

BALLINROBE COMMUNITY SCHOOL
CODE OF DISCIPLINE AND BEHAVIOUR

INTRODUCTION

This Code of Behaviour has been developed through ongoing discussion and debate with all the partners in education, namely, the Board of Management, Staff, Parents and Pupils. The core of the code of discipline has been in place in the school for a number of years but this has been modified to suit changing circumstances. The present revision was carried out to take into account the Guidelines for Developing a Code of Behaviour issued by the NEWB.

MISSION STATEMENT

“Ballinrobe Community School is a focal point in the community for learning and teaching of young people irrespective of abilities, background or gender.

Through its policies and activities, it aims at providing a tolerant and caring environment in which young people and adults can enjoy, exercise and fully develop their knowledge, talents and interests in the context of their responsibilities to themselves, to others, to the school and to society.

Our school is a faith community. It presents values that are actively lived and communicated through the interpersonal and sincere relationships of its members.

The school continually re-examines its goals and objectives and responds in a creative way to the demands of a changing age.”

Our Code of Behaviour and Discipline is firmly rooted in mutual respect, justice, the common good and concern for health and safety.

Acceptance and application of this approach by pupils, parents and teachers creates the ideal environment for the imparting of knowledge, a growth in self-confidence and respect for one another.

The behaviour of the adults in a child’s life, including parents and teachers, is a significant influence on how a child acts.

PARENTS – ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The support of parents is vital for the emotional and academic welfare of each student. Parents are encouraged to help their children by:

* Ensuring that they attend school regularly, in full school uniform, punctually and with all necessary books/equipment.

- * Encouraging their children to strive for excellence.
- * Providing them with a quiet place and the opportunity to study.
- * Taking an interest in their daily school life.
- * Supporting the authority and discipline of the school, thereby helping their children to achieve maturity, self-discipline and self-control.
- * Discouraging them from engaging in outside jobs during the school term since this has such a detrimental effect on the academic progress of all students.
- * Ensuring that they are aware of:
 - a. the amount of time their children are spending on social media and that this time is not infringing on their educational and/or on other leisure activities
 - b. the material being accessed is content and age appropriate.
- * Keeping in regular contact with the school; contacting the school immediately if anxieties arise in relation to any aspect of a child's life in school.
- * Informing the school about any incidents of bullying
- * Attending scheduled meetings.
- * Explaining absences by a note, which should be done through the school App, or by a phone call.

NOTIFICATION OF ABSENCE FROM SCHOOL

Student absences from school must be explained by a signed note or a notice on the school App from Parent/Guardian. Parents are requested to inform the Principal if a student is going to be absent for a prolonged period. Parents/Guardians will be notified daily by text of a student's absence from school. Under the Education Welfare Act 2002 non-attendance at school may lead to prosecution. Parents/Guardians will be notified if a student's attendance is causing concern. All parents will receive an Attendance Report with the Christmas and Summer Reports. Excessive student absences will be notified to the Tusla, The Child and Family Agency.

STUDENT CODE OF BEHAVIOUR AND REGULATIONS

- * Students should show respect for each other and for all members of staff. All visitors to the school ought to be treated with the greatest courtesy.

- * Students must be on time for school and all classes during the day.
- * Students must complete all homework to the satisfaction of the teachers.
- * Students must not disrupt or interfere with the learning process for themselves or for others at any time.
- * Rough or boisterous play or offensive language at any point during the school day, in any part of the school and/grounds or while representing the school is strictly forbidden.
- * Students must sit for regular assessments and school examinations. Absence from such must be adequately explained and the student will be required to sit the examination on their return to school.
- * School property must be treated with respect at all times. Any accidental damage by pupils to school property should be reported to any member of staff. In the case of accidental damage, students are expected to defray the costs. Those guilty of wilful damage will have sanctions imposed, and the property will have to be repaired/replaced by parents/guardians of the offending student(s).
- * Smoking, consumption of alcohol and the possession or use of illegal drugs are absolutely prohibited inside the school, in the vicinity of the school and on school outings.
- * Students must carry to class and use the official school journal, which can be used to monitor their behaviour, it is subject to inspection by all staff members. Parents must check their child's journal to monitor their progress and ensure it is never defaced; parents should sign the journal every week. Replacement cost of lost/defaced journal is €10.
- * Eating or chewing of gum is forbidden during class times.
- * All students must have a locker in school for the protection of their property. These lockers must be locked at all times.
- * Lockers are liable to inspection at any time.
- * Students must have all their books, sports gear etc... when necessary and be responsible for the safety of their property.
- * Students must move quietly and briskly from class to class and pay attention in every class.

