

Our Lady of Mercy College Beaumont



Code of Behaviour

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1. Introduction

The Code of Behaviour was developed in line with the Education Act 1998, the Education Welfare Act 200 and the NEWB Guidelines. The Board of Management has the ultimate responsibility for the Code of Behaviour and the Principal is responsible for its implementation. The policy is a written document and must be signed by all students and their parents or guardians prior to beginning school. A student learning contract is included in the school journal and this will be used to roll out the policy to all. This learning contract must be signed each year by both students and their parents/guardians.

Where lists are given they are not exhaustive, instead they are indicative of the particular behaviour, sanction or item.

A whole school approach was taken to develop the Code of Behaviour by consulting with all the stakeholders (students, staff, parents, and the Board of Management). The Code of Behaviour is reviewed regularly in line with the needs of the school community.

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.

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/Guardians 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.

Our Lady of Mercy College is part of the DEIS School programme - the school is committed to delivering equality of opportunity for students. Under DEIS, the school has well defined plans under the following headings: attendance, attainment, retention, progression, liaising with parents and liaising with the community. Literacy and numeracy are also key areas for planning. There are a wide range of student supports including a Home School Community Teacher, School Completion Programme.

2. Aims of the Code of Behaviour

- To foster a sense of pride and respect in the school community where all feel valued, supported and cared for.
- To maintain a calm and safe school environment.
- To promote an effective learning environment.
- To promote kindness, respect and positive relationships among the school community.
- To encourage consistency of response to both positive and negative behaviour.

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3. A Whole School Approach

Each year group is under the care of a Year Head who has overall responsibility for:

- leading learning,
- attendance,
- punctuality
- 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
- monitoring daily attendance
- Providing students with a point contact.

The Guidance Counsellor, Care Team, Home School Community Liaison Officer (HSCL) 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 external bodies as appropriate.

Communication: The 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/guardians 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. ● School contracts should be signed each year by both students and their parents. ??? ● Code of Behaviour, AUP contradict should be signed by students and parents or guardians.

Absences, Medical/Dental Appointments & Illness

- Parents/guardians are asked to make all medical/dental appointments outside of school time.
- Should a student be absent from school a note on the school app 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/guardian 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.

Roles and responsibilities of teaching staff and school managements

- Implement the Mission Statement and all policies and procedures
- Promote our Ethos
- Bring the Code of Behaviour and all policies to the attention of the school community

- Implement all policies and facilitate a review of policies
- Expect high standards and commend good behaviour
- Respond to and sanction unacceptable behaviour

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- Provide a curriculum that meets the needs of the students within the resources provided by the Department of Education and Skills
- Provide a secure, healthy and structured working environment in line with our Health and Safety Statement
- Adhere to the legislative requirements of Child Protection
- Provide an education which sets high expectations and supports each student to achieve her potential
- Monitor students' progress with regular assessments and formal reporting ● Encourage partnership with parents by enhancing communication and parental involvement
- Support the provision of a range of extra-curricular activities

Roles and responsibilities of students

- Students are expected to uphold our Code of Behaviour and our school rules at all times.

Role of parents/guardians

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

Parents/Guardians should be notified of any breaches of the code of behaviour.

A note sent home or a phone call is required as methods of communication.

- 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/Guardians 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. / app note.

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4. Setting standards for behaviour

School Rules: Reflecting the core values of Our Lady Mercy College Beaumont
To reach our potential we are... Be Ready Be Respectful Be Responsible

