



**Desmond College,  
Newcastlewest, Co. Limerick**

**Code of Behaviour**

## **Introduction**

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

### **Aims of the Code**

- To promote good behaviour and respect for all members of the school community. All members of the school community have the right to be treated with respect and to work in a calm, safe, well-disciplined environment.
- To promote standards of behaviour which reflect the standards and expectations of adult life such as respect, consideration, cooperation, application, punctuality and adaptability.
- To encourage students to take responsibility for their own behaviour and to understand the implications of their behaviour for themselves and others.

### **Scope of the Code**

This Code of Behaviour applies to all students during the school day, while on the school grounds and while on school-related activities outside of school.

### **Principles of Managing Behaviour**

- To protect the basic rights of safety, learning and respect
- To create a climate where teaching and learning can flourish
- To promote positive behaviour
- To set the boundaries in which students can achieve and feel successful
- To encourage students to behave in a socially appropriate manner
- To provide a transparent framework for the fair, consistent and equal treatment of all students

### *The School's Plan for Promoting Positive Behaviour*

The key features of a positive approach are:

- To acknowledge improvement in behaviour
- To place an emphasis on positive rather than negative statements
- Regular and sustained use of praise and rewards
- Teaching students the social skills they need to be successful
- Redirecting students towards success rather than highlighting their mistakes

### *Principles of Fair Procedures and Natural Justice applying to Suspension and Expulsion*

- Schools are required by law to follow fair procedures in respect of proposals to suspend or expel a student. Any failure on the part of the school Board of Management to ensure that these procedures are observed would breach the school's legal obligations.
- Any investigation should be free of bias. A Principal/Deputy, Class Tutor, Year Head, Subject Teacher, or other staff member involved in the behaviour matter in the first instance, should not be involved in conducting the investigation of the alleged misbehaviour or making a decision to impose a sanction.
- The **absence of bias in the decision maker** would mean for example:
  - The right of reply and to appeal are central to fair decision making.
  - Both the parent/guardian and the student should be facilitated in presenting their views on the allegations made.
  - The Board should take steps to ensure that the procedures and the proceedings are understood by the parent/guardian.
  - It is also preferable that, if at all possible, in terms of the principle of **impartiality in decision making**, different people or groups carry out the task of investigating misbehaviour and that of deciding whether a serious sanction is warranted

## Core Expectations

The school's expectations provide the following framework for reasonable and responsible behaviour.

### ***1. I will come to school every day for the full day and arrive on time***

This means

- That you attend every day unless it is absolutely unavoidable.
- That you arrive before 8.45 a.m., and are punctual for all classes.
- That lateness is explained by a note in the journal from parents or guardians.
- That, in accordance with the Education (Welfare) Act 2000, absences must be explained by completing the note for explanation of school absence provided in the back of the School Journal, dated and signed by parents/guardians. This note must be presented on the day you return to school.

Because

- Time missed is hard to make up.
- Punctuality displays courtesy to your teachers and fellow students and is a life-skill for adulthood and the world of work.
- Good attendance and good timekeeping helps everyone to do well.
- The school must be given a written explanation for absence by the parents/guardians as per Section 18 of the Education Welfare Act 2000.
- The school is responsible for you during school time.

### ***2. I will come to school in full uniform, clean and tidy (School Uniform: Appendix 1)***

This means

- That you wear the school shirt tucked in and the school tie properly tied and visible above the 'V' of the school jumper.
- That you do not wear jewellery except for discrete stud earrings.
- That you do not display visible piercings or visible tattoos.
- That you do not wear non-uniform tops, scarves and accessories.

Because

- The school uniform is agreed to by parents/guardians, students and the school authorities.
- The school uniform ensures all students present in the same way – regardless of their family's income
- We all have a responsibility to maintain the image of the school.
- We must all contribute to and maintain high standards of Health and Safety in the school.

***3. I will come in properly prepared for all my subjects, with all class materials and on time for my classes.***

This means

- That you go to your locker at official break times only.
- That you have correct books, completed homework, pens, copies and exercises.
- That you bring any special equipment needed e.g. school PE gear, drawing equipment etc.
- That you respect your school journal and use it appropriately.

Because

- You waste class time if you are not properly prepared for class.
- You cannot participate fully without the appropriate books, materials and equipment
- The journal is a means of communication between school and home.

