not loiter in classrooms/ locker area or changing rooms, during or between classes

Because

- Mutual respect and support helps to make a positive, happier school experience for everyone
- You would like to be shown respect and consideration by others
- Bullying and victimisation can cause fear, hurt, misery and illness. We want our school to be a safe space
- We want the school to be a safe place for students who need to report bullying to us
- Aggressive behaviour could cause serious injury or accidents
- Damaging school property is destructive and shows a lack of respect for the school community of which you are a member
- Smooth movement of people in the corridors is easier on everyone

6. That you have respect, consideration and good manners in your dealings with teachers, staff members, visitors and local residents

This means

- That you co-operate fully and willingly in the classroom
- That you are not aggressive in behaviour or language
- That you carry out instructions in a co-operative manner
- That you show courtesy, consideration and good manners in your behaviour and language to student and staff members
- That you park motorised vehicles outside of the school grounds at your own risk, that you do not drive onto school property at any time and that you have consideration for staff parking
- That you do not post or circulate humiliating /damaging material online

Because

- Mutual respect is important
- Positive behaviour contributes to a positive, happier experience for everyone
- Aggressive behaviour or language has no place in the wider school community

7. That you respect the school environment

This means

- That you contribute to keeping the school clean and free of litter as this is a Green School
- That you place litter in appropriate bins
- That you do not chew gum on school property
- That all students' belongings must be kept in their lockers. (Lockers remain the property of the school and are subject to search. Opportunity will be given to student to volunteer offending materials before search. Failure to do so will result in sanctions if found in possession of suspect materials)
- That lockers must be locked when not in use.
- Students should only bring personal items that are necessary to school each day.
- That all of your property is labelled with your name.
- That you do not return to the school grounds outside of school hours without the school's explicit permission
- That you do not interfere or damage any safety equipment.

Because

- This is a Green School.
- Everyone benefits from working in a safe, pleasant and clean environment
- We are all responsible for maintaining a clean school
- Disposal of gum can be unhygienic and expensive
- Personal property such as valuables and money is entirely the responsibility of the student
- The school cannot accept responsibility for the loss or damage of students' property and accordingly parents/guardians are advised to ensure that each student's property be labelled
- The school is the property of Limerick and Clare Training and Education Board

8. That you switch off you mobile phone/other mobile technology during school hours and at break times

This means:

- That you do not take out your phone at any time during the school day, on the school premises
- That all students and their parent/guardians sign the school Acceptable User Policy as part of the school rules
- That you may not record images, audio or video of any person in the school community
- That you may not circulate material in print, electronically or on the internet in relation to any member or the school community

Because:

- The Office phone is available if you need to make an essential call or if your parent/guardians need to contact you during school hours
- Students who use mobile phones to make contact with a person outside of the school, without office knowledge or parents knowledge, may put themselves or others at risk
- It is important that students are in a safe environment free from distraction, and free from any potential for bullying (through texting or cyber bullying)
- Teachers are entitled to teach without interruptions
- The use of digital video/photos and other recording devices can lead to an invasion of privacy and circulation of recorded material could cause embarrassment or humiliation to another person
- Students comparisons of electronic devices can increase peer pressure to have the latest model
- Your phone/electronic device may be confiscated for up to a week

9. That you do not use addictive/intoxicating or banned substances

This means:

- That you do not possess, engage with, use, distribute or sell alcohol, stimulating or illegal drinks/substances/solvents or cigarettes at any time during the school day, at lunchtimes, on school grounds or during school related activities
- Students are not allowed visit a public house at any time during the school day, or while participating in a school activity even if over 18 years old
- Tippex liquid is banned in school.

Because:

- The use and sale of addictive substances is a Health and Safety issue and a legal issue.
- The school is responsible for the protection and safety of the whole school community
- It is illegal and is strictly forbidden for anyone to be found in possession of illegal substances. Parent/guardians and Gardaí will be contacted immediately

10. That you do not bring into the school or have on your person objects likely to cause injury or harm

This means:

- The health and safety of all member of the school community is of the utmost importance
- That you do not bring or facilitate the bringing into the school grounds, or on any school related activity, any object likely to cause injury.

Because:

- Such objects can present a serious threat to the Health and Safety of the school community

11. That you follow instruction in the COVID 19 addendum on pages 11 and 12

These are the rules of our school and students will be encouraged to abide by them at all times. Positive behaviour will be reinforced with rewards and breaking the rules will result in disciplinary action.