	Be Ready to learn	Be Respectful	Be Responsible
In Our School, I Will...	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be on time • Wear the correct school uniform • Wear the school jacket inside and outside the school building • Fill in any absences on the school App 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Treat others as I would like to be treated • Respect school property and the property of others • Follow my teacher's instructions and that of all staff. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Watch out, Speak Up and Tell someone and do the right thing. • Sign in and sign out at the office • Keep Our Lady of Mercy College a substance free zone • Clean up and recycle • Try and have a refill water bottle with me. • Mobile devices are to be turned off and put in the boxes at all times
In the Classroom I Will...	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have all materials • Be attentive and try my best • Put my journal on the desk and mobile phone in the box at the teacher's desk. • Record and attempt all homework 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Put my hand up and wait • One Voice • Be willing to learn new things • Show good manners • Follow all safety procedures in every practical classroom • Use the school premises purposefully at all times 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keep the classroom tidy and food free • Ensure my own safety and the safety of others • Let my teacher know if I need help • Take care of all resources used or borrowed from the school and return them in a timely fashion.

<p>In the Corridors, I Will...</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Walk on the left • Line up outside my classroom • Move promptly from one class to another 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use a calm voice and speak in a respectful way • Respect Personal Space of others • Stay calm and patient 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keep the corridors food and drink free • Keep corridors clear and allow others to pass • On the corridors during class times requires me to have my journal.
<p>At the Lockers, I Will...</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keep my locker tidy • Store my locker code in a safe place • Use my locker at assigned times only 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allow other students to access lockers nearby • Open and close my locker carefully 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lock my locker • Move away from the locker area when finished • I will not display any stickers or signs on the locker outside or inside.
<p>In the Canteen or concert hall, I Will...</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Line up and wait my turn • Walk, stay calm and be patient • Listen for the school bell and go to classes promptly 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Follow directions of all adults • Tidy up after myself • Be mannerly • Respect everyone's personal space 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eat Healthily • Sit on seats provided while eating • Store bags and personal belongings safely during break times • Include others
<p>In the Toilets and Changing Areas, I Will..</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use toilets during break times only or the nearest bathroom if it is an emergency. • Only enter the changing rooms to change for class or training • Change as quickly as possible within the allotted time 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have respect for school property • Respect the privacy and dignity of others • Respect the property of others • Not eat or drink in this area • Hand up all devices and jewellery before 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I will only use the toilets designated to my own year group • Keep toilets clean • Leave the toilet area when I am finished using the facilities • Changing rooms and toilets are food free areas.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leave the room as soon as I have changed • Have all my gear; with my shoes correctly tied 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> entering the changing room • Not enter a cubicle with other student (s) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be responsible for my property and hand up any valuables beforehand • Help keep the changing areas tidy
On the Grounds, I Will...	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be safe on the roads and paths to and from school • Use pedestrian crossings • Listen for the school bell and go promptly to class 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Follow directions of all adults • Encourage others during sport • Use respectful language 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stay in designated students' areas • Junior students remain on the school grounds all day. Senior students may leave at lunchtime and return. • Follow sign out procedures

On Trips, I Will...	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have consent forms and all relevant documents • Be in full uniform unless stated otherwise • Accept that school expectations apply 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be courteous to everyone I meet • Represent my school with pride 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stay with the group • Clean up after myself • Follow safety instructions from all adults
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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 the box in the classroom at the beginning of every lesson. See Mobile Phone Policy / AUP

Attendance & Punctuality

- Consistency of attendance ensures that learning is not disrupted and takes place over a long length of time.
- Students who arrive or leave during the school day must sign in or out in the appropriate location.
- 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. ● Always adhere to the Locker Contract, Mobile Phone, Internet Usage/AUP and Anti Bullying Policies.

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.
 - Full correct PE uniform can be worn on the days when a student has PE.
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- Only the prescribed uniform may be worn and a student not in full school uniform will not be allowed to class without a note in the journal from parent/guardian and signed by the Principal.
 - All personal belongings must be labelled with the student's name.

Substance use

- The use, possession or supply of banned or prohibited substances and/or drug paraphernalia, cigarettes, e-cigarettes, vapes in the school, during any school related activities or on school trips and outings is not permitted. See the Substance Use

Policy.