***4. I will co-operate and participate in the classroom and have a positive attitude to classwork, homework and all extra-curricular activities***

This means

- That you listen to your teachers.
- That you do not disturb the class.
- That you always carry your journal and note your homework for each subject.
- That you do your homework each night and hand in assignments on time.
- That you do not eat or drink in class. (*except in exceptional circumstances*)

Because

- The teacher has a right to teach.
- The other students have a right to learn.
- Your journal helps you to organise your homework so that you will succeed in school.
- Homework builds on the work done in class.

***5. I will have respect and consideration for other students, teachers, staff members, visitors and local residents***

This means

- That you are fair and honest with everyone.
- That you help other students if they need support e.g. younger students finding a classroom.
- That you do not pick on, victimise or bully others and that you report any incidents of bullying to the Year Head. [*Bullying is repeated aggression, verbal, psychological or physical, conducted by an individual or group against others. Victimisation is the singling out of a person for cruel or unjust treatment.*]
- That you do not make offensive remarks.
- That you do not fight or threaten to fight in or out of school.
- That you respect the property of others and that of the school.

Because

- Mutual respect and support helps to make a positive school experience for everyone.
- You would like to be shown respect and consideration by others.
- Bullying and victimisation can cause fear, hurt and misery. We want our school to be a safe space.
- Aggressive behaviour could cause serious injury or accidents.
- Damaging school property is destructive and shows a lack of respect for the school community of which you are a member.

***6. I will show respect for others in the way I speak, in the language I use and in the way that I behave.***

This means

- That you cooperate fully and willingly in the classroom.
- That you are not aggressive in behaviour or language.
- That you carry out instructions in a co-operative manner.
- That you show courtesy, consideration and good manners in your behaviour and language.

Because

- Mutual respect and support helps to make a positive school experience for everyone.

- Positive behaviour contributes to a positive school experience for everyone.
- Aggressive behaviour or language has no place, and will not be tolerated, in our school community.

### ***7. I will respect the school environment, school property and equipment***

This means

- That you contribute to keeping the school clean and free of litter.
- That you place litter in appropriate bins.
- That you do not chew gum while in school.–
- That lunch is eaten in designated locations only and that you ensure this area is tidy after you have used it.
- That you do not return to the school grounds outside of school hours without the school's explicit permission.

Because

- Everyone benefits from working in a safe, pleasant and clean environment.
- We are all responsible for maintaining a clean school.
- Chewing gum is difficult and costly to remove.
- The school is private property.

### ***8. I will keep my phone switched off at all times during school hours (Appendix 2)***

This means

- That you keep your mobile phone switched off and out of sight, except at permitted times.
- That you do not use digital / electronic media in school (e.g., iPods, MP3 players), except those permitted by your teacher e.g. ipad.

Because

- Teachers are entitled to teach without interruptions.
- The Office phone is available if you need to make an essential call or if your parents/guardians need to contact you during school hours.
- Students who contact home via mobile do so without office knowledge and this may become a health and safety risk.
- It is important that students are in a safe environment free from distraction, bullying (*through texting*).

- The use of digital video/photos and other recording devices can lead to an invasion of privacy.
- Use of electronic devices can increase peer pressure to have the latest model.

***9. I understand that the use of addictive/intoxicating substances is not allowed.***

This means

- That you do not use, distribute or sell cigarettes, ecigarettes, alcohol, stimulating or illegal drinks/substances/solvents at any time on school campus or during school related activities.

Because

- The use and sale of addictive substances is illegal and poses a serious Health and Safety concern.
- It is illegal to smoke in all public places under the Public Health (Tobacco Acts).
- The school is responsible for the protection and safety of all the school community.

*Note:*

*If anyone is found using, or in possession of illegal substances, parents/guardians will be contacted immediately and the Gardaí will be notified.*

***10. I will not bring into the school or have on my person objects likely to cause injury or harm***

This means

- That you do not bring, or facilitate the bringing into the school campus, or on any school related activity, any object likely to cause injury such as knives, syringes, fireworks, bangers, stink bombs etc.

This also includes jewellery likely to pose a threat to safety.

Because

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

## **Rewards**

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

- Signal/sign e.g. thumbs up
- Smile/nod of approval
- Verbal praise - one to one
- Explain why a compliment is given- "Good, you have waited your turn to speak"
- Acknowledge/praise outside the classroom
- Class competition
- Positive comments on written work
- The use of merit stickers
- Watching a video
- Prizes
- Written praise to Tutor/Year Head/parent/guardian
- Record in homework journal
- Display of students work throughout school
- Award of a commendation e.g. improved result
- Public recognition at class/school assemblies when it is more than one student
- Referral of praise to Principal/Deputy Principal
- Use of school newsletters/ Yearbook to give congratulations
- Certificates for attendance, punctuality and other areas of effort and achievement
- Acknowledgement at Award Ceremony.

