

# Our Lady of Mercy College Beaumont



## *Code of Behaviour*

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## **1. Mission Statement**

The core value of Our Lady of Mercy College Beaumont is respect for all and the nurturing of individual potential, academically, spiritually and culturally as a member of the school and wider community and in the spirit of the Mercy Ethos.

## **2. Mercy Philosophy of Education**

Inspired by the vision of Catherine Mc Auley, Mercy Education is committed to holistic development and to the achievement of the full potential of each student, particularly those who are disadvantaged or marginalised. It is a process informed and influenced by the teaching and example of Jesus Christ and is conducted in an atmosphere of care, respect and joy. Mercy education is committed to on-going whole-school development in collaboration and partnership with the Board of Management, Staff, Students, Parents and the wider community. Our school became part of CEIST in 2007.

It is hoped that the effect of the Code of Behaviour will be to inspire confidence in staff, parents and students alike, co-operation, tolerance and respect are valued in the school and discipline is not merely punitive or a matter of reaction. This facilitates the development of internalised standards in young people and a coordinated teamwork between staff and parents and ensures the right of teachers to teach and of students to learn without interference. By accepting a place in this school you are agreeing to abide by all school policies. A positive attitude is valued and encouraged in Our Lady of Mercy College.

## **3. Care Programme**

Each year group is under the care of a Year Head who has overall responsibility for leading learning, attendance, punctuality and general conduct of the students in his/her particular year group. Each class group has a Class Tutor who is responsible for promoting high standards and monitoring daily attendance.

The Guidance Counsellor, Care Team, Year Head and Tutor provide a comprehensive service to individual students and to groups of students in the areas of personal, educational, spiritual and vocational development. Students are helped to cope with problems which arise either academic and/or personal. Individual counselling is available to all students and students are referred to other bodies as appropriate.

## **4. Bullying**

In accordance with Mercy Order philosophy & CEIST Charter all persons associated with the college have the right to be treated with consideration, dignity and respect. Bullying is unacceptable behaviour and it will not be tolerated (see Anti Bullying Policy).

## **5. School Homework Journal**

Students are expected to purchase the school homework journal and bring this with them to all classes. All homework, written and oral is to be written in for each class. Teachers, Tutors, Year Heads, Deputy Principal and Principal may check the Journal. Parents are expected to check the school homework journal and sign and date any notes from teachers which are shown to the teacher the next day.

## **6. Parents' Role**

Parents are asked to explain this Code of Behaviour to their daughter and stress the importance of cooperation, tolerance and respect and keeping the school rules. Parents are responsible for ensuring that their daughter attends school and that the school is notified in writing of any absences or lateness.

Under the Education Welfare Act (2000) schools must report absences of 20 days or more to TUSLA's (Child and Family Agency) Education Welfare Service (EWS). Parents are expected to sign any notes written into the school journal and are expected to acknowledge in writing or by phone call receipt of an appointment time with Year Head/Deputy Principal or Principal or receipt of a web-text.

## **7. Mobile Phones**

Students must give teaching and learning their full attention and participate fully in class activities. All mobile phones/personal electronic equipment must be switched off and put in a safe place by the student. See Mobile Phone Policy.

## **8. Absences, Medical/Dental Appointments & Illness**

Parents are asked to make all medical/dental appointments outside of school time. Should a student be absent from school a note of explanation from parents is expected on return to school. Students who present themselves as ill during the school day report to the school office. If a student is too ill to return to class a parent will be sent for and the student will be collected and signed out. A student is not permitted to go home on their own. Students who are leaving school for an appointment must show their note and sign out. Parents are expected to phone the school with an explanation if they get a web-text about an absence.

## **9. School Rules**

Our goal is to create a positive learning environment so that students can flourish. Areas we see as contributing to the wellbeing and achievements of students are:

### **Attendance & Punctuality**

Consistency of attendance ensures that learning is not disrupted and takes place over a long length of time. Punctuality avoids disorder, disruption of others work and concentration. See Appendix 3

### **Respect and Courtesy**

Treating each other with courtesy and respect ensures that all students have a positive environment to prosper in. Having regard for each other, their property and the schools' property shows consideration. Confiscated property will only be returned on production of a signed note by parent stating that the offence will not reoccur. Any damage caused must be paid for. Proper use of social media ensures offence is not caused to anybody. See Anti Bullying, Mobile Phone and Internet Usage Policies.

### **Behaviour**

Students are expected to be organised, always cooperate with their teachers and to show respect to teachers, other staff, other students and visitors. Students wearing our school uniform represent the school and are therefore accountable to the school for their behaviour. Respect and dignity are the basis of our rules. Exemplary behaviour is expected from students at all times. This applies to in school, going to and from school, on school trips and on other school activities.