- Those who remain in the company of students who smoke or use alcohol or other mood altering substances, during school activities or at any time while in school uniform, and make no obvious effort to leave the scene will be liable for serious disciplinary sanctions.
- If a member of staff suspects that a student is in possession either of a prohibited item (cigarettes, vapes, alcohol, etc.) or of the property of another, students should note that they are liable to be asked to empty their pockets and/or be liable to a locker, bag, footwear inspections. This will be witnessed by another member of staff. A student who refuses to agree to such an inspection may face serious sanctions. If deemed necessary, Parent(s) / Guardian(s) and / or a member of An Garda Síochána may be called to the school to assist in such inspections.

5. Promoting positive behaviour

“Positive acknowledgement is a very effective way of influencing and promoting good learning behaviour” (NEWB (Tusla), 2008)

Encouragements	Acknowledgements	Rewards
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Positive everyday interactions between teachers and students • Classroom routines • Use of Merits • Expectation Reminders • Clear boundaries and rule 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A quiet word of acknowledgement by a teacher • Praise for effort, participation or achievement in class • A positive note in the student’s journal • Letter/note home • A special mention of achievements at Positive Assembly • Special mention on daily intercom announcements • Special mention on school website/ twitter • Positive reports of students given to parents/guardians at parent teacher • Display of student’s work • A positive comment about the student to Tutor/Year Head 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Note in the journal • Phone call home • Positive Assemblies • Announcements • Attendance, punctuality, organisation and academic achievement rewarded through certificates/ small rewards • Student Commendation and letter home from Principal • End of year awards • Reward based initiatives

The promotion of positive behaviour is the fundamental aim of the Code of Behaviour. In the promotion of positive behaviour, the school has clearly outlined the expectations of students. Students will be encouraged to meet these expectations through encouragement/acknowledgments and rewards both formally and informally. Failure to adhere to school rules will result in sanctions.

- These range from a word of warning to expulsion.
- A Major or Minor Conduct Report is filled out describing 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. Notice will be given to parents. This may be after school or during lunchtime. 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 our ladder of referral (see below). 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.

Supports

The school rules are for everyone. Reasonable accommodations may be made for students with Additional Educational Needs. This will be identified and included on a student Support

Plan or Behaviour for Learning plan. Any reasonable accommodation included in the above plan is subject to termly review by Year Head and Special Needs Teacher.

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

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 extracurricular activities.
- These activities may include the following: 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 or trips. We encourage as many students as possible to take part and the help and involvement of parents is welcomed.

6. Responding to inappropriate behaviour

Sanctions / Interventions

A Pod system of accommodation is established by the staff to take students into their classrooms when all interventions have failed.

Low Level Behaviour –Teacher/SNA/school staff

Low Level Behaviour	Responses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Talking out of turn - Not following instruction - Distracting others in class - Late to class - Not being in correct uniform - Not attempting homework/study - Not having class materials/ journal - Inappropriate behaviour on the corridors - Littering - Chewing gum - Mobile devices 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Proximity - Quiet word/ Expectation reminder - Tactical ignoring - Change seating - Conversation at the end of class - Exaggerated praise of other students - Remove distraction - Social skill reminder - Signal/gesture/look - Record misbehaviour in the journal grid - Humour - Model/practice expectation - Penalty sheet - Subject teacher detention

Suggested Interventions and Supports for Low Level Behaviour:

- SEN supports
- Tutor support
- Consultation with Student Support Services; -Care team -HSCL -SCP
- Classroom
- Explicit teaching of expectations and routines
- Differentiation to meet needs of all students
- Anti-Bullying Support

Medium Level Behaviour–Teacher/SNA/ and Year Head

Medium Level Behaviour	Responses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Repeated low level behaviours following appropriate sanctions/supports - Persistent disruption of teaching and learning - Inappropriate language or comments - Absent from class without permission - Verbal and/or physical aggression - Mobile devices 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Continued application of low level sanctions - Year head Detention - Referral Form to Year Head - Reciprocal teacher temporary withdrawal system - Phone call and/or Referral Parent/Guardian/Student Meeting(s) - Absence without permission form – Major report- Suspension

