

Code of Behaviour

CODE OF POSITIVE BEHAVIOUR.

At St. Finian's Community College, we enforce a Positive Code of Behaviour to encourage co-operation, openness and respectful communication between students and staff. A Code of Behaviour is vital for the efficient operation of the school, to maintain good order and respect for each person in the school.

Our policy on behaviour also aims to foster self-discipline and interpersonal skills in our students so that they learn how to work co-operatively, develop respect and tolerance for others and resolve conflicts in a positive manner.

The Code of Behaviour also complements our Core Values: Respect, Responsibility, Honesty and Inclusion.

1. Introduction

At St. Finian's Community College, we are committed to maintaining a caring, learning inclusive community where each person is valued and accorded respect and dignity.

Our Aims are:

- * To provide an inclusive calm, friendly, disciplined and safe environment.
- * To provide a broad, diverse curriculum relevant to the needs of all our students.
- * To promote the development of the whole person and to afford the opportunity to develop his/her full potential.
- * To foster in each person a positive self-image and a sense of responsibility and personal integrity.
- * To promote respect for the rights and beliefs of others, and to encourage all to be tolerant, caring and responsible members of society.

2. Rationale

At St. Finian's we believe that this Positive Behaviour Policy should be framed in such a way as to encourage co-operation and independence.

An essential element of this is good open communication between the partners.

We believe that such an approach will be beneficial for students, teachers, parents/guardians and the Board of Management alike and that it will also encourage students to take a positive view of co-operation and interdependence into their adult life.

The Positive Behaviour Committee sought the opinions of teachers, parents/guardians and student representatives. This policy was formally ratified by the Board of Management in June 2006 and was reviewed and ratified in May 2010.

The objectives of this policy are:

- * To enable the efficient operation of the school in a manner which allows the school's overall mission statement to be realised.
- * To maintain good order throughout the school, respect for each person in the school and the school environment.

- * To foster self-discipline in students with the aim of developing positive behaviour patterns based on respect and tolerance of others.
- * To develop interpersonal skills which will help students to work cooperatively, give them the ability to solve problems, develop relationships and resolve conflict in a positive manner.

ROLE OF STUDENTS

Students should:

- Be on their best behaviour coming to and from school and on school trips & outings.
- Attend school each day in full school uniform.
- Be punctual for both school and classes.
- Should attend all timetabled classes.

ROLE OF PARENTS/GUARDIANS

Parents have an increasingly important role to play in the education process. The more a parent participates in the education of his/her child, the more likely that the child will succeed at school.

We ask all parents of children in the school to:

- Be aware of all policies/guidelines which are published by the school.
- Ensure that their children adhere to the school rules.
- Help their children to develop a good habit of attendance and punctuality.
- Check Journals to see that all homework – written and learning – is completed, and sign the journal at the end of each week.
- Ensure their children arrive to school each day in full uniform.
- Respond to any comments that are written by teachers on end of term reports
- Attend Parent-Teacher meetings.

If your child needs to leave school early for an appointment please inform the school in writing – space for this is provided at the back of the Journal

Students must always leave the school building by the main door and report their departure to the main office.

If you need to contact your child in school please do so by ringing the office number 8402623.

THE SCHOOL DAY

- Get up early. Give yourself plenty of time to prepare for the school day.
- Make sure to have your full uniform ready for wearing. If you bring a jacket with you to school it should be brought from class to class. Jackets must be plain black or navy – no logos.

If uniform is incomplete, a letter will be sent to parents from the Principal or parents may be asked to bring in the articles of uniform or student will be sent home for same.

- You should not wear the jacket in class or on the corridor. You must attend tutorial time in full uniform even if you have P.E. afterwards.
- Jewellery should be kept to a minimum. Girls and Boys are allowed to wear 1 pair of stud earrings. Large earrings, bolts etc., are not allowed. Face / body piercing is not allowed. Any note from a parent / guardian excusing a lack of uniform is only acceptable for a 24 hour period and must be dated.
- Hoodies are forbidden as part of the school uniform. If a student brings/wears a hoodie to school it will be confiscated.
- Do not bring valuable items such as MP3 players and I-Pods into school. The school cannot be held responsible for the disappearance of or damage to any such items.
- Have all homework done and books ready for the day. Make sure that both written and learning homework is done for the day ahead. Check your timetable for the day to ensure that no relevant books/copies are left at home or in your locker.
- Arrive on time. Tutorial time is at 8.50 a.m. Students should be in the school building before this time in the assembly area. Enter through the main door and be at your classroom before your tutor arrives.
- During tutorial time you may go to lockers to organise your books for the day. Students should only go to lockers during tutorial time, after lunch and at the end of the school day.
- If you arrive late for school you must use your swipe card to register and also present yourself to the secretary inside the main door. You must have a note to explain your reason for arriving late.

