



## INTRODUCTION

This policy represents a statement of good practice covering all aspects of the school that contribute to the development and maintenance of good behaviour, the creation and maintenance of school safety and an atmosphere conducive to learning. All members of the school are expected to work towards creating a caring community based on courtesy, respect, integrity, honesty and justice and a safe learning environment. Mount Sackville is committed to respecting the individuality of each person and helping students reach their full potential in a caring school community.

## 1. ETHOS

The main purpose of a Cluny school is to care for the faith and overall development of each student in the context of the school and the wider Christian and civil community. All school activities are assessed against this objective.

The Cluny school is a community characterised by warmth and simplicity. The whole school community of staff, students and parents create this atmosphere that is one of respect, trust, communication and co-operation, which is enriched by good discipline. School discipline in a Cluny school is intended to create an environment that assists the self-development of the students. Disciplinary decisions are taken in a spirit of concern for the individual student and the welfare of other students.

## 2. AIMS OF THIS CODE

- To conform to the statutory obligation in section 23 of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000 which obliges recognised schools to prepare, for the information of students and their parents, a Code of Behaviour in respect of students registered at the school;
- To inform students and their parents of the procedures used by the School to address issues of discipline in the school;
- To define standards of behaviour for students, to inform students and their parents of the measures that the school may take to address student misbehaviour;
- To inform parents of the school procedures that will be followed before a student is suspended or expelled;
- To explain the grounds and conditions under which a suspension imposed on a student may be lifted;
- To inform parents of their legal responsibilities relating to occasions when their child is absent from school;
- To support effective teaching and learning in a safe learning environment;

- To contribute to mutual respect among all members of the school community;
- To create a caring community with the support of students, teachers, parents and non-teaching staff;

This code has been prepared following consultation with the Principal, teaching staff, students and the parents of students in the school and formally adopted by the Board of Management as the official Code of Behaviour of the school.

## 3. MUTUAL EXPECTATIONS

The school encourages the pursuit of excellence and offers a high standard of teaching and learning opportunities. A high standard of co-operation and behaviour is expected from students and adherence to the school Code of Behaviour.

### The Student

In keeping with the ethos of the school, individuals are responsible for their own behaviour while showing respect for themselves and others. In class, students should make it easy for everyone to learn and for the teacher to teach. They should attend regularly and be punctual; begin and end lessons in a polite and orderly way; work hard; ask for help when needed; help others when it is appropriate but they should not distract or annoy others; do homework and assignments in the best way they can and hand them up on time.

### The Staff

Members of staff implement the Code of Behaviour on a day-to-day basis. The overall responsibility for discipline within the school rests with the Principal, subject to the authority of the Board of Management. Each teacher has responsibility for the maintenance of discipline within his/her class while sharing a common responsibility for good order within the premises and on out of school activities.

### The Dean of Year

The Deans promote the pastoral and academic progress of their year group through the implementation of school policies relating to discipline, absenteeism and punctuality. Deans will be involved in monitoring students with serious or persistent breaches of the Code of Behaviour.

### The Class Tutors

The tutors take on the particular care of the students in their class as part of the pastoral team. Through their implementation of school policies they support students in developing self-discipline and in their development into mature, responsible young adults.



**The Deputy Principal**

The Deputy Principal is part of the Senior Pastoral team working to develop the pastoral care of students and to maintain a high standard of student discipline in the school in conjunction with the Principal and the Staff.

**The Principal**

The Principal is responsible for the day-to-day running of the school and the maintenance of high standards of behaviour and co-operation in the school. The Principal oversees the implementation of the Code of Behaviour in the school and may suspend a student if the circumstances warrant this sanction.

**The Board of Management**

The Board of Management is ultimately responsible for the management of the school and will be the final arbiter in cases of gross misbehaviour, which may lead to expulsion of a student.

**4. STATEMENT ON BULLYING**

Every student has the right to an education free of fear and intimidation. If someone is being treated badly, it is expected that others will take action; watching and doing nothing can suggest support for the bullying behaviour. This type of behaviour is unacceptable and should not be tolerated; there is a confidential reporting system through the Tutors, Deans and the prefect system. The school's anti-bullying policy outlines procedures for dealing with bullying.

**5. SANCTIONS**

To create an environment which promotes student learning and self-development, certain standards of behaviour need to be prescribed.