Suggested Interventions and Supports for Medium Level Behaviour

- SEN supports
- Restorative Approaches What Happened? What were you thinking/feeling at the time? Who was affected by your behaviour? How might you resolve this situation?
- Tracking
- Student Support Services Referral; -Care team -HSCL -SCP
- Student Behaviour Plan (BFL Support)

High Level Behaviour Year Head/Deputy Principal/Principal

High Level Behaviour	Responses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Persistent engagement in medium level behaviour following appropriate sanctions/supports - Fighting - Theft - Throwing an object likely to cause injury - Leaving school without permission - Behaviour that constitutes a significant threat to health and safety - Serious damage to property - Verbal and/or physical aggression - Smoking, vaping, suspect or associated with it, possessing alcohol and/or illicit substances as outlined in the AUP. - Bullying 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Continued application of medium level sanctions - Tracking - Restorative Meetings - Direct referral to Year Head / DP/P - Referral Parent Guardian/Student Meeting(s) - Anti-Bullying Procedures - Suspension - Reintegration meeting attended by Parent/Guardian and Student, YH/DP/Principal - Referral to the Disciplinary Committee - Recommendation of School Expulsion

Suggested Interventions and Supports for High Level Behaviour

- SEN Supports
- Restorative approaches

- Progress reports
- Tracking
- Student Support Services
- Referral to Discipline Committee
- Student Behaviour Plan
 - Referral Meeting(s)
 - Reintegration Meeting(s)
- Temporary Reduced Timetable
- Individual Behaviour Agreement
- Student Behaviour Plan (BFL Support)

- Anti Bullying Policy and Procedures

After the above interventions and sanctions, the majority of students will respond positively and learn the skills for expected behaviour in Our Lady of Mercy College. When any sanction is completed, the student is given the opportunity and support for a fresh start. Records are always kept. If a student fails to respond to all the supports and interventions at Our Lady of Mercy College offers and has been sanctioned through 3 Stage Suspensions, the Principal will convene a Discipline Committee Conference to plan the next steps which may include a recommendation of expulsion to the School Board of Management.

Ladder of Referral

It is the responsibility of every member of our school community to maintain a classroom and whole school environment that is supportive of the learning of every student.

The procedures for dealing with incidents of unacceptable behaviour/breaches of the school expectations are referred to as our 'ladder of referral'. The basic principle is that the more serious the incident/misbehaviour, the higher up the ladder it is dealt with through Referral Reports and Staged Suspensions supported wholly by intervention-based strategies.

Board of Management
Principal (Stage 3) (Discipline Committee Conference)
Deputy Principal (Stage 2)
Yearhead (Stage 1)
Tutor
Classroom Teacher and SNA's

Our Lady of Mercy College Beaumont Referral Form:



Student Code:

Class:

Date of issue:

Time of issue:

BE READY TO LEARN, BE RESPECTFUL, BE RESPONSIBLE

Failure to meet expectations					
In our school		In the classroom		In the corridors/stairwells	
At the lockers		In the canteen/concert hall		In the toilets	
On the school grounds		On school trips		Through use of mobile devices	

Date	Interventions	Details	Contacted home	Year Head/Tutor
	<i>Verbal warning</i> yes <input type="checkbox"/> no <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>moved seats</i> yes <input type="checkbox"/> no <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Note in Journal</i> yes <input type="checkbox"/> no <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>penalty sheet / other</i> yes <input type="checkbox"/> no <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Removed from class</i> yes <input type="checkbox"/> no <input type="checkbox"/>			

Teacher.....

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.