* Students must be in full School Uniform to attend class; students not in uniform must get a uniform pass. The Principal has the discretion to refuse to allow a student attend class if the non-uniform garments are considered inappropriate.

* Students are encouraged to keep school complex and surroundings clean and litter free.

* Students must not leave the school during the school day without permission of the Year Head, Deputy Principal or Principal. Students must be signed out in the Office or Library. Parents/guardians are required to attend at the school to sign out a student if they are leaving for the rest of the school day.

Failing to do this is considered to be “mitching” and the sanction may be Saturday detention/suspension or penalty points. The school must know at all times which students are present.

* Students must avoid areas of the grounds that are out of bounds and where students are not visible to supervising teachers.

* Students are not permitted to have a phone with them during the school day, phones must be locked in the student’s locker. *(this applies to school outings also, in exceptional circumstances the organising teacher may, following a consultation with the Principal allow students access to their phones on an outing or a tour).*

If a student has a phone in their possession i.e. on their person or in their school bag, it will be confiscated and locked in the safe in the office. Active phones can be searched by the Principal and/or Deputy Principal in the presence of a parent/guardian to ensure no unauthorised use of the phones has taken place. (See separate policy on phones/electronics)

* The standards and rules contained in this Code of Behaviour apply where the student, although outside school, is still the responsibility of the school.

* Students must not engage in activities which will bring the school into disrepute at any time.

* Observe other rules as may be made from time to time.

It is to be understood that not every possible school requirement is listed above. The normal standards of decent behaviour are always expected.

STAFF – ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Adults have more responsibility than students in fostering good relationships of trust between students and teachers. An understanding of the factors that influence behaviour is fundamental to implementing the Code of Behaviour.

Knowledge about what shapes the behaviour of children and young people, as individuals and as groups, enables teachers and other school staff to:

- * plan and implement a team approach to helping students to behave well.
- * develop ways of responding to unacceptable behaviour that are more likely to work and avoid responding in ways that may worsen it.
- * avoid an individualised or personal stance about the behaviour of students.

Learning, relationships and behaviour are inextricably linked. Effective teaching and learning are closely linked to good behaviour. Positive acknowledgement is a very effective way of influencing and promoting good learning behaviour.

Ballinrobe Community School acknowledges the contribution of ancillary staff (administrative, special needs assistants, caretaking, cleaning staff and canteen/shop staff) in the day to day running of the school. They all have a part to play in the successful operation of our Code of Behaviour. In particular they have a responsibility to report incidents of misbehaviour and examples of positive behaviour which they witness.

SANCTIONS

The choice of sanctions in relation to breaches of discipline is at the discretion of the school and the following steps may be taken in relation to breaches of discipline:

- Teacher discusses the issue with the student, appealing to pupil's sense of responsibility
- Reprimand
- Penalty Sheets
- Detention for part of lunch break
- Referral to Year Head
- Imposition of Penalty Points
- Weekly Report

- Removal of privileges (following a warning)
- Removal from class
- Suspension from class
- In-school suspension
- Saturday Detention
- Suspension from school
- Exclusion from school

Infringement of the Code of Discipline and Behaviour leads to the imposition of PENALTY POINTS, graded according to the seriousness of the infringement. Twelve penalty points result in Saturday Detention which will be from 10.30 am – 1.00 pm. Students and Parents will be notified of Saturday Detention. The school uniform must be worn to Detention.

Failure to do Saturday Detention (except in exceptional circumstances and with the prior agreement of the Principal/Deputy Principal) will result in a two-day suspension on the Thursday and Friday preceding the next detention, which the student must attend. Failure to do detention for a second time will result in the student excluding themselves from the school until such time as the detention is completed.

A student, having reached Thirty Six penalty points, will be suspended for two days and will also be placed on the list for the next Saturday detention. Further accumulation of penalty points, (Twelve) may result in longer suspensions together with Saturday detentions.

