

# Code of Behaviour Policy

## St Tiernan's Community School

### Codes of Behaviour Policy

#### 1. General Philosophy

The philosophy of the behaviour policy of St. Tiernan's Community School is embodied in its aims and mission statement, which was drawn up in conjunction with students, parents, and staff.

#### 2. Aims and Mission Statement

St. Tiernan's Community School aims to:

- 1) Encourage academic success, promoting quality in everything we do.
- 2) Develop a well-rounded individual with a healthy physical, social, and spiritual outlook on life.
- 3) Nurture a sense of respect and pride in each individual in the school and in the community.
- 4) Maintain a positive, caring and disciplined environment.
- 5) Provide a joyful educational experience for all.

#### 3. Objectives of the Policy

*For students to show:*

Self Confidence

Self-Control

Sensitivity and consideration for others

A pride in themselves and their school

A high standard of courtesy to everyone

**4.** *For students to develop:*

Responsibility for their learning and their environment

An understanding of the need for rules

A committed and persistent approach to tasks

A sense of fairness

A respect and tolerance for others way of life and different opinions

An acceptable and responsible reaction to bullying and abuse

## **5. Excellence**

St. Tiernan's encourages and rewards excellence in every area of school life through regular school assemblies where students receive a variety of awards including:

- 1) Academic Achievement Certificates awarded 3 times annually.
- 2) Fergus Mowlds Trophy awarded to the student who achieves the best overall Junior Certificate Result.
- 3) The Andrew Donaldson Trophy awarded to the student who contributes most positively to the work experience programme in LCA1.
- 4) The Rita McGrane Trophy presented to the most outstanding Junior Debating Team.
- 5) Employee of the Year awarded to the most highly commended LCA2 student from the work experience programme.
- 6) Table Tennis Perpetual Trophy awarded to the most outstanding First Year Table Tennis Team.
- 7) First Year Perpetual Sports Trophy presented to the most successful First Year class at their sports day.

## **6. Attendance**

each student should attend school every day unless exceptional circumstances prevail. When possible, medical, dental appointments, etc, should be made outside of school hours. Excuses for absences should not be given easily. All notes must be dated and recorded in the relevant section of the student's homework journal giving precise reasons for any absences. All notes must be presented to the class tutor promptly on the day students return to school, a copy of which will be filed in the student's records by the tutor / year head.

## **7. Punctuality**

Students should be on time for school and for each class of the day. Good habits in this regard are an excellent training for life. Students are expected to be in school before 8.55am each morning. Students who are late must sign the late register. Failure to do so may result in them being marked absent for the day. Students who are late are detained at the end of the day by their year head.

## **8. Uniform**

All students are expected to be in full school uniform every day and parents are asked to co-operate in this regard. All items of uniform may be purchased directly from the school. Uniform is worn to encourage a sense of community, pride, and identity, and it also has the advantage of removing undesirable competition in dress standards. We rely on parents and students full co-operation in ensuring that the public image of the school is expressed, in the highest possible standard, in the way pupils dress and behave as they travel between the school and home.

## **9. Discipline for Learning**

In St. Tiernan's we believe that discipline must be consistent and fair. We have developed and adapted a Discipline for Learning Programme in our school. The main purpose of the programme is to encourage positive attitudes to learning through a system of rules, rewards, and consequences, which are applied consistently by every teacher and in every classroom. In this way, we have a code of behaviour that is clearly defined and understood by the students, which encourages them to take the responsibility for their own learning experience.

### *Around the School Rules*

- 1) Arrive to school on time and in full uniform.
- 2) Walk quietly and sensibly around school.
- 3) Keep all areas of litter.
- 4) Follow instructions from all the staff.
- 5) Bullying, unruly behaviour, offensive language, and smoking are absolutely forbidden.

### *Classroom Rules*

- 1) Line up outside classroom quietly and on time. Enter and sit in assigned place with teacher's permission.
- 2) Place on desk appropriate classroom materials, homework, and journal immediately.
- 3) Listen attentively and follow teacher's instructions.
- 4) Always raise hand and wait quietly for permission to speak.
- 5) All work should be completed on time and to a high standard.
- 6) Record homework in journal and leave quietly when dismissed.

### *Consequences*

A firm reprimand from a member of staff is expected to be sufficient to correct inappropriate behaviour. However, if this fails to correct the behaviour of a student, the following procedure is followed:

C1 – Verbal communication / warning (as above).

C2 – Correction / reprimand at end of class.

C3 – Extra work / detention written in journal and recorded by subject teacher.

C4 – Referral to year head recorded and written in journal, also written in year head's office. Detention with written exercise supervised by year head. Meeting with student/year head as appropriate.

C5 – Referral to Deputy Principal

Serious misbehaviour includes:

- Defiance
- Bullying
- Fighting
- Verbal abuse
- Damage to school property.

- Student's name is recorded.
- 40 minutes detention.
- The parents are informed
- A meeting is arranged between the parents and the deputy principal.
- The student is suspended and the Board of Management is informed.

