

McEgan College Code of Behaviour

Under Section 23 of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000 the Board of Management of a recognised school will be required to prepare a code of Behaviour in respect of students registered at that school.

Content of the Code of Behaviour

A code of behaviour shall specify:

- The standards of behaviour that shall be observed by each student attending the school.
- The measures that may be taken when a student fails or refuses to observe those standards.
- The procedures to be followed before a student may be suspended or expelled from the school concerned.
- The grounds for removing a suspension imposed in relation to a student
- The procedures to be followed relating to notification of a child's absence from school.

Mission Statement

To care equally for all and to promote learning, hard work and responsibility for self in an ordered and disciplined environment.

Aims of Code of Behaviour

The code of behaviour aims to achieve the following:

- The efficient operation of a worthwhile, effective and stimulating learning programme for all students.
- The fostering of self-discipline and training in good behaviour patterns.
- The encouragement of personal responsibility.
- The maintenance of good order throughout the school and respect for the environment.
- The involvement and co-operation of parents/guardians in supporting the code and the operation of sanctions.

- The understanding and acceptance of rules governing behaviour within the school.

Standard expected from each student

In the interests of good order and the provision of a fruitful and happy learning experience, the following statements of College Policy apply to all students:-

To maintain good order students are required to remain within the College and its environs throughout the school day and may not leave the school building during the morning break. Students wishing to leave the College and its environs during the lunch break must have a special form signed by their parents/guardians. Misconduct of any kind will cause this privilege to be withdrawn.

To develop good work practices for now and the future students, are required to arrive punctually in the morning and for all classes during the day.

If students have to leave early, a note from home must be produced and sign the sign-out book in the Deputy-principal's office. Students are not allowed leave without first making contact with a staff member.

To further enhance good work practices students are required to apply themselves to their study (inc. classwork and homework) in an honest and diligent manner so that they may reach their full potential according to their aptitudes and abilities.

To promote solidarity, neatness and a sense of identity and belonging, students are required to wear full College uniform from the time they leave home in the morning until they return in the evening. They should be neatly groomed at all times.

To promote health and health awareness, smoking in the College and its environs is strictly forbidden.

To maintain good hygiene and decorum, chewing gum is strictly forbidden.

To promote accountability and good Home / College liaison, students must present a note to cover all absences.

To promote habits of punctuality students should arrive in school in good time each morning. It is expected that parents will co-operate with the school in ensuring that their children attend punctually and regularly.

To cultivate respect for the environment, College property must be respected. Litter will be disposed of in the bins provided and the College maintained as a litter free zone.

To promote respect teachers must be addressed as Miss, Mrs., Father, Mr or Sir.

School procedures to be followed by students

The morning bell will ring at 8:57 a.m.

In the classrooms students will immediately take their places, and prepare for classwork.

Morning Break will be from 11:05am to 11:20 am.

Lunch Break will be from 1:20 to 2:00 pm.

Lunch will be taken in the Assembly Area.

Students will go from class to class in an orderly manner.

Students will attend classes with all appropriate books and materials for the lesson in question.

Students will be assigned a locker during the first week of term. Lockers can be accessed before school, during the small and big breaks and after schools.

Students will be issued a detention if accessing lockers during class or breaks of classes.

Students will stand aside for all adults entering or leaving rooms.

All class groups will ensure that the furniture is orderly and tidy before they leave their rooms at the end of each class.

All students are advised to mark jumpers and coats with name tags. Coats must be hung on the hooks provided.

Valuables or sums of money should never be left in Cloakrooms, lockers or bags. Any large sum of money should be handed into the office and collected when required.

Students are asked to take home their coats, school bags and books each evening. They should make sure that dirty jerseys togs and socks are taken home for washing. These items should not be left in lockers in a dirty state.

Personal items left lying around the premises will be impounded.

School Rules

In the interest of good order and the provision of a fruitful and happy learning environment, the following rules apply:-

Students are required to wear the full College uniform from the time they leave home in the morning until they return in the evening; additionally, they are also required to be neatly groomed at all times. The Management reserves the right to refuse admission to students failing to do so (by means of Suspension from individual classes or from the College.)

Students must keep mobile phones switched off and out of sight at all times within the college.

The use of chewing gum, alcohol, unprescribed drugs or tobacco is strictly forbidden.

Students are required to be punctual at all times.

Students are required to apply themselves to their study (including their classwork and homework) in an honest, diligent manner so that they may reach their full potential according to their aptitudes and abilities.