- a) Ordinary misdemeanours in class will be dealt with by the teacher who may reason with a student, issue a reprimand, allocate extra work or impose another appropriate sanction or in cases of serious or repeated misbehaviour refer the student to the Tutor or Dean and contact parents.
- b) Detention may be imposed for certain offences: single major offences or repeated minor offences. Detention is imposed following a meeting of the Deans, Principal and Deputy Principal. Parents will be informed in advance of a student's detention.
- c) Suspension may be imposed by the Principal for the following: vandalism, stealing, persistent smoking, bullying or any violent or anti-social behaviour and truancy, including any serious disruption in school, repeated misbehaviour and any other kind of behaviour likely to bring the school into disrepute.
- d) Gross misbehaviour may mean the student being referred to the Board of Management for decision as to her retention in the School. The school's policy on expulsions and suspensions is contained in the Admissions and Participation policy drawn up pursuant to section 15-(2)(d) of the 1998 Act.

- e) Procedure for dealing with suspension. The discipline committee consisting of the Principal, the Deputy Principal, the Dean of year and Tutor will meet to consider suspension.

In the event of suspension, parents will be notified immediately and interviewed with their daughter. All suspensions will normally be notified to the Board of Management and the staff. Suspensions are normally of five days or less; the law requires that any suspension of six or more days must be reported by the Principal to the Education Welfare officer, Welfare Act section 21-(4)(a). Students who have merited a suspension will make restitution, if appropriate, and give an undertaking in writing, countersigned by their parents, that they will co-operate fully with school discipline before they return to the school.

- f) Procedure for dealing with Expulsions. When a student has breached school discipline in a serious or in a persistent minor manner, they will be referred to the Board of Management. The Principal will prepare a report for the Board and a copy of the report will be provided to the parents of the student. The Board will invite the student and their parent/s to explain their case before a full Board meeting. The Board will request all relevant information and documents be provided for this meeting. The Board will make a decision on the continuance of the student in the school on the basis of the student's readiness to benefit by the education offered by the school and following consideration of the safety and educational welfare of other students in the school. The parents will be informed in writing within five days of the Board meeting.
- g) Any serious misbehaviour by a student who has already been suspended within the same academic year may mean suspension by the Principal for a further period and the matter referred to the Board of Management.
- h) Persistent failure to co-operate with the school authorities may mean that a parent will be asked to withdraw his/her daughter from the school.
- i) Written records of behaviour are kept as a matter of school policy and are open to inspection and discussion by parents and students over 18 years.
- j) Any behaviour outside the school that damages the school's reputation, interferes with its workings, is detrimental to other students or undermines school discipline and good order is subject to the school's sanction.

**Appeals**

This policy recognises the rights of those who wish to make an appeal within the terms of the Education Act (1998) sections 28 and 29. In the event of an expulsion, a long suspension or refusal to admit a student, appeals may be made by parents to the Secretary General of the DES. Application for an appeal form should be made in writing to the Principal or to the Board within four weeks.



## 6. RULES FOR STUDENTS

### Attendance and Punctuality

Students are expected to attend school and all classes punctually and to be well equipped for their work.

### Uniform

Students are expected to wear the correct school uniform to all school and school-related events. Tracksuits are only acceptable for attendance at sporting events.

### Out of Bounds

Students may not approach the following areas which are private to the convent: the area in front and to the side of the convent, the area near the tractor sheds and the convent cemetery or any other area so designated by the school.

### Forbidden/illegal substances: refer also to The Substance Use Policy

- a) **Chewing gum** - this is banned in the school as it causes much damage to flooring and furniture.
- b) **Smoking** - the school urges all students not to smoke in view of the serious dangers to personal health posed by tobacco use. Smoking is forbidden in the school and on all school-related activities and when travelling to and from the school. A sanction of making a €25 donation to charity will be imposed on any student found smoking. Smoking is banned by law in all areas of the school premises, indoors and outdoors, under the terms of the Public Health (Tobacco) Act 2002; offences can incur fines of up to €3,000.
- c) **Alcohol** - the school is concerned about the abuse of alcohol in our society. Students who attend school or school-related activities under the influence of alcohol or in possession of alcohol will merit suspension.
- d) **Drugs** - the use of drugs by students is absolutely forbidden. Any such use or possession, particularly the sale or provision of drugs for others, will make the offender liable to be expelled. The Juvenile Liaison Officer of the Garda Síochána will be informed of incidents involving drugs.
- e) **Inappropriate objects** - objects including weapons or dangerous items or salacious materials will be confiscated from students and returned only to their parents.

### Student Absence

In the case of a student being absent, a note of explanation must be written in the student's school journal and signed by the parent or guardian. This must be brought to the Tutor on the day of the girl's return to school. This note will be signed by the Tutor.

As far as possible, appointments (medical and other) should be arranged outside school time. Family holidays should not be planned during term time; where an exception is to be made, the matter should be discussed with the Dean of Year in advance and the school advised in writing.

Under the terms of the Education Welfare Act, the Educational Welfare Officer legally requires notification of all students who miss 20 days of school or if the Principal forms the opinion that a student is not attending school regularly.