### **Uniform**

Having a neat and tidy school uniform shows consideration for oneself and the school. Full uniform must be worn going to and from school at all times. Only the prescribed uniform may be worn and a student not in full school uniform will not be allowed to class. All personal belongings must be marked.

# School Rules

It is expected that students will:

- Treat each other, staff and visitors with courtesy and respect.
- Always cooperate with teachers, be attentive & respectful at all times, in class and outside the classroom.
- Attend school as scheduled, be ready for class when the bell rings, not leave the school or school grounds without permission and present a note explaining absence to tutor or teachers on return to school.
- Present a note from parent/guardian if seeking permission to leave school early.
- Have all homework, oral and written, properly prepared and come to class with all the correct materials.
- Behave in an exemplary manner when in school uniform or when representing the school.
- Always wear the proper school uniform. PE uniform may only be worn for PE class or as allowed.
- Always keep the uniform neat and presentable.
- Only wear one pair of stud ear-rings. No other studs/bars are allowed. Hair & nails must be neat, tidy and deemed by the school to be of appropriate colour and style.
- Be respectful of school property and the school environment; keep classrooms, locker areas and corridors tidy and litter free.
- Always adhere to the Locker Contract, Mobile Phone, Internet Usage and Anti Bullying Policies.

## 10. Rewards

We wish to stress the positive aspects of behaviour in a nurturing school environment is a motivating factor for students.

Good behaviour is encouraged.

- A student may have a Conduct Report retracted if there are no further breaches within four weeks of the last report being issued.
- We have an Awards System in operation. Among the areas acknowledged are Achievement & Diligence. At the end of each school year students from each year group will receive Achievement Awards recognising academic success and Diligence Awards recognising hard work. Both these awards are conditional on good behaviour. Attendance & Punctuality Awards are given to all students with exemplary records. Other awards are given for different areas.
- Extra-curricular/Co-curricular Activities. Each student's involvement in school should not be limited to mere attendance at class. Students are encouraged to get involved in religious, cultural, social and sporting activities of the school. They will be given an opportunity to direct their talents and enthusiasm into actively participating in extra-curricular activities. These activities may include the following: The School Musical, Concerts, Choirs, Drama, Debates, visits to Museums/Art Galleries, Theatre, Films, Cultural Day, Market Day, Eco Committee, School Trips within Ireland and abroad.
- Sport. In addition to PE classes students are encouraged to get actively involved in sporting activities. Sport is an aid to good health and personal wellbeing and success stems from

good discipline, self-control, commitment and having a positive team-spirit. The following are some of the sports played in the school: Badminton, Table-tennis, Basketball, Soccer, and Volleyball. There is also an annual Sports Day.

Extra-curricular and sporting activities are organised by teachers in their own free time and show a high level of commitment and concern for all aspects of the students' education. Students with a poor behaviour record may not take part in activities. We encourage as many students as possible to take part and the help and involvement of parents is welcomed.

## 11. Sanctions

Failure to adhere to school rules will result in sanctions. These range from a word of warning to expulsion. A Major or Minor Report is filled out outlining the misbehaviour and passed onto the Year-head (see Appendix 2). It is expected that students will accept and respond positively to correction from members of Staff be it inside or outside of the classroom.

Students who fail to do so or who repeatedly disregard any regulation may be given a period of detention. This may be after school or during lunchtime. Notice will be given to parents.

Daily detention may be given at the discretion of the Principal or Deputy Principal. This will be for a period no longer than 15 minutes. Further sanctions may include temporary confiscation of property, longer detentions, suspension from class/school and expulsion. In most cases the range of sanctions follows one another. However, in certain cases, the degree of disrespect or disregard for school rules shown by a single act may warrant that a student be immediately suspended.

## 12. Corrective Structures and Procedures

The initial sanctions outlined above are effective for the majority of students. However a small number of students may require further attention. The following structures and procedures indicate how the situation will normally be dealt with when the need arises.

### Stage 1 The teacher deals with the issue

Any breach of classroom discipline will, in the first instance, be dealt with by the classroom teacher. The classroom teacher may counsel, reprimand or impose a sanction on the student as appropriate. Sanctions include; a written punishment exercise, lunchtime detention (15 min max), contact with parents, being asked to write an apology letter.

### Stage 2 The matter is referred to the Year Head i.e. a Major or Minor Report is completed.

Where the behaviour is repeated or is of a more serious nature, the class teacher will complete a written report and refer the matter to the Year Head. The teacher will record this in the students' journal and the parent will acknowledge this by signing and dating the note for the next days' class. The incident will be investigated and students may be asked to make a written statement about their knowledge of an incident.