Students are not permitted to wear jewellery that is considered to be in breach of Health and Safety Regulations. Students are required to comply with the 'Health and Safety Regulations' within the classrooms and the College. This is in the best interest of all students to comply with Health & Safety regulations. (A summary of these regulations is available in the main College office.)

Students are required to use appropriate language to each other, be courteous, considerate and helpful towards each other and members of staff at all times. Students are required to accept all instructions and directives from the Principal, Deputy Principal and teachers while acting in a professional capacity in matters relating to schoolwork and behaviour.

Any student deemed to be undermining the work of the class through ongoing distraction (however trivial) may be excluded from the class or from the College.

Any student absent or late must provide a written explanation from parents. Students who wish to leave the College before the end of the school day are similarly required to provide a signed note and report to the Deputy-Principals office to sign out.

When outside the school on trips or outing, students are expected at all times to maintain high standards of consideration to others. They must comply, without question, with all specific requirements laid down by those in charge. School rules must be observed on all occasions. Any student guilty of misbehaviour on a trip or outing may be barred from participating in similar future events and be subject to other sanctions.

The Principal in consultation with the deputy principal, middle management and year heads and school partners (parents, students and BOM) reserves the right to amend, delete or otherwise add to these rules if deemed necessary and desirable.

Any breach of College rules will be dealt with according to College Disciplinary Procedures.

Jurisdiction of school rules:

The standards and rules contained in this code of behaviour apply to the normal school day. They also apply in all of the following areas:

- Extra-Curricular Activities
- School Tours
- When on bus outings
- Fieldtrips
- Work Experience Placements
- Attendance at events organised by the school including School Musical, Annual Awards.
- Representing the school in competitions or at functions
- Cyberbullying or other forms of bullying that takes place outside school but are linked to school.

Responding to inappropriate behaviour

It is the responsibility of the school authorities to maintain a classroom and school environment which is supportive of the learning of every student in the school and which ensures continuity of instruction for them.

In our school, we try to develop a strategy for intervening early when student behaviour does not meet the standards expected in the school.

Levels of intervention:

1. Support for all:

Most students behave appropriately, with the help of consistent and clear rules and routines in class and in school.

Occasional minor misbehaviour should be attended to routinely and effectively through the skill of the Subject Teacher.

2. Additional Support for some students:

Some students need more active intervention to help them to manage their behaviour.

Additional interventions include referral to another teacher who can work with the student; involving the pastoral care team; setting targets for behaviour and monitoring them with the student in a supportive way

3. Specialised Support for a small minority of students:

Students who show particularly challenging behaviour need a systematic response involving the adults in their lives, in school and at home.

Management and staff continue to build good links with local support services that may be able to assist in responding to the needs of a student with behavioural difficulties, including National Educational Psychological Services, HSE Psychology Services.

Teachers who have management responsibilities may provide support to Class Teachers in addressing behaviour issues with an individual or class group.

Pastoral Care Support Structure

Subject Teacher:

The Subject Teacher is the front-line source of help for students, who will deal with routine incidents of misbehaviour through classroom management strategies, thus minimising the need for other interventions.

The Subject Teacher implements the Code on a daily basis in a fair, efficient and consistent way.

Courtesy and co-operation are expected at all times.

A good classroom climate prevails where there is open and honest communication and where rights and responsibilities are respected.

As part of the whole school plan, Subject Teachers need access, where possible, to support from another member of staff, whom they can ask for advice, or to whom they can refer a student for advice and support.

Class Teacher:

The Class Teacher has responsibility for the Pastoral Care of each member of the class. Students are motivated in all aspects of their work and encouraged to build a sense of class pride. They are disciplined and advised where necessary. The Class Teacher pays particular attention to effective use of school journal, punctuality, attendance, uniform, pupil files, reports and assessments. The Class Teacher should also be aware of health issues or special educational needs of the student. Effort and excellence are rewarded in a variety of ways.

Year Head:

The Year Head pays careful attention to every aspect of the Year Group, which contributes to the learning environment of the school.

S/he supports the Class Teacher in the execution of their pastoral responsibilities.

Matters of concern are discussed, and action is taken in consultation with others.

S/he ensures that all college procedures and systems operate effectively in the Year Group.

Achievements are acknowledged and rewarded.

Regular monitoring of student behaviour is discussed at weekly meetings with management, where time is devoted to analysing trends and patterns of behaviour.