CLASSROOM CODE OF BEHAVIOUR

- Arrive to class on time and enter the classroom quietly with your teacher's permission.
- Put all class materials including your school journal neatly on the desk.
- Do nothing to distract others during class time.
- All homework should be written carefully in your homework journal.
- Ask for permission if you need to leave the classroom and only if absolutely necessary.
- Keep the classroom tidy.

- Please follow teachers instructions so that the process of teaching and learning is not disrupted.
- Refusal to co-operate with a teacher is a serious breach of discipline – see Stage 3.

Lunchtime :

- All Junior Cert Students must stay in school during lunchtime.
- Leave your area tidy after you have finished lunch.

Behaviour on Corridors between classes.

- Move quickly and carefully to your next class.
- Walk using the one- way system.
- If you have permission to go to the toilet you must have a note from a teacher in journal.

After school ends.

- Carry out teachers' instructions
- Make sure you leave the room tidy and clean.
- Smoking outside the school gates is forbidden.
- In the interests of health and safety students are asked not to congregate outside the school railings at any time.
- Parents should collect students at the gates of the P. E hall to avoid congestion at the main entrance.

CODE OF BEHAVIOUR DURING EXTRA-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES.

Representing the school in any extra-curricular activity, either as a participant or spectator should be seen as a privilege and an honour for the pupils involved.

Pupils must have a positive behaviour record within the school to be considered for such activities, including trips and tours.

Pupils involved must follow the instructions of the teacher(s) in charge at all times.

Participation in extra-curricular activities is always at the discretion of the school management.

APPLAUDING POSITIVE BEHAVIOUR :

At St. Finian's Community College positive student behaviour is applauded and encouraged. To this end we constantly seek out ways of recognising and rewarding good behaviour and effort. We are proud that the vast majority of our students complete their education here without ever needing to be sanctioned for misbehaviour. These students make an invaluable contribution to school life and we acknowledge and celebrate this every year at the awards night.

Students' improvements are noted and applauded throughout the year. Awards are regularly given for punctuality and attendance. Periodically during the year, class groups are rewarded for their positive contribution and at the end of the school year. Some class groups enjoy a fun day out with their class tutor. Continued effort is encouraged in all areas of the students' personal, social and educational development.

Motivational assemblies are held with each year group to recognise positive achievements and effort. Such assemblies also provide an opportunity to promote good practices, e.g. study skills, to the students. Students' successes both in school and outside school are made known to the student body and to parents through regular letters from the Principal.

Class teachers use the student journals and the daily class report sheet to record positive behaviour on a daily basis. The Principal and Deputy Principal regularly phone parents or write notes to acknowledge their children's successes.

St. Finian's Community College participates in the School Completion Programme (SCP) which seeks to make the experience of school more positive for young people and encourages them to complete their education and achieve to their full potential. SCP works in partnership with young people, teachers, parents and the other agencies that may be involved in a young person's life to offer positive supports and tackle the causes of educational disadvantage.

To assist the school in meeting the needs of young people, SCP offers the following services:

- Counselling for students to help them through difficult times
- Esteem-building activities offered in conjunction with local youth and sporting organisations
- Awards for attendance and punctuality
- Educational and fun trips and activities for students
- Supporting JSCP and LCA
- Breakfast Club and School Meals
- Individual Support Programmes
- Attendance Monitoring & tracking
- Personal Development modules
- Intercultural & Integration Programmes
- Supporting school musicals and the choir
- Care and support for all students

STAGES IN APPLYING SANCTIONS FOR UNACCEPTABLE BEHAVIOUR.