\*\*C5 – Referral to Principal – Further to action taken by Vice Principal.

### *Rewards*

All teaching staff recognises the importance of praise, encouragement and rewards in maintaining a positive learning environment. The following are the rewards, which are in operation in St. Tiernan's.

- Praise / compliments for good behaviour, initiative, courtesy, neat appearance, etc.
- Praise for progress as well as achievement.
- Affirmation of pupils' self-esteem and self-worth.
- Communications to the home in the form of letters (commendations / certificates) from year-head.
- Award ceremonies for academic achievement three times annually.
- Monthly commendations from subject teachers for classroom effort / behaviour.
- Prizes from teachers / year heads.
- Outings / trips / activities where appropriate.

**Conclusion:**

Discipline at St. Tiernan's Community School is founded on the principles of respect for people, environment, property, and safety. All rules follow from these basic principles, which are intended to create and maintain a happy and stable community. The best way in which the school can operate with the maximum happiness and fulfilment for everybody is if the maximum courtesy and respect is shown for other people. Pupils at the school are expected to respect the dignity of other pupils, teachers, and other staff in the school, and have the right to expect that their own dignity will be respected.

In the case of serious breaches of discipline or of continuous disruptive behaviour a pupil may be suspended from class or from school for a period of time. Only the Principal or Deputy Principal may impose this sanction.

Circumstances in which suspension/expulsion may be considered include:

Repeated incidents of indiscipline in spite of warnings and counselling by staff.

Failure to recognise and submit to legitimate authority.

Behaviour which is considered to interfere with the right of other students to learn.

Particularly serious incidents which endanger the welfare of others.

Damage to school property.

Smoking on the school premises or while in school uniform.

Stealing from other students, staff of the school.

Behaviour inside or outside of school, which is deemed dangerous to the good name and reputation of the school.

## **Persistent Misconduct** **Emotional/Behavioural Difficulties**

The normal process of rewards and consequences will cover the vast majority of the issues (situations) that arise as students in their growth from childhood to young adulthood test the limits of their own self will and the boundaries set by the responsible school authorities.

In the event that this process is ineffective in moderating a student's conduct the school will use all of its resources to enable the students formal and academic education to continue and to minimise the impact of such conduct. This will be done in consultation with the parents/guardians and will require parents/guardians active involvement. The resources available to the school include: Chaplin, Guidance Counsellor, Home school liaison, Family Therapist (under school completion), school completion co-ordinator, Learning Support, Resource teaching (where sanctioned by D.E.S).

The school may involve external agencies such as NEPS, Social Services, EWB, SENC etc in developing a suitable educational plan for the student. Families may wish to involve other family members who have influence with the student in difficulty – this may include grandparents, older brothers and sisters, uncles, aunts etc. The process may include a reduced school timetable, one to one teaching if resources permit, and a mixture of work done at home, in school, withdrawal from the school for short periods eg. Mornings, afternoons by parents/guardians if students conduct are unmanageable. The Board of management will be informed at its regular meetings. If in the view of the Principal and team working with the student having exhausted all strategies, the conduct of the student is leading to neglect of the education of other students or undermining the rightful authority of teachers or their right to work with dignity, the Principal will recommend expulsion to the BOM.

### **Suspension Policy**

### **Expulsion Policy**

Continued behaviour which prevents staff from their right to work or which undermines the right of staff to dignity at work.

Only the Principal with the approval of the Board of Management will impose such a penalty. In such cases the Principal will inform parents of his intention to impose this penalty and of their right to appeal to the Board on behalf of the student. An appropriate opportunity must be given to the parents to present their appeal to the members before the recommendation of the Principal is considered. The school will inform the Education Welfare Officer of its intention in this regard.

## Appendix:

The Legislative Context The Constitution The Policy must, firstly, be considered against the constitutional background from which it emerges and, in particular Article 42 (education). The Convention on the Rights of the Child The Convention on Rights of the Child, (CRC), adopted by the Un General Assembly in 1989 and ratified by Ireland in 1992 provides that State parties with the suitable measures to ensure that school discipline is administered in a manner consistent with the human dignity of the child and in conformity with the Convention. The Articles of Management for Community Schools Second Schedule Article 10 (ii) Subject to the provisions of these articles and to the direction of the Board, the Principal shall control the internal organisation, management and discipline of the School, shall exercise supervision over the teaching and non-teaching staff and shall power, for any cause which he or she judges adequate to dismiss subject to the approval of the Board or to suspend pupils from attendance but on the dismissal or suspension of any pupil the parent shall be informed that he or she has the right to appeal to the Board. The Education (Welfare) Act 2000 Section 23.