HSCL

Our HSCL coordinates develops positive links with our parents and our community by hosting a variety of activities including; coffee morning, numeracy project, e.g., Maths for Fun, literacy initiatives, e.g. "One Book club". Links with the community include Paired Reading with TY students and the local primary school, and reading for pleasure in Macroom Hospital and nearby Nursing Homes.

SCP

McEgan College is part of the Bandon Macroom SCP project. SCP identifies children at risk of early school leaving and develops interventions to prevent this from happening. One to one meetings, monitoring attendance, rewarding positive behaviour are some examples of the work. Homework club is run by SCP in McEgan College.

College Counsellor:

The College Counsellor provides an important pastoral service to the whole school in their support given to troubled members of the college community in times of need. She offers advice, pastoral counselling and spiritual direction to many on a daily basis.

Deputy Principal:

The Deputy Principal has a responsibility for managing the Pastoral Care System in the college and contributes generally to the educational and personal development of students. The Deputy Principal encourages and fosters learning in students and supports teachers in their various roles. She forms a direct line of communication between all groups in the school and the Principal.

Principal:

The Principal has overall responsibility for the Pastoral and Disciplinary System in the college. She emphasises the on-going development of a positive, affirming atmosphere in the college, in line with the college ethos and vision.

She manages the implementation of all policies that support and affirm the endeavour and success of all students. A culture of continuous improvement is established, and co-operation between school and the community it serves, is promoted.

Board of Management:

The Board of Management functions as a sub-committee of the CETB. It meets once per term and is legally responsible for the management of the school on behalf of the CETB and for the benefit of students and their parents.

The Board is accountable for upholding the spirit of the school as determined by the cultural, moral, religious, social, linguistic and spiritual values which are characteristic of the school.

The Consequences of unacceptable behaviour

The purpose of a sanction is to bring about a change in behaviour by helping students to recognise the effect of their actions and behaviour on others and helping them to take responsibility for their behaviour.

A sanction also signals to others that their wellbeing is being protected.

Sanctions may also be needed to prevent disruption of teaching and learning and to keep everybody safe.

Strategies used to show disapproval of unacceptable behaviour:

- Verbal reprimand
- Change of location within the class or moved to another class
- Phone call and/or note to parent/guardian in the Student Journal
- Extra work assignments proportionate to the level of indiscipline
- Withdrawal of privilege
- Carrying out a useful task in the school
- Detention, supervised by Teacher (24 Hrs Notice given)
- Disciplinary or Academic Review
- Behaviour Monitoring Report Card - Blue- issued for one week- all subject teachers sign
- Homework Monitoring card issued - Green - issued for one week - all subject teachers sign

- Student is placed on Probation 1 - Yellow - issued for one week - all subject teachers sign - if "x" is placed on card, referred to DLT or Deputy or Principal and placed on Probation11. Parents/ Guardians informed
- Student is placed on Probation 11 - Red - issued for one week - all subject teachers sign - if "x" is placed on card, student referred to DLT or Deputy or Principal and suspension results. Parent/guardian is notified.
- Notice of Concern sent to parent / guardian
- Request for Parent Teacher Conference
- Referral to Class Teacher / Year Head
- Withdrawal from particular class to a supervised location
- Referral to Deputy Principal / Principal.
- Suspension and Expulsion

Dealing with a serious incident

When a serious incident is known to have occurred in a school the following steps should be followed in processing the case.

- The alleged incident should be reported to the Principal as soon as possible. In the event that the Principal is involved in the incident, a report should be made to the Deputy Principal who undertakes the functions hereunder ascribed to the Principal.
- The Principal or an Investigating Officer (class teacher, class tutor or Deputy Principal) appointed by the Principal should conduct an investigation. The Investigating Officer should not be a party to the complaint.
- An **Incident Report Sheet** should be completed as soon as possible. It should encompass the following details:
 - A clear outline of the alleged incident or complaint.
 - The name/s, if known, of the student/s involved in the incident.
 - The date, time and location of the alleged incident.
 - The names of any witnesses to the incident
- Depending on the nature and severity of the incident, the Principal should notify other appropriate authorities.