The Year Head will counsel, reprimand or impose a sanction on the student as appropriate. Sanctions include placing the student on behaviour sheet, detention(s), contacting parents, inviting parents to visit the school. Where a student is placed on longer detention 24 hours notice in writing is given to parents. In a small number of cases students are kept on in the school on the basis of an agreement with parents that detention takes place on the day on which the misdemeanour occurs.

Stage 3 The matter is referred to the Deputy Principal

Where there is persistent low-level disruption i.e. after 3 minor reports or misconduct or where there is a once-off incident of a very serious nature or failure to comply with the sanctions outlined above or where there are other considerations which merit it, the matter will be referred to the Deputy Principal or Principal. Following investigation the student may be counselled and sanctions will be applied – these will include behaviour sheet or reprimand or exclusion or detention or formal written warning to parents or a recommendation for suspension or other sanction.

Stage 4 The matter is referred to the Principal

Where there is persistent low-level disruption or misconduct and the student has failed to respond to the strategies followed so far; where there is a once-off incident of a very serious nature; where students have failed to comply with the sanctions outlined above or where there are other considerations which merit it, the matter may be referred to the Principal. The Principal will review the matter and will, if necessary, engage in further investigation. Following review and/or investigation one or more of the sanctions outlined in stage 2 or 3 above may be applied. The principal may suspend a student from the school for a period of up to three days or 5 days in consultation with the chairperson of the BOM. The principal will report on discipline matters to the BOM each month. Parents/Guardians have the right to appeal the suspension to the Board. The EWS will be informed if a student is suspended for 6 days or more.

Stage 5 The matter may be referred to the Board of Management (BOM). The Board may be asked give a further suspension or consider expulsion.

A decision to expel a student rests with the Board of Management. See Expulsion Policy.

**Note** The Education Welfare Service (EWS) will be informed of any suspension of six day or more and of any expulsion. The EWS shall also be informed if any suspension gives rise to a situation where a student's total absences for the school year exceed 20 days. Appeals may be made to the Department of Education and Skills in the case of an expulsion or where the cumulative total number of days on suspension for a student exceeds twenty in any one year.

### 13. Procedures to be followed in the event of a Suspension

1. The matter will be very serious; either a pattern of persistent misconduct or a serious once-off incident.
2. The issue will be fully investigated by the Principal or Deputy or a person with delegated responsibility, other than the offended party. Witnesses to the event(s) may be interviewed as appropriate.
3. The student against whom the complaint is made will be given an opportunity to present their side of the story. The student may be asked to give an account in writing.
4. The parent will be given an opportunity to present their case. Where a suspension is being considered a student may be withdrawn from class or required to stay at home until their parents visit the school.
5. Parents will normally 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
  - A clear statement that the student is under the care of the parents/guardians for the duration of the suspension
  - Expectations of a student while on suspension
  - Rights of appeal  
If the EWS has been informed, this should be stated
  - If consideration is being given to expulsion as a sanction in this instance, the letter must state this unambiguously.
6. The Principal may suspend a student for up to three days or five days in consultation with the Chairperson of the BOM. All suspensions will be reported to the BOM at their next ordinary meeting.
  7. Prior to a decision being made to suspend a pupil parents will be given an opportunity to make their case to the Principal or Board.
  8. Where the Board of Management suspends a student, and the cumulative number of days suspension for that student exceeds twenty in any one school year, parents will be informed of their right to appeal the decision to the Trustees and/or the Department of Education and Skills. The EWS are informed of the suspension.
  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 or suspended for a period up to three days or up to five days in consultation with the Chairperson of the BOM., until the matter is decided upon by the Board of Management. In that event the Board will take the further incident into account in reaching its decision.

Grounds for removing a suspension: Following a suspension the parents/guardians (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.

Following a suspension the student may be admitted back to school using one or more of the following:

- Return as per normal timetable.
- Signing of a Contract of Behaviour.
- Issuing of a Behaviour Sheet which is to be completed and reviewed daily and to be signed by parents.
- Student checks in with designated person for as long as is deemed necessary.
- Behaviour review with parents/guardians.
- Meet with Guidance Counsellor.
- Phased return to school following suspension on a reduced timetable.

On day of re admittance the Parent /Guardian presents with the student to the Principal before first class.

Grounds for removing a suspension: Following a suspension the parents/guardians (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.

In exceptional cases where expulsion is being considered parents/guardians will be written to advising them of the procedures to be followed.