1. The Board of Management of a recognised school shall, after consultation with the Principal of, the teachers teaching at, the parents of students registered at, and the educational welfare officer assigned functions in relation, that school, prepare, in accordance with *subsection (2)*, a code of behaviour in respect of the students registered at the school (hereafter in this section referred to as a “code of behaviour”.
2. A code of behaviour shall specify –
  - a) The standards of behaviour that shall be observed by each student attending the school.
  - b) The measures that may be taken when a student fails or refuses to observe those standards.
  - c) The procedures to be followed before a student may be suspended or expelled from the school concerned.
  - d) The grounds for removing a suspension imposed in relation to a student.
  - e) The procedures to be followed relating to notification of a child’s absence from school.
3. A code of behaviour shall be prepared in accordance with such guidelines as may, following consultation by the Board with national associations of parents, recognised school management organisations and trade unions and staff associations representing teachers, to be issued by the Board.
4. The Principal of a recognised school shall, before registering a child as a student at that school in accordance with section 20, provide the parents of such child with a copy of the code of behaviour so provided is acceptable to them and that they shall make all reasonable efforts to ensure compliance with such code by the child.
5. The Principal of a recognised school shall, on a request being made by student registered at the school or a parent of such a student, provide the student or parent, as the case may be, with a copy of the code of behaviour in respect of the school concerned.

## **Education Act 1998** section 28

1. The Minister, following consultation with patrons of recognised schools, national associations of parents, recognised school management organisations and recognised trade unions and staff associations representing teachers, may from time to time prescribe procedures in accordance with which –
  - a) The parent of a student or, in the case of a student who has reached the age of 18 years, the student, may appeal to the board against a decision of a teacher or other member of staff of a school.
  - b) Grievances of students, or their parents, relating to the students' school (other than those which may be dealt with under *paragraph (a) or section 29*), shall be heard, and
  - c) Appropriate remedial action shall, where necessary, be taken as a consequence of an appeal or in response to a grievance.
2. In prescribing procedures for the purposes of this section the Minister shall regard to the desirability of determining appeals and resolving grievances in the school concerned.

## **Section 29**

Where a board or a person acting on behalf of the board –

- a) Permanently excludes a student from a school or
- b) suspends a student from attendance at a school for a period to be prescribed for the purpose of this paragraph, or
- c) refusal to enrol a student in a school, or
- d) makes a decision of a class which the Minister, following consultation with patrons, national, associations of parents, recognised school management organisations, recognised trade union and staff associations representing teachers, may from time to time determine may be appealed in accordance with this section, the parent of the student, or in the case of a student who has reached the age of 18 years, the student, may within a reasonable time from the date that the parent or student was informed of the decision and following the conclusion of any appeal procedures provided by the school or the patron, in accordance with *section 28*, appeal that decision to the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Science and that appeal shall be heard by a committee appointed under *subsection (2)*.

**Equal status act 2000** Schools are regulated by the Equal Status Act 2000 which aims to promote equality and prohibit types of discrimination, harassment and related behaviour in connection with the provision of services, property and other opportunity to which the public generally has access.

There are nine grounds of discrimination contained in section 3(2) of the Act. These are *Gender, Marital Status, Family Status, sexual orientation, Religion, Age, Disability, Race, and Membership of the travelling community.*

The code of behaviour should explicitly name the nine grounds and require behaviour that respects diversity across them. It should prohibit harassment and sexual harassment. The code should set out the policy and procedures to deal with harassment across all of the grounds and sexual harassment, and should identify action to ensure such harassment does not occur and the steps that will be taken if it does occur. Steps to prevent harassment occurring include ensuring all member of the school community – including parents and staff – are made aware of the code of behaviour and that harassment and sexual harassment are prohibited.

Non-fatal offences against the Person Act 1997 scholastic corporal punishment was prohibited by the Minister of Education in 1981. The prohibition was re-enforced by Non-fatal Offences against the Person Act 1997, section 24. “The rule of law under which teachers are immune from criminal liability in respect to physical chastisement of pupils is hereby abolished”. Section 18 of the act provides for the justifiable use of force in certain circumstances which might arise in schools.

The Responsibility of the School, apart from the provisions of the 1998 Act responsibility for the substance of school discipline remains with the individual school authority provided basic fair procedures which are set down in a series of Department of Education and Science circulars and are Education Welfare Act 2000, section 23.

Glendenning (education and the law, 1999, pgs 327-329) distinguishes two main categories for discipline:

a) Internal of domestic school discipline<

Disciplinary decisions in this category are subject to the provisions of Section 28 of the Education Act 1998. Since, as yet, no “procedures” have been prescribed by the Minister this section is not yet operative in law.

b) Quasi Judicial Decisions:

Disciplinary decisions which have a greater impact on the lives of students e.g. Exclusion, suspension for a long period, or refusal to enrol may be perceived by a Court to be quasi judicial in nature.

School decisions of such a quasi judicial nature are subject to appeals to the Secretary General, Department of Education and Science, as provided for in Section 29 of the 1998 Education Act. Provision is made in Section 29 (1) (d) for the Minister to decide what decisions other than suspension, exclusion or refusal to enrol, may be appealed under this section.

Policy originally formulated in:	1996
Ratification Date:	2007

Re- evaluated, re- formulated and reviewed in 2012.