The Role of the Investigating Officer

- The Investigating Officer shall be responsible, for investigating the complaint or incident. The investigation should normally take place as soon as possible after an incident has been reported.
- The Investigating Officer shall conduct interviews with the parties to the complaint. Care should be exercised when interviewing that good and safe practice is followed. The more serious the alleged transgression the more it is advisable that a witness, and or parent, is present at the interview. In the case of certain kinds of allegations it is important that gender issues are considered when conducting an interview. Parents do not have the right in a school situation to insist that they be accompanied by a solicitor.
- The Investigating Officer may invite the parties to the complaint to make formal written statements relating to the alleged incident.
- The Investigating Officer should conduct interviews with witnesses to the alleged incident.
- Contemporaneous notes of interviews should be taken by the Investigating Officer
- Having conducted his/her investigation, the Investigating Officer shall, as soon as is practicable, supply his/her **written report** to the Principal of the school. The school operates a merit card system to ensure fairness and equity throughout the process and these cards assist both the Principal and the students to arrive at an equitable and fair conclusion when the need arises. When a student is returning from suspension they are given a "General Monitoring Card" so as to monitor their re-integration into the class and assist to identify any areas of concern before a problem may occur, this usually takes 3 to 5 school days depending on how the student is progressing with their studies.

Policies and Procedures for Suspension and Expulsion

1. Students and parents are advised about, and are aware of the policy for Suspension and Expulsion.
2. Fair procedures are used and all staff members are aware of these procedures.
3. There are no undue delays in an investigation and in making decisions about the imposition of Suspension and Expulsion.
4. Care is taken to ensure that all matters to do with an investigation of alleged misbehaviour are dealt with in confidence.
5. The principles of ensuring the right to be heard and the right to impartiality apply in all cases.
6. If a student aged 18 years or more request the school to restrict or limit communication with his/her parents, or to limit parental involvement in matters relating to their education, the management of the school will

inform the parent of the student about the change in practice and the reasons.

7. Where allegations of criminal behaviour are made about a student, these will usually be referred to the *Gardaí*, who have responsibility for investigating criminal matters.
8. A member of staff will provide support to the student during the re-integration process.
9. When the sanction of suspension is completed, a student is given the opportunity and support for a fresh start.
10. Formal records of investigation and decision making are kept.
11. The Principal reports all suspensions in excess of five days to the Board of Management with the reasons for and duration of each suspension.

Suspension

Defined as "requiring the student to absent him/herself from the school for a specified, limited period of school days".

Authority to suspend:

The Articles of Management of the college give authority to the Principal to suspend a student from the school. Or in the absence of the Principal, the deputy principal assumes the role of the Principal.

Grounds for Suspension:

- The student's behaviour has had a detrimental effect on the education of other students.
- The student's continued presence in the school at the time constitutes a threat to the safety of students, staff of the school or other person.
- The student is responsible for serious damage to property.
- Other interventions may have been tried but have not worked.
- The student has been involved in a single incident of serious misconduct.
- The student poses a threat to good order and to the right of other students to do their state examinations in a calm atmosphere.
- As part of the school's policy on sanctions and following a consultation process, particular named behaviours may incur automatic suspension: smoking on school grounds; the use of foul abusive language; physical assault on another person, disrespect for school rules and authority.

Procedures in respect of suspension:

Where a preliminary assessment of the facts confirms serious misbehaviour that could warrant suspension, the following procedures are observed:

1. The student and their parents are informed by phone and/or in writing about the complaint and that it could result in suspension.
2. Parents and student are given an opportunity to respond before a decision is made and before any sanction is imposed.
3. A meeting with the student and parent provides an opportunity to ask questions about the evidence of misbehaviour.
4. If a student and their parents fail to attend a meeting, the school will write a letter advising of the gravity of the matter, the importance of attending a re-scheduled meeting and failing that, the duty of the school authorities to make a decision to respond to the negative behaviour.
5. In the case of an immediate suspension, parents will be notified of the details of the preliminary investigation, and arrangements will be made with them for the student to be collected. The formal investigation will follow immediately and all procedures for suspension will apply. A student will not be sent home from school without first notifying parents.

The Period of suspension:

A student will not be suspended for more than 3 days, except in exceptional circumstances where the Principal considers that a period of suspension longer than 3 days is needed in order to achieve a particular objective. The Education Welfare Officer will be informed if the duration suspension exceeds five days.

When the student returns from suspension, the student is placed on a monitoring card for one week.