Reinforcing positive behaviour

Promoting good behaviour is the main goal of this policy. Rewards have the ability to change behaviour. Examples of affirmations and rewards are listed below:

12. Success in your work
13. Improvement in your work
14. Smile/nod of approval/ praise/recognition from teacher
15. Verbal praise - private and public
16. Acknowledge/praise outside the classroom
17. Class competition/prizes
18. Positive comments on written work
19. The use of stickers/stamps
20. Written praise
21. Record in homework journal
22. Display of students work throughout school
23. Record in a Student's Achievement Sheet
24. Public recognition at class/school assemblies
25. Referral for praise to Principal/Deputy Principal
26. Use of school newsletters, school Facebook page, website, to give congratulations
27. Certificates for attendance, punctuality and other areas of achievement
28. Awards
29. Use of class or individual rewards
30. Treats e.g. play games at end of day, watching a video
31. Participation in extra-curricular and social occasions
32. Class party, trip, day out

Disciplinary action

Good practice in the use of sanctions ensures that:

- Teaching and learning can take place
- They are a part of a plan to change behaviour
- They are used consistently
- Students and parents know what sanctions are used in the school
- Sanctions are proportionate
- Sanctions are appropriate

Unacceptable behaviour is behaviour that results in:

- Rights being disrespected
- Teaching or learning being disrupted
- Somebody being hurt or threatened (including bullying, harassment and victimisation)
- Property threatened or damaged
- Refusing to take responsibility
- Use of banned substances /items

The following will be taken into account when deciding sanctions:

- Age and maturity
- Frequency of the misconduct
- Degree of disturbance of teaching and learning
- Nature of the misbehaviour
- Student's attitude to the incident and to correction
- Nature of special needs

The approach to student's inappropriate behaviour is a problem solving approach where the teacher and school respond. Sanctions do not change behaviour but they can limit it in the short term. The following lists of sanctions can be used.

Stage 1. Classroom discipline

- Students may be reminded of the class/school rules
- Students may be requested or instructed to choose the correct course of behaviour
- Students may be directed to work elsewhere in the room
- Students may be given extra work
- Students may be directed to take cool-off time or five minutes to sit quietly and calm down in a quiet area of the room
- Students may be asked to stay back and work out a solution with their teacher, or fix things up or put things right
- Students may be reprimanded
- A note may be put in the students diary for the parents attention
- Refusal to hand up the diary/not having the diary will result in immediate referral to the Deputy Principal/Principal
- A factual account of breaches of discipline may be written up on an incident sheet for referral

- Any serious incident or repeated incidents may be referred to the Year Head, Deputy Principal or Principal
- The student may be sent to the Year Head, Deputy Principal or Principal
- Students may be given detention by the teacher (subject to notice for lunchtime detention)

Stage 2. Referred issues

- Students may be directed to leave and go to another teacher's room for a cool down period, or go to the Deputy Principals/Principal's office
- Parents may be notified or requested to attend a meeting to discuss the matter
- The student may be referred to the Student Support Team
- Referral to the Guidance Counsellor may be appropriate
- A Student Behaviour Plan may be put in place
- Community Tasks, e.g. cleaning duties, litter picking, may be assigned if relevant to the misbehaviour
- A Year Head, Deputy Principal, or Principal may give detention.
- Withdrawal from class may occur in order for the student to regain composure
- A Discipline Hearing may be heard and the parents will be invited to attend
The committee comprises of the Principal/ Deputy Principal and Year Head.
- The student may be put on a report card. After three white report cards and a behaviour plan, further incidents will lead to a yellow report card. After two yellow report cards and a behaviour plan, a student may be placed on a red report card for further misconduct. Serious misconduct on a red report card may lead to suspension and a final consequence may be expulsion.
- Students on report may not represent the school on non-curricular school events
- In the case of serious misconduct suspension or expulsion may be applied

Sanctions are applied as the consequences of a choice made by the student and therefore as a logical consequence to the student's action.

Suspension and Expulsion.