STAGE 1: CLASSROOM TEACHER

Sanctions can include:

- Warning.
- Extra work/punishment work.
- Break time or lunch or after school unofficial detention (less than 1 hour)
- Written reports from class teacher in journal.
- May not be allowed to go on a school trip.

STAGE 2: TUTOR / CLASS TEACHER

If a student interferes with teaching and learning in the classroom - 3 incidences in any one month- they go on “Report – Stage 2 ”[Green] for 5 consecutive days

STAGE 3: YEAR HEAD

Year head will communicate with parents or guardians

- Student go on “ Report – Stage 3” [Yellow] for 5 consecutive days.

STAGE 4 - PRINCIPAL or DEPUTY PRINCIPAL

- The Principal, and in his/her absence the Deputy Principal, has the final authority in dealing with matters of discipline in the day to day running of the school.
 - Student goes on “Report – Stage 4” [Red] for 5 consecutive days.
 - Principal/Deputy Principal will communicate with parents / guardians.
 - Student may be referred for counselling or mentoring
- At any stage the report may be reviewed.

STAGE 5: BOARD OF MANAGEMENT

Meeting of parents with Board of Management.

Further suspension(s)/Exclusion.

STAGES IN IMPLEMENTING THE CODE OF BEHAVIOUR.

Stage 1 : The classroom teacher.

- Teachers must be allowed to teach and deliver their subject according to Department of Education guidelines.
 - Students must be allowed to learn in a positive environment.
 - Students must have all the necessary equipment and materials in class .
 - Homework must be completed on time and to the best of the student’s ability.
- Some interventions to be made by the class teacher.**
- Discuss the matter with the student.
 - Reprimand/warn the student and advise the student on what aspect of their behaviour they need to improve on.
 - Put behaviour note in journal.

- Change the student's seating arrangement.
- Issue extra homework.
- Arrange unofficial detention during school time: either as part of lunch time or after school for less than one hour.

- Contact the parent/ guardian.

Stage 2 : Tutor / Class teacher

Tutor / class teacher collects BEHAVIOUR notes from journal.

After 3 negative behaviour comments from teachers, tutor puts student on "Report- Stage 2 " [Green] for 5 consecutive days.

Being "on Report" means that Report sheets are filled by each teacher for all classes for five consecutive days.

Stage 3: The Year Head

A : Year Head receives the "Report- Stage 2"[Green] with accompanying details

Reports may include details of incidences such as:

- Persistent misbehaviour that is interfering with learning and teaching in the classroom.
- Student not attending specific class(es)
- Persistently arriving late to class without a valid excuse.
- Leaving classroom without permission.

At this stage the student goes on " Report – Stage 3 " [Yellow] for 5 consecutive days.

OR B If the incident is serious the matter can be reported to the Year Head /

Deputy Principal directly.

Examples of Incidences to be reported to the Year Head/Deputy Principal directly:

- Student directing unacceptable language towards a teacher.
- Bullying of a student by another student.
- Racial or sexual harassment of any member of the school community.

Year Head sets up meeting with parents

Student may be referred to the support services, counsellors, guidance, home school liaison

Student put directly onto Report sheet – Stage 3 [Yellow] for 5 consecutive days.

Stage 4 : Principal/Deputy Principal

The Principal, and in his/her absence the Deputy Principal, has the final authority in dealing with matters of discipline in the day to day running of the school.

The Principal/Deputy Principal will deal with Serious Breaches of the Code of Positive Behaviour, referred by the Subject Teachers or Year Head.

Student is now put on "Report – Stage 4 "[Red] for 5 consecutive days.

Principal / Deputy Principal will communicate with Parents / Guardians

Student may be referred for counselling or mentoring

Serious Breaches of the Code of Discipline, including the disruption of teaching and learning ,for which report – stage 3 is inadequate, will normally result in a pupil being sent home or being suspended.

Abuse whether physical, verbal or psychological will be considered a serious offence.

Incendiary devices such as lighters or matches are strictly forbidden.

The Principal/Deputy Principal, may also authorise the Year Head to suspend a student for repeated Breaches of the Code of Positive Behaviour.

A principal may suspend a student for up to 3 days [or 5 days in consultation with the Chairperson of the Board of Management.]