## Consequences (Sanctions)

Good practice in the use of sanctions ensures that:

- Students and parents/guardians know and understand that there are consequences for unacceptable behaviour and that students must take responsibility for their own behaviour.
- They are a part of a plan to change behaviour i.e. they are transformative responses
- They are used consistently, proportionately and appropriately.

Thresholds for unacceptable behaviour are:

- Rights being disrespected
- Somebody threatening to harm or actually harming another person, including bullying, harassment, discrimination and victimisation  
*(Refer to the Bullying and Harassment Policy)*
- Property threatened, damaged or stolen
- Inability to take responsibility for behaviour/actions
- Use and/or distribution of illegal substances  
*(Refer to the Substance Misuse Policy)*

***The approach to student's inappropriate behaviour is a problem-resolving restorative approach, where the teacher and school respond. The following actions are included in the spectrum of the school's behavioural management strategy.***

- Students will be reminded of the class/school rule.
- Students may be directed to work elsewhere in the room.
- Teachers may record a note in the Journal to be signed by parent and Tutor/Year Head.
- Three notes in Journal will mean that a student is referred to Care Team.
- Students may be directed to take cool-off time or five minutes to sit quietly and calm down in a quiet area of the room.
- Students may be asked to stay back and work out a solution with their teacher, or fix things up or put things right.
- Teachers may send another student to the office for management support or help of another teacher.
- Students may be referred to their Class Tutor or Year Head.
- A Report may be written and given to Year Head to be brought to Care Team.
- Parents/guardians may be notified.
- Students may be referred to the Care Team or Student Support Team or Counsellor.
- Detention may be recommended by Care Team where restorative questions are to be answered by the student who reflects on their actions.
- A student Behaviour Plan may be drawn up.
- Restorative practice and peer mediation may be used.
- School community tasks or detention may be undertaken.
- Students may be placed on a Report Card (yellow or red)

- If the behaviour escalates further or is of a particularly serious nature it may require Board of Management involvement giving rise to possible suspension and/or expulsion. *This list is not exhaustive; consequences may be reviewed depending on circumstances and context.*

## **Suspension**

### ***Policies and Procedures for Suspension***

Suspension is defined as:

*Requiring the student to absent himself/herself from the school for a specified, limited period of school days*

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

- The student and their parents/guardians will be informed about the complaint.
- The student and their parents/guardians will be given an opportunity to respond.
- The student and their parents/guardians have the right to be heard.
- The student and their parents/guardians have the right to impartiality.

In the school, fair procedures apply to:

- The investigation of alleged misbehaviour that may lead to suspension or expulsion.
- The process of decision-making as to (a) whether the student did engage in the misbehaviour and (b) what sanction to impose.

### ***Schools or Colleges established or maintained by a ETB***

The ETB holds the authority to suspend a student. LCETB has devolved this authority under Section 31 of the *Vocational Education (Amendment) Act 2001* to the Board of Management of a school. (The education officer or designated person should be informed by the school of the intention to suspend to ensure that legal requirements are being adhered to.)

The Board of Management has the authority to suspend a student. Where this authority is delegated to the Principal, the delegation should be done formally and in writing. The Principal has authority to suspend for up to 5 days. Further days may be requested by the Principal to the Board if deemed necessary.

**Suspension will be a proportionate response to the behaviour that is causing concern.**

In considering whether to suspend a student the Board of Management will be presented with a report prepared by the Principal following a thorough investigation where the views of all parties will be elicited containing the following:

- The nature and seriousness of the behaviour
- The context of the behaviour
- The impact of the behaviour
- The interventions tried to date
- Whether suspension is an appropriate response
- The possible impact of suspension

Parents/guardians will be notified by phone and in writing (of the decision to suspend). The letter will contain the following:

- The period of the suspension and the dates on which the suspension will begin and end
- The reason for the suspension

Students should not be suspended for more than three days, except in exceptional circumstances where the Principal considers that a period of suspension longer than three days is needed in order to achieve a particular objective, to a maximum of 5 days. If a longer suspension is being proposed by the Principal, the matter will be referred to the Board of Management for consideration and approval.