In acknowledging the importance of encouraging positive behaviour, a system of BONUS POINTS will operate where students, receiving commendations for various reasons, will be rewarded with Bonus Points at the discretion of their Year Head. These Bonus Points can be applied to reduce Penalty Points.

SUSPENSION

The Board of Management has delegated the authority to suspend a student from school to the Principal. In exceptional cases a suspension of up to 5 days can be imposed. The Principal will report all suspensions to the Board of Management.

Grounds for Suspension

- * the student's behaviour is having a seriously detrimental effect on the education of other students.
- * the student's continued presence in the school at this time constitutes a threat to the safety or the wellbeing of another student or member of staff.
- * the student is responsible for serious damage to property.

Suspension will normally take place only when other interventions have failed to bring about the required improvement in behaviour.

Factors to be considered before suspending a student:

1. The nature and seriousness of the behaviour.
2. The context of the behaviour.
3. The impact of the behaviour.
4. The interventions tried to date.
5. Whether suspension is a proportionate response.
6. The possible impact of suspension.

Immediate suspension: In exceptional circumstances immediate suspension may be considered necessary where the continued presence of the student in the school could represent a serious threat to the safety of students or staff or any other person. A physical assault or actual violence may result in immediate Suspension.

Suspension during a State Examination:

The Principal, delegated by the Board of Management may suspend a student from a State Examination if the student is a threat to

- * good order in the conduct of the examination.
- * the safety of other students and personnel.
- * the right of other students to do their examination in a calm atmosphere.

Automatic suspension may be imposed for the following misbehaviours:

- * Behaviour that would breach health and safety rules and regulations, e.g. Climbing up on the roof
- * Verbal or Physical Assault on any member of staff or another student
- * Online abuse of students or staff
- * Any action which brings the school into disrepute
- * Leaving the school without permission
- * Activating the fire alarm as a prank will incur an immediate suspension of up to five days. In addition the matter will be referred to the next Board of Management meeting where all sanctions including expulsion will be considered
- * Interfering with fire extinguishers or fire hoses
- * Substance Abuse
- * Being part of an illegal activity in or around the school

The process of Suspension is governed by fair procedures:

- * the right to be heard
- * the right to impartiality.

These fair procedures apply to:

- * the investigation of the alleged behaviour
- * the process of decision making as to
 - (a) whether the student did engage in misbehaviour and
 - (b) what sanction to impose.

When suspension is being imposed, Parents/Guardians will be informed in writing:

- * Of the reason for the suspension
- * Of the duration of the suspension

* That the pupil will be regarded as being in the care of parents/guardians from the end of the school day on which the pupil is suspended.

* That the parents have the right to appeal.

* An appeal will automatically put the suspension on hold until the Board of Management considers the matter and makes a decision, unless the Principal decides that an immediate suspension is warranted.

* If a parent wishes to have an opportunity to discuss the suspension with School Management before it is imposed, the suspension will be put on hold until after the discussion has taken place, providing it takes place within a reasonable time scale. This will not apply where the Principal believes an immediate Suspension is warranted.

* If a student accumulates 20 days or more of suspensions, parents have a right to appeal to the Department of Education & Skills under Section 29 of the Education Act 1998, and will be given information about how to appeal.

EXPLUSION

The Board of Management alone has the authority to expel a student. Expulsion of a student is a very serious step and one that will be taken by the Board of Management only in extreme cases of unacceptable behaviour. It will only be taken when all other means of dealing with very unacceptable behaviour have been tried and have failed to bring about the required improvement.

Schools are required by Law to follow fair procedures when proposing to expel a student.

Expulsion will be considered when:

* 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 publishing or sharing material about another student or member of staff online which is considered to be seriously offensive or defamatory. (See Policy on Phones, electronic equipment and Acceptable use Policy)

* The student is responsible for serious damage to property.

* School authorities have tried a series of other interventions and believe they have exhausted all possibilities for changing the student's behaviour.

Expulsion for a first offence may be imposed by the Board of Management for:

- * A serious threat of violence against another student or member of staff.
- * Actual violence or physical assault.
- * Sexual assault.
- * Supplying/attempting to supply illegal drugs to other students in the school.

The Board of Management will consider the following factors before proposing to expel a student:

1. The nature and seriousness of the behaviour.
2. The context of the behaviour.
3. The impact of the behaviour.
4. The interventions tried to date.
5. Whether expulsion is a proportionate response.
6. The possible impact of expulsion.