Policy ratified June 14<sup>th</sup> 2017

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

*Chairperson, BOM*

# Appendix 1

## School Rules

*It is expected that students will:*

- Treat each other, staff and visitors with courtesy and respect.
- Always cooperate with teachers, be attentive & respectful at all times, in class and outside the classroom.
- Attend school as scheduled, be ready for class when the bell rings, not leave the school or school grounds without permission and present a note explaining absence to tutor or teachers on return to school.
- Present a note from parent/guardian if seeking permission to leave school early.
- Have all homework, oral and written, properly prepared and come to class with all the correct materials.
- Behave in an exemplary manner when in school uniform or when representing the school.
- Always wear the proper school uniform. PE uniform may only be worn for PE class or as allowed.
- Always keep uniform neat and presentable.
- Only wear one pair of stud ear-rings. No other studs/bars are allowed. Hair & nails must be neat, tidy and deemed by the school to be of appropriate colour and style.
- Be respectful of school property and the school environment; keep classrooms, locker areas and corridors tidy and litter free.
- Always adhere to the Locker Contract, Mobile Phone, Internet Usage and Anti Bullying Policies.

# Minor Conduct Report

Name of Pupil: \_\_\_\_\_ Class \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_ Time \_\_\_\_\_

## Nature of Misconduct

- 1. Not having the correct books, homework journal, materials or copies for class (after teacher interventions).
- 2. Absence from class without permission.
- 3. Consistently late for class.
- 4. Interruption of teaching & learning e.g. non co-operation, consistent talking in class.
- 5. Homework not done (after teacher interventions).
- 6. Not wearing PE uniform (without note).
- 7. Breach of uniform/presentation rules.
- 8. Consistent eating, drinking or chewing gum in class.
- 9. Non production of absence note or parent's signature in Journal as requested.
- 10. Foul or abusive language to a pupil.
- 11. Minor vandalism.
- 12. Other.

## Further Details

*Attach extra sheet if needed*

Reporting Teacher: \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

# Major

## Conduct Report

Name of Pupil: \_\_\_\_\_ Class \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_ Time \_\_\_\_\_

### Nature of Misconduct

- 1. Mithing
- 2. Blatant, defiance of a staff member.
- 3. Major Vandalism (destruction of schools or others' property).
- 4. Theft.
- 5. Any behaviour, while in school uniform or representing the school, which brings the school into disrepute.
- 6. Foul or abusive language to a staff member.
- 7. Assault on a pupil or staff member.
- 8. Serious intimidation or bullying by any medium.
- 9. Smoking, drug-taking, consumption of alcohol or substance abuse in the school building, school grounds, while in school uniform or on all organised trips.
- 10. Other.

Items 1- 5 may mean suspension, items 6, 7, 8, 9 and 10 **will** mean suspension. A breach of any of the above may warrant automatic progression to stage 3 of 5 of the Corrective Structures and Procedures.

### Further Details

*Attach extra sheet if needed*

Reporting Teacher: \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

**TUSLA- Child & Family Agency ([www.tusla.ie](http://www.tusla.ie))**  
**Education Welfare Services – Information for Parents/Guardians**

**School Attendance – what every parent needs to know**

Under the Education (Welfare) Act, 2000 parents are responsible for making sure their child receives an education. The law also says that every child between the ages of 6 and 16 must attend school or otherwise receive an education. Most children attend recognised schools although some are educated at home or in non-recognised schools

**What should I do if my child cannot go to school?**

You must tell the school that your child cannot attend and say why. Write a short note to the school to explain why your child was out of school and send it in with your child when they go back to school. Generally, there are good reasons why a child is missing school (e.g. illness).

Keep in regular contact with your child's school to explain why your child is absent and, where appropriate, provide medical certificates.

**What will the school do if my child misses a lot of school?**

The school must tell the statutory Educational Welfare Services of the Child and Family Agency if your child has missed 20 days or more in the school year, or if it is concerned that your child is missing too much school.

**What we must do if your child misses a lot of school?**

If a school tells us that your child is missing too much school, an Educational Welfare Officer (EWO) will work with the school and may visit you to see how we can help to make sure that your child attends school more often.

**Can I take my child on holidays during term time?**

Taking a holiday during term time means that children miss important school time. It will be difficult for them to catch up on work later on. As a result, they may fall behind with school work and lose confidence in their abilities. We strongly advise parents do not take their children out of school for holidays during term time.

**Can I be taken to court if my child doesn't attend school?**

If you are a parent or guardian of a child aged between 6 and 16 you have a central role to play in ensuring that your child does not miss out on his or her education. Under Irish law you must ensure that your child attends school or otherwise receives an education.

We will help parents in whatever way we can to ensure your child gets an education. However, parents who refuse to co-operate with the EWO regarding their child's school attendance (or fail to register with the Educational Welfare Services of the Child and Family Agency if they are being home educated or in receipt of an education in a 'non-recognised school') can be taken to court and fined or imprisoned. Legal action of this kind only takes place in exceptional circumstances and forms a very small part of the Board's work.

**At what age can my child leave school?**

The minimum school leaving age is 16 or after three years of post-primary education, whichever is later.