Appeals:

- The Board of Management offers an opportunity to appeal a Principal's decision to suspend a student.
- Where the total number of days for which the student has been suspended in the current school year reaches 20 days, the parents or a student aged 18 years or over, may appeal the suspension under Section 29 of the Education Act 1998. At the time when parents are being formally notified of such a suspension, they and the student will be told about their right to appeal in the first instance to the CETB. Where an appeal to the CETB is concluded, parents, or a student aged 18 years or over, may appeal to the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Science.

Written Notification:

- The school will notify the parents in writing of the decision to suspend. The letter will confirm the period of suspension, the reason for the suspension, any study programme to be followed while on suspension.

Expulsion

Authority to expel:

The Articles of Management of the college give authority to the Principal to expel a student from the school.

Grounds for expulsion:

The school will have taken significant steps to address the misbehaviour and to avoid expulsion including as appropriate:

- Meeting with parents and the student to try to find ways of helping the student to change their behaviour.
- Making sure that the student understands the possible consequences of their behaviour, if it should persist. (First Formal warning, Second Formal Warning and Final Warning, Probation Card system.)
- Ensuring that all other possible options have been tried.
- Seeking the assistance of support agencies (e.g. NEPS, HSE, EWO, Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services).

Proposal to expel a student requires serious grounds such as that:

- The student's behaviour is a persistent cause of significant disruption to the learning of others or to the teaching process.
- The student's continued presence in the school constitutes a real and significant threat to safety.
- The student is responsible for serious damage to property.

The kinds of behaviour that might result in a proposal to expel on the basis of a single breach of the code 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.

Procedures in respect of expulsion:

1. The student and the parent are informed in writing about the details of the alleged misbehaviour, how it will be investigated, and that it could result in expulsion.

2. Parents and the student are given an opportunity at a meeting to respond to the complaint of serious misbehaviour before a decision is made and before a sanction is imposed. This may be an opportunity for parents to make a case for lessening the sanction, and for the school to explore with parents how best to address the student's behaviour.
3. If a student and the parents fail to attend the meeting, the Principal will write advising of the gravity of the matter, the importance of attending a re-scheduled meeting, and failing that, the duty of the school authorities to make a decision to respond to the inappropriate behaviour.
4. At the meeting, parents and the student are informed that the Principal is considering expulsion.
5. Parents will be provided with records of the allegations against the student; the investigation; and written notice of the grounds on which the Principal is considering expulsion.
6. Parents are advised that they can make a written and oral submission.
7. Where the Principal, having considered all the facts of the case, is of the opinion that the student should be expelled, the Principal will notify the Educational Welfare Officer in writing of his/her opinion and the reasons for this opinion.
8. The student cannot be expelled before the passing of twenty school days from the date on which the EWO receives this written notification.
9. The Principal will inform the parents in writing about his/her conclusions and the next steps in the process. Where expulsion is proposed, the parents will be told that the Principal will now inform the Educational Welfare Officer and the CEO of CETB.
10. Within twenty days of receipt of notification from the Principal of his/her opinion that a student should be expelled, the EWO will make all reasonable efforts to hold individual consultations with the Principal, the parents and the student, and convene a meeting of those parties who agree to attend. The purpose of the consultations and the meeting is to ensure that arrangements are made for the student to continue in education. The Principal may consider it appropriate to suspend a student during this time, where there is the likelihood that the continued presence of the student during this time will seriously disrupt the learning of others, or represent a threat of safety of other students or staff.
11. Where the twenty day period following notification to the EWO has elapsed, and the Principal remains of the view that the student should be expelled, parents will be notified that the expulsion will now proceed.

12. Parents and the student will be told about the right to appeal. The appeal may be made in the first instance to the Board of Management of the college. Where an appeal to the Board of Management has concluded, a parent or student aged 18 years may appeal a decision to expel to the CETB and may then go on to appeal to the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Science.
13. The Board of Management meeting for the purpose of a hearing will be properly conducted in accordance with Board Procedures:
 - The Principal and the parents, or a student aged 18 years or over, put the case to the Board in each other's presences.
 - Each party will be allowed to question the evidence of the other party directly.
 - After both sides have been heard, the Board will ensure that the Principal and the parents and student are not present for the Board's deliberations.
 - The Board will inform the parents and the Principal in writing about its conclusions and the next steps in the process.

Review

The Codes of Behaviour and classroom behaviour are subject to regular review and updating, as necessary. The Board of Management welcomes views as to how these codes may be improved.

Reviewed April 2017

Parental Signature: _____

Students Signature: _____

School Management: _____

Date: _____