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Appendix 2: Sample of a 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 cooperation, 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 _____

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Appendix 3: Sample of a Major Conduct Report

Name of Pupil: _____ Class _____ Date _____ Time _____

Nature of Misconduct

1. Mitching

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, vaping drug-taking, consumption of alcohol or substance abuse school building, school grounds, while in school uniform or on all organised trips.

10.
Other.

Items
1- 5
and
10
may
mean

suspension, items 6, 7, 8 and 9 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 _____

Attach extra sheet if needed

Reporting Teacher: _____ Date _____

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Appendix 4: TUSLA- Child & Family Agency (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 cooperate 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.

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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.

Factors to consider before suspension of a student

The nature and seriousness of the behaviour
• What is the precise description of the behaviour?
• How persistent has the unacceptable behaviour been?
• Has the problem behaviour escalated, despite the interventions tried?
The context of the behaviour

- What are the circumstances of the incidents of serious misbehaviour (e.g. in class, in a teacher's class, in the yard, in a group)?
- What factors may have triggered incidents of serious misbehaviour (e.g. bullying, cultural or family factors)?
- What is the age stage of development and cognitive ability of the student?
- Are there any factors that may be associated with the behaviour (e.g. particular home circumstances, special educational needs)?

The impact of the behaviour

- How are other students and staff affected by the student's behaviour?
- What is the impact of the behaviour on the teaching and learning of the class?
- Does the behaviour have a particular or greater impact on some students or teachers?
- Does the student understand the impact of their behaviour on others?

The interventions tried to date

- What interventions have been tried? Over what period?
- How have the interventions been recorded and monitored?
- What has been the result of those interventions?
- Have the parents been involved in finding a solution to the problem behaviour?
- Has the intervention of NEPS or other psychological assessment or counselling been sought, where appropriate?
- Are any other interventions such as peer mediation, restorative justice approaches or family conferencing available?
- Is the student or parent involved with any support service and has this agency or support service been asked for help in solving this problem?
- Has any other agency been asked for assistance (e.g. Child Guidance Clinic, Child and Adolescent services)?

Whether suspension is a proportionate response

- Is the student's behaviour sufficiently serious as to warrant suspension?
- Is the standard being applied to judging the behaviour the same as the standard applied to the behaviour of any other student?

The possible impact of suspension

- Will suspension allow additional or alternative interventions to be made?
- Will suspension help the student to change the inappropriate behaviour?
- How will suspension help teachers or other students affected by the behaviour?
- Will suspension exacerbate any educational vulnerability of the student?

Staged Suspension

Suspensions are normally 3 school days in duration at each stage.

The student along with their parent/guardian must attend a reintegration meeting before returning to school. This meeting will normally be scheduled during day 2 of the suspension period.

Suspension 1

The Year Head oversees this suspension. The student's file is reviewed by the Year Head in consultation with the Principal/Deputy Principal. The Year Head communicates with the students and parent(s)/guardian(s). The Year Head writes the letter of suspension which is to be signed by the Principal/Deputy Principal. The Year Head convenes and facilitates a reintegration meeting. The school expectations are signed by the student, parent(s)/guardian(s) and year head. A reintegration agreement is signed.

Suspension 2

The Deputy Principal oversees this suspension. The Deputy Principal communicates with the student and parent(s)/guardian(s). The Deputy Principal writes the letter of suspension. The Deputy Principal convenes and facilitates a reintegration meeting. The school expectations are signed by student, parent(s)/guardian(s) and Deputy Principal. A reintegration agreement is signed.

Suspension 3

The Principal oversees this suspension.

The Principal communicates with the student and parent(s)/guardian(s)

The Principal writes a letter of suspension.

The Principal convenes a conference of The Discipline Committee. This Committee is composed of the Principal, Deputy Principal, Year Head and a representative from the student services team. The Committee works as an advisory forum to the Principal and constructs the reintegration plan. The Discipline Committee will monitor and review the student's reintegration and advise on how to proceed if behaviours of concern continue or escalate which may include a recommendation of expulsion to the school Board of Management.