Fair Procedures and Natural Justice

- Schools are required by law to follow fair procedures in respect of proposals to suspend or expel a student. Any failure on the part of the Board of Management to ensure that these procedures are observed would breach the school's legal obligations
- Any investigation should be **free of bias**. A staff member involved in the behaviour matter / incident in the first instance, should not be involved in conducting the investigation of the alleged misbehaviour or making a decision to impose a sanction
- The **right to a fair hearing** calls for the right for both sides to be heard. The right of reply and to cross examine witnesses are also central to fair decision making

Addendum to Code of Behaviour Policy during Covid-19

Rationale

In light of the need for students to be more mindful of attending school during the current Covid-19 climate, this amendment to the Code of Behaviour Policy is required so that students will be aware of specific rules on their return to school. Our guiding principle when making any changes or adjustments to this policy is to be able to keep all of our students, families and staff safe. The school will explain these rules clearly to students at the start of the year and remind them periodically

Behaviour Expectations

Every member of the school community is expected to observe and respect the principles of social distancing, hand hygiene, cough and sneeze etiquette and make every effort to minimise risk to oneself and others.

This means:

School Routines and Procedures

- using agreed entry and exit points, sanitising on entry and exit.
- proceeding to the designated classroom without delay and sanitising desks
- asking for permission to go to the toilet
- following instructions on what groups students can socialise with at school at break time
- moving around the school as per specific instructions and following instructions from staff members on movement throughout the school campus
- avoiding behaviours that breach social distancing, hand and respiratory hygiene, e.g. coughing or spitting at or towards any other person
- wearing face coverings indoors, entering and leaving the school, and on school transport
- following break time instructions and only removing masks when seated for lunch or break times, to eat and drink.
- following teacher's rules for students about conduct in relation to remote education when students are working from home.

Hygiene and Health Expectations

- washing hands correctly for at least 20 seconds more often than usual with soap and water or use hand sanitiser
- practicing good etiquette for sneezing, coughing, using tissues and binning tissues.
- avoiding touching mouth, nose and eyes with hands
- telling an adult if you are experiencing symptoms of coronavirus or feeling unwell
- remaining in designated seating within the classroom during classes
- keeping a safe distance from other students and refrain from physical contact with their peers in class and at break
- NOT spitting or coughing at or towards others
- being responsible for their own equipment e.g. stationery and water bottles and ensure that these are not shared with other students

Wellbeing and Social and Emotional Learning

Our school will provide a safe and pleasant environment and spend a considerable amount of time liaising with students on promoting their wellbeing. This will include:

- Curriculum changes to support students during SPHE, PE and CSPE classes
- Additional time devoted to in-class discussions on general wellbeing and development
- Additional supports that students can access outside of classroom if required

Sanctions for unsafe behaviour during the Covid-19 pandemic

The following will be addressed in line with the sanctions of our current Codes of Behaviour policy.

- Incidents, which involve students who fail to comply with instructions
- Incidents, which involve students who deliberately breach rules
- Incidents where a student deliberately engages in behaviour that puts the health of others at risk

Suspension Policy

Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board (LCETB) has the authority to suspend a student and have devolved this authority under Section 31 of the *Vocational Education (Amendment) Act 2001* to the Board of Management of St. Michael's Community College.

The Board of Management has the authority to suspend a student and this authority is delegated to the Principal who is responsible to the Board for her use of that authority.

Grounds for suspension

Suspension will be a proportionate response to the behaviour that is causing concern. Suspension will have a clear purpose. Normally other measures will have been tried before suspension is used. The decision to suspend a student requires serious grounds such that;

- The student's behaviour has had serious detrimental effect on the education of other students
- The student's presence in the school at this time constitutes a threat to health and safety
- The student is responsible for serious damage to property
- There has been a single incident of serious misconduct
- Bullying and cyber-bullying, including posting /circulating humiliating / damaging material online

Types of suspension

1. Suspension where other interventions have not succeeded: The Principal may impose a suspension where other measures and interventions have not worked to assist the student to manage his/her behaviour.

2. Immediate suspension: The Principal may consider an immediate suspension necessary where the continued presence of the student represents a threat to the safety of self or others.

3. Suspension during State Examinations: This sanction will require the approval of the Board of Management. It will only be used where there is a threat to the good order needed for the conduct of examinations, a threat to the health and safety of others, or a threat to the rights of others to do their examinations in a calm atmosphere.