Fair procedures in proposing an expulsion include

- * The right to be heard
- * The right to impartiality

These fair procedures apply to:

- * The investigation of the alleged behaviour
- * The process of decision making as to
 - (a) whether the student did engage in misbehaviour and
 - (b) what sanction to impose.

Where a preliminary assessment of the facts confirms serious misbehaviour that could warrant expulsion the procedural steps will include:

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 recommendation; and the holding of a hearing.
4. Board of Management deliberations and actions following the hearing.
5. Consultations arranged by Educational Welfare Officer.
6. Confirmation of the decision to expel.
7. Parents and student notified that expulsion will now proceed. They will be informed of their right to appeal and supplied with the standard form on which to lodge an appeal.

The Board of Management will decide which tasks involved in these procedural steps requires separate meetings and which tasks can be accomplished together in a single meeting, consistent with giving parents due notice of meetings and a fair and reasonable time to prepare for a Board of Management hearing.

UNIFORM CODE

Full school uniform to be worn by students at all times.

No other option is acceptable and students not in school uniform may be sent to the library and not allowed into class.

A student in partial uniform may be given a uniform pass by the Principal or Deputy Principal and allowed to class for that day. A note is necessary explaining why the full uniform is not worn. A penalty point will accrue if no note is given.

Any student not in full school uniform will not be allowed to represent the school at an event.

Boys Junior:

* Maroon & Grey V-Neck Jumper with Crest

* Grey School Pants

* Grey School Shirt/Grey T-Shirt

Boys Senior:

* Black & Grey V-Neck Jumper with Crest

* Grey School Pants

* Grey School Shirt/Grey T-Shirt

Girls Junior:

* Maroon & Grey V-Neck Jumper with Crest

* Grey School Skirt (Grey School Pants Optional, Jogging/Leisure Pants are not allowed)

* Grey School Blouse/Grey T- Shirt

Girls Senior:

* Black & Grey V-Neck Jumper with Crest

* Grey School Skirt (Grey School Pants Optional, Jogging/Leisure Pants are not allowed)

* Grey School Blouse /Grey T-Shirt

*A black jacket with the school crest is compulsory for all students.

This jacket can be purchased from the uniform suppliers.

P.E. Gear:

1st, 2nd and 3rd Years - PE kit consists of blue school PE sweatshirt, plain polo shirt/T-shirt, tracksuit pants, shorts or leggings and sports trainers. (as a good hygiene practice these should not be the same shoes worn to class).

TY/5th/6th Years - Sweatshirt/Hoodie, polo-shirt/T-shirt/jersey, tracksuit pants, shorts or leggings and sports trainers. (as a good hygiene practice these should not be the same shoes worn to class).

Students without appropriate kit will be given penalty points.

The school reserves the sole right to specify what jewellery and accessories are worn by students.

HOMEWORK POLICY

Homework, when given by the teacher, must be done at the requested time by the student. Failure to do homework will be recorded on the teacher's daily diary and on the school Computerised Administration System. This can result in students getting penalty points.

ANTI-BULLYING CODE

In accordance with the requirements of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000 and the code of behaviour guidelines issued by the NEWB, the Board of Management of BALLINROBE COMMUNITY SCHOOL has adopted the anti-bullying policy within the framework of the school's overall code of behaviour. This policy fully complies with the requirements of the Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools which were published in September 2013.

- * Every teacher has the right to teach and every pupil in Ballinrobe Community School has the right to enjoy his/her learning, free from intimidation, both in the school and in the surrounding community.
- * Our school community will not tolerate any unkind actions or remarks, even if these were not intended to hurt.
- * Pupils should support each other by reporting all instances of bullying.
- * Bullying will be dealt with seriously.

All disciplinary matters will be dealt with in a fair and reasonable manner. Under the laws of natural justice, parents/guardians have the right to present the pupil's side of the case and have the right to appeal a sanction to the Board of Management.

Please retain this copy of the Code of Discipline and Behaviour for future reference.

By enrolling in Ballinrobe Community School you are signifying acceptance of its policies. If you wish to raise any specific issues relating to these procedures, please do so in writing to the Principal prior to your child attending the school.

Ratified by the Board of Management 17/09/2019

Review by 01/09/2021