Automatic Suspensions – Named Behaviours:

The Principal/Deputy Principal may deem it necessary to automatically suspend a student when investigating the following:

- For Assault
- For direct verbal assault of staff member
- For violent behaviour towards others whether in person, by mobile phone or via social media or other electronic means; in the school, or when identifiable with the school
- For vandalism of any property
- For behaviour(s) causing serious Health & Safety risk
- For the supply/possession /use of tobacco including e-cigarettes/alcohol and /or illegal drugs
- For the supply /possession /use of weapons/ hazardous materials
- For intimidation / sexual harassment and/or the possession/supply or use of pornographic material.

Our Lady of Mercy College Board of Management authorise the Principal with the approval of the Chairperson, to impose a suspension of up to 5 school days as a consequence for serious concerning behaviours that merit an automatic suspension.

Factors to consider before proposing to expel a student

The nature and seriousness of the behaviour
What is the precise description of the behaviour? <ul style="list-style-type: none">• How persistent has the unacceptable behaviour been and over what period of time?• Has the problem behaviour escalated, despite the interventions tried?
The context of the behaviour
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• What are the circumstances of the incidents of serious misbehaviour(e.g.in class in a teacher's class, the yard, in a group)?• What factors may have triggered or provoked incidents of serious misbehaviour (e.g. bullying, cultural or family factors)?

• Are there any factors that may be associated with the behaviour(e.g. particular home circumstances, special educational needs)?

The impact of the behaviour

- How are other students and staff affected by the student's behaviour?
- What is the impact of the behaviour on the teaching and learning of the class?

The interventions tried to date

- What interventions have been tried? Over what period?
- How have the interventions been recorded and monitored?
- What has been the result of these interventions?
- Have the parents been involved in finding a solution to the problem behaviour?
- Has the intervention of NEPS or other psychological assessment or counselling been sought, where appropriate?
- Is the student or parent involved with any support service and has this agency or support service been asked for help in solving this problem?
- Has any other agency been asked for assistance (e.g. Child Guidance Clinic, Child and Adolescent Mental Health services)?
- Is the Board satisfied that no other intervention can be tried or is likely to help the student to change their behaviour?

Whether expulsion is a proportionate response

Is the student's behaviour sufficiently serious to warrant expulsion?

- Is the standard being applied to judging the behaviour the same as the standard applied to the behaviour of any other student?

The possible impact of expulsion

- To what extent may expulsion exacerbate any social or educational vulnerability of the student?
- Will the student be able to take part in, and benefit from, education with their peers?
- In the case of a student who is in care, what might be the implications of expulsion for the care arrangements?

Appendix

Behaviour issues, responses and responsibilities

Low level behaviours

Missing materials/disorganised

Talking out of turn

confrontation/being argumentative

Not following instructions

Asking to go to the toilet

Lack of focus

Late to class

Uniform issues

Distracting others / each other

Phones

Attention-seeking behaviour

Messing / laughing inappropriately

Constant background disturbance

No homework

Eating, drinking, Chewing gum

No Journal

Bank of responses available to teacher

Verbal correction	Comment on the 'Teacher Comment Page'
Note in the Journal	Remove from class
Move seats	Extra homework
Talk to student outside / after/before class	
Phone home	If there is no change and the behaviour is persistent.....refer to YH
Penalty sheet	
Writing out school rules	

Bank of responses available to DP/ P

Meeting with student	Referral to outside agencies
Meeting with parents	Suspension (max 3 days)
Detention	
In-school suspension	Referral to BOM
Referral to Discipline Council - DC Report	
Referral to school support services - BfL, SET, HSCL, Counselling, Care Team	

High Level Behaviours

Abusive language aimed/directed at staff members

Walking out of school

Insulting language

Fighting

Stealing

Recording (audio/video)

Threatening behaviour / invading personal space

Ratified by the Board of Management 13th December 2023