However, the Board of Management can authorise the Principal with the approval of the chairperson of the Board, to impose a suspension of up to five days.

**Immediate Suspension**

Where an immediate suspension is considered by the Principal to be warranted for reasons of the safety of the student, other students, staff and others, a preliminary investigation should be conducted to establish the case for the imposition of the suspension. The formal investigation should immediately follow up the imposition of the suspension. No suspension, including an immediate suspension, should be open-ended.

**Appeals**

The Board of Management should offer an opportunity to appeal a Principal's decision to suspend a student.

In the case of decisions to suspend made by the Board of Management an appeal can be made to the CEO/EO under Section 29 of the Education Act 1998 to LCETB where the number of days of suspension reaches twenty days in an academic year.

### **Section 29 Appeal**

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

At the time when parent/guardians are being formally notified of such a suspension, they and the student should be told about the right to appeal. The appeal must be made in the first instance to the education officer of LCETB or designated officer. Where an appeal to the ETB is concluded, parent/guardians, or a student aged over eighteen years, may appeal to the secretary general of the Department of Education and Skills.

### **Clean Slate**

When any sanction, including suspension, is completed, a student should be given the opportunity and support for a fresh start. Although a record is kept of the behaviour and any sanction imposed, once the sanction has been completed, the school should expect the same behaviour of this student as of all other students.

On return to school following a suspension, a student will be placed on a Report Card and an individual behaviour plan drawn up using restorative methods.

## **Expulsion**

### **Policies and Procedures for Expulsion**

A student is expelled from a school when a Board of Management makes a decision to permanently exclude him or her from the school, having complied with Section 24 of the Education (*Welfare*) Act 2000.

A 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 grounds for expulsion may be similar to the grounds for suspension. In addition to factors such as the degree of seriousness and the persistence of the behaviour, a key difference is that, where expulsion is considered, school authorities have applied interventions according to the Code of Behaviour, and believe they have exhausted all possibilities for changing the student's behaviour.

The procedural steps leading to consideration of expulsion are:

- 1) A detailed investigation carried out under the direction of the Principal
- 2) A recommendation to the Board of Management by the Principal
- 3) Consideration by the Board of Management of the Principal's recommendations and the holding of a hearing
- 4) Parents/guardians are invited to attend with a minimum of seven calendar days and fair and reasonable time to prepare for the hearing
- 5) Board of Management deliberations and actions following the hearing
- 6) Consultations arranged by the Education Welfare Officer
- 7) Confirmation of the decision to expel

### **Appeals**

A parent, or a student aged over eighteen years, may appeal a decision to expel to the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Skills (*Education Act 1998* section 29). An appeal may also be brought by the National Educational Welfare Board/TUSLA on behalf of a student.

If the student is attending a school established or maintained by an ETB, the appeal must be made in the first instance to the ETB. Where an appeal to the ETB has been concluded, parents, or a student aged over eighteen years, may go on to appeal to the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Skills.

## **School Uniform**

School Jumper with Crest  
Grey Trousers or School Skirt  
White School Shirt  
School Tie  
Black socks  
Black **leather** shoes, not runners  
School Hoodie  
School Jacket  
School Halfzip

### **PE Uniform**

**White crested** polo shirt and navy tracksuit bottoms  
Runners with **non marking** soles

The school cannot accept responsibility for the loss or damage of students' property and accordingly **parents/guardians are advised to put the student's name on all items of school uniform and property** as this makes it much easier to locate mislaid items.

Lockers are available to students and they must be locked at all times.

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| <p><b>Students are expected to be in full school uniform at all times including the period of the State Examinations.</b></p> |
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### **Please note:**

- ◆ High heeled shoes, platform shoes or shoes with steel toe caps are not permitted. **Multicoloured** deck shoes are not acceptable as uniform.
- ◆ **To comply with Health and Safety regulations** the wearing of jewellery is limited to a watch and one pair of discrete stud earrings. This means that **no other item of jewellery** may be worn. ( Facial Jewellery is not permitted)
- ◆ Clothing must be clean and tidy.
- ◆ Hair should be neatly groomed. Extreme hairstyles and hair colour are forbidden. School Management decides what is deemed appropriate and acceptable.

This Policy was reviewed by the Board of Management on 13/12/17.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Micheal Cregan  
Chairperson

Date: 13/12/2017