The school is legally obliged under the Education (Welfare) Act 2000 to keep a record of the reasons for a student's

absence. Section 18 states 'Where a child is absent from the school at which she is registered during part of a school day, or for a school day or more than a school day, the parents of such child shall, in accordance with procedures specified in the Code of Behaviour prepared by the school under section 23, notify the Principal of the school of the reasons for the child's absence.'

### Arriving and leaving the school during the school day

Students may not leave the school grounds between their arrival in the morning and their departure after school without the prior permission of their Tutor on production of a signed note of explanation from their parents.

Students are required to sign in as late at reception before they attend class if they arrive after 8.50 a.m. and then go directly to their class.

On leaving the school for all school activities and appointments, students must sign out. It is a serious offence to leave the school without permission at any time.

### Mobile Phones

The school recognises the increasing use of the mobile phone, particularly in an emergency; however, it is noted that they can provide a disruption to the work and life of the school. The use of mobile phones in the school is restricted to lunchtime when they may be used in designated areas of the school. At other times, they should be switched off and kept in the student's locker.

- If a parent needs to make urgent contact with their daughter, a call should be placed to the school office and a message will be passed on.
- Students are not permitted to contact home directly if they are ill in school; the staff in sickbay will contact parents if they consider a student to be too ill to remain in school.
- Mobile phones are forbidden in examination centres.
- In order to protect the privacy of all members of the school community, the recording of images on digital imaging phones or any other digital imaging device in the school or on school activities is forbidden.
- If a mobile phone is used inappropriately or outside the appointed times or areas it will be confiscated and returned after 1 week to the student or it may be collected by parents at an earlier date on the understanding that it will not be brought back into the school for the duration of the week.
- If a student needs to contact home in an emergency, she should make a call through the school office.

### Care of property

Students are responsible for their own property while in school and should take care of the property of others, including the school. All uniform, books and materials should be clearly labelled and kept in the student's locker. Valuables should not be brought to school. The school cannot accept responsibility for loss or theft. Lockers are provided for the use of students but are at all times the property of the school, and it is a condition of the rental of the lockers to students that the school reserves the right to open and to search students' lockers. The student will be invited to be present during any such search.



**Safety, Health and Welfare**

*Students are expected:*

- a) To exercise personal responsibility for the safety of themselves and their classmates.
- b) To observe all the safety rules of the school and in particular the instructions of staff given in an emergency.
- c) To use and not wilfully misuse, neglect or interfere with things provided for their safety.
- d) To walk on the right side of the corridor and be particularly careful on stairways.
- e) To adhere to the safety instructions posted around the school and explained by staff.

**Accidents and emergencies**

- a) Students suffering illness or minor cuts and bruises should attend the school office with their teacher's permission and they will be referred to sickbay. The student will be treated for minor illness, minor cuts and bruises.
- b) Sickbay staff will contact parents if this is considered necessary.
- c) Medication is not generally given to students, however paracetamol may be given at the discretion of the sickbay supervisor.
- d) If it is considered necessary to attend a hospital, the student's parents will be notified immediately to attend with their daughter.

**6. COMMUNICATION BETWEEN TEACHERS AND PARENTS**

Parents will be contacted if there is concern about a student's behaviour. Communication by parents with a student's teachers should be by letter or through the school journal. Parents may meet teachers by appointment, which may be made through the school office. In cases of an emergency, the school will make contact by phone and likewise in an emergency, parents should contact the school office. In particular, family members should not contact students directly with upsetting news which will leave a student distressed and unsupported in the school. In such cases, please contact the school office for assistance.

The Board reserves the right to review this policy to meet the changing needs of the school. All members of the school community have been involved in the formulation of this policy, which will be reviewed no later than 2008.

Admission of a student to the school is conditional on parents/guardians giving a written undertaking that they find this code acceptable and shall make all reasonable efforts to ensure compliance by their daughter.

**October 2005**

**APPENDIX 1**

**Expected Student Behaviour**

*In general:*

- Co-operate with all members of staff
- Speak politely to everyone
- Do not use offensive or abusive language
- Offer to help others
- Do not run inside the school buildings
- Listen to others and expect to be listened to
- Do not interrupt others
- Be silent when required
- Wear the correct uniform

*Keep the school clean and tidy as a welcoming place we can all be proud of; this includes:*

- Not chewing gum as it damages floors and furniture
- Put litter in the litter bins
- Use the school's facilities in a proper manner
- Keep walls and furniture clean and unmarked

*Out of class:*

- Move quietly and in an orderly way about the school,
- For safety, keep to the right on corridors.
- Walk, don't run or push.
- Be ready to help by opening doors.
- Be ready to help by offering to carry things.