The Principal/Deputy Principal has the right to refer matters to the Gardaí when the law has been broken.

Any student can be referred directly to stage 4 or stage 5 for serious breaches of the code of behaviour.

The students file may be referred to the Board of Management.

At any stage the report may be reviewed.

SUSPENSIONS

Students may be suspended because of breaches of the Code of Positive Behaviour, and in the case of serious breaches a Parent/Guardian may be invited to come to the school to meet with the Principal/Deputy Principal/Year Head.

By law smoking is prohibited in schools and school yard/grounds and may incur suspension.

A student suspended for breaches of the Code of Positive Behaviour may be required to give an undertaking in writing that such behaviour will not happen again.

"Contracts of behaviour" may be drawn up in consultation with Parents/ Guardians and students to encourage positive behaviour

Students may be referred to the Board of Management for breaches of the Code of Positive Behaviour, for any involvement that threatens the Health and Safety of themselves or others.

All suspensions may be appealed to the Board of Management.

STAGE 5 : BOARD OF MANAGEMENT, V.E.C., DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION & SCIENCE.

The Co. Dublin V.E.C. "Policy on Discipline" document, based on the Department of Education's "Guidelines towards a Positive Policy for School Behaviour and Disciplines" (C/L M 33/91), set out a "Policy Statement" and "Discipline Procedure". This document has now been superseded by the Education Act, 1998.

In the interim between communication to and the meeting of the committee, the student may be given schedules of work/study to minimise any disruption of studies pending the decision of the committee”

“In dealing with serious cases of indiscipline principals/staff are expected to make every effort to consult all professional services available.”

The N.E.W.B guidelines for developing a Code of Positive Behaviour (2008) govern the schools on suspension and exclusion.

These guidelines are available for inspection in the school.

EDUCATION ACT. 1998

Section 29 of the Education Act 1998, gives parents (and students who have reached the age of 18) the right to appeal a decision made by a Board of Management to: permanently exclude/expel a student from the school for a period which would bring the cumulative period of suspension to 20 school days in any one school year.

Information on procedures for making an appeal are set down in the document “Procedures for Hearing and Determining Appeals under Section 29 of the Education Act, 1998” and the leaflet “Making an Appeal to the Department of Education and Science.”

The following are key points from these documents:

- All appeals made under Section 29 of the education act will be processed and administered by the appeals Administration Unit of the Department of Education and Science.
- In the case of a V.E.C. school the appeal against the decision of the Board of Management should be made in the first instance to the V.E.C. An appeal must be made within 42 calendar days of the parent/student being notified of the Board of Management’s decision. This period may, be extended, in exceptional circumstances only. Where an appeal has been heard by the V.E.C. a student may make a further appeal to the Department of Education and Science.
- The Appeals Administration unit will refer the case to an Appeals Committee who will decide whether it will be referred for facilitation, or whether a hearing will be held. When facilitation is not considered possible or where it doesn’t resolve the problem, the Appeals Committee will hold a hearing and on the basis of the hearing will decide the appeal.

SOME EXAMPLES OF SERIOUS INCIDENTS

Physical aggression including fighting (all parties involved in fighting will be suspended).

Congregating / arranging for a large group to congregate at the school gate after school.

Possession of illegal substances for private use or supply to others.

Smoking on school premises including at the school gate.

Verbal abuse of staff/ use of improper language in class or in the presence of a staff member.

Bullying of another student or a staff member.

Leaving school grounds without permission or failing to provide a note of absence from parent(s).

Causing a disturbance on corridors during class time.

Failure to attend detention.

Disruption of classes or exams.

Unauthorised use of fire doors or interfering with any Health and Safety equipment.

Leaving class without permission or not attending classes according to the class timetable. Failure to attend for class without a valid reason.

Causing damage to or defacing of school property.

Persistent failure to wear school uniform.

Causing damage to another student's property or stealing another student's property.

Refusing to hand over a personal electronic device/ non-uniform jacket or hoodie when requested to do so by a teacher.

The above list is not exhaustive nor are the sanctions meant to be prescriptive. The Principal and Deputy Principal will make the final decision on the seriousness of an incident, and the context in which an incident occurs will determine the degree of seriousness and thus the appropriate sanction.