4. Automatic suspension: This sanction will be used for the following reasons

- Vile, vulgar, crude language, offensive or sexual remarks to students or teachers inside or outside the school
- Assault
- Smoking (This will also invoke the Substance Misuse Policy)
- Use of drugs or banned substances, sale or provision of same (This will also invoke the Substance Misuse Policy)

- Damage to property/ Theft of property

Fair procedures

The school will follow fair procedures when proposing to suspend a student. Where a preliminary assessment of the facts confirms serious misbehaviour that could warrant suspension, the following procedure will be observed:

- The student and their parents will be informed about the complaint by phone or in writing
- Parents and student will be given an opportunity to respond
- The student and parents have the right to be heard
- The student and parents have the right to impartiality
- Fair procedures will be apply to the **investigation** of alleged misbehaviour that may lead to suspension and to the process of **decision-making** as to (a) whether the student did engage in the misbehaviour and (b) what sanction to impose
- A formal investigation will always follow an immediate suspension
- In the case of immediate suspension, parents will be called and arrangements made to have the student collected. A student will not be sent home without first notifying parents.
- Following a decision to suspend, parents will be informed and will receive a written notification of the suspension. It will state the reason for suspension, its duration and the right to appeal the decision.
- The appeal process will be outlined to parents who take this action. In the case of an appeal the parent will have the right to address the Board of Management
- In considering whether to uphold a suspension a student the Board of Management will be presented with a report containing the following:
 - The nature and seriousness of the behaviour
 - The context of the behaviour
 - The impact of the behaviour
 - The interventions tried to date
 - Whether suspension is an appropriate/proportionate response

The parents and Principal will each be given the opportunity to put their case forward. They will then withdraw from the meeting. The Board will deliberate and make a decision. The decision may be communicated at the end of deliberations. Parents will be notified in writing of the decision made by the Board.

Section 29 Appeal

If the total number of days for which the student has been suspended in the current school year reaches twenty days, the parents, or a student aged over eighteen years of age, may appeal the suspension under Section 29 of the *Education Act 1998*, as amended by the *Education (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2007*.(when commenced).

Expulsion Policy

Expulsion is a very serious sanction and results in the student being permanently excluded from the school and therefore expulsion should be a proportionate response to the student's behaviour. Only the Board of Management of the school has the authority to expel a student. A proposal to expel a student requires serious grounds such as that:

- The student's behaviour has had a **persistent** serious detrimental effect on the education of other students
- The student's continued presence in the school constitutes a **persistent**, real and significant threat to health and safety
- The student is responsible for serious deliberate damage to property
- There has been a single incident of serious misconduct
- Bullying and cyber-bullying, including posting /circulating humiliating / damaging material online

The grounds for expulsion may be similar to the grounds for suspension. In addition to the degree of seriousness and the persistence of behaviour, a key difference is that school authorities have exhausted all possibilities for changing the student's behaviour.

Categories of Expulsion

1. Expulsion because all other interventions have been exhausted and failed: As outlined above

2. Expulsion for a once off event: There may be exceptional circumstances where the Board of Management forms the opinion that a student should be expelled for a first offence. The kinds of behaviour that might result in a proposal to expel based on a single breach of the code could include:

- A serious threat of violence against another student or member of staff
- Actual violence or physical assault
- Supplying illegal drugs to other students in the school
- Sexual assault.
- NB This list is not exhaustive

3. 'Automatic' expulsion: The Board of Management may decide as part of the school's policy on sanctions, and following a consultation process with the Principal, parents, teachers and students, that particular named behaviours incur expulsion as a sanction. However, a decision to impose expulsion for named behaviours does not remove the duty to follow due process and fair procedures.

Procedures in respect of expulsion

Where a preliminary assessment of the facts confirms serious misbehaviour that could warrant expulsion, the procedural steps will include:

1. A detailed investigation carried out under the direction of the Principal
2. A recommendation to the Board of Management by the Principal
3. Consideration by the Board of Management of the Principal's recommendations and the holding of a hearing at a date consistent with giving parents due notice of the hearing and a fair, reasonable time to prepare for the hearing
4. Board of Management deliberation and actions following the hearing
5. Consultations arranged by the Education Welfare Officer
6. Communication of the decision of the Board of Management to the Parents/Guardians

Appeals

At the time when parents are being formally notified of such a suspension/expulsion, they and the student will be told about the right to appeal and how to do so. The appeal must be made in the first instance to the Education Officer of LCETB or Designated Officer. Where an appeal to the LCETB is concluded, parents, or a student aged over eighteen years, may appeal to the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Science.

Code of behaviour for review: September 2021