



# JOHN SCOTTUS SECONDARY SCHOOL

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## Code of Behaviour

### John Scottus Secondary School

John Scottus School offers a vision of education which gives young people the self mastery, strength of character and compassion to contribute meaningfully to the world around them whilst at the same time fulfilling their own unique set of talents and qualities.

It is an education based on the belief that each child can come to discover their innate gifts, that each child can come to contribute something exceptional and that each child has at their heart a limitless potential.

Central to the ethos of the school is the development of character. Character building is described as the development of good habits such as the ability to be still and self-aware, to attend to the present moment, to participate in the spirit of enquiry and to unite with others around. These habits of attention, enquiry, stillness and unity will provide the foundations for academic excellence, a life of meaningful purpose and a life journey of Self-Discovery.

Mindfulness along with philosophy and meditation are considered the three key aspects in the journey of character building and the development of these habits. The mindful motto of the school is "Delight in the present" and the belief is that when a child comes to know their true Self it is possible to delight in the present every moment of every day.

#### 1. Definition:

The Code of Behaviour is the set of programmes, practices and procedures that together form the school's plan for helping students in the school to behave and learn well.

The Code of Behaviour addresses the following:

- The standards of behaviour expected in the school
- The plan for promoting good behaviour
- The ways in which the school responds to unacceptable behaviour
- Efforts made to understand behaviour
- The plan for implementing the Code of Behaviour
- School procedures for the use of suspension and expulsion

#### 2. Scope and development of the policy:

The Code of Behaviour applies to all students until the completion of their education in John Scottus Secondary School and should be observed while in school, when in school uniform, while travelling

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**Principal: Dr. Declan Kelly, B.A.I, M. Eng, Ph.D, Pg.Dip.Ed**

Patron: John Scottus Educational Trust Ltd., Company Registration No. 108257.

to or from school and while attending any school activity including trips, sporting, cultural events and Transition Year work experience. This code was formulated following consultation with students (student council), parents (parents representatives), teachers (School Planning meetings) and the Board of Management and takes cognisance of the Education Act, the Education Welfare Act, Equal Status Act and the Guidelines for Schools on Developing a Code of Behaviour (NEWB: 2008). The code should be read in conjunction with the ICT Acceptable Use policy, Substance Use policy and Anti Bullying policy.

### **3. Relationship to our mission, vision and aims:**

The Code of Behaviour of John Scottus Secondary School is determined in the context of the school's Vision Statement which has at its core the holistic development and care of the student. The code is an integral part of a positive school ethos where learning and personal development can take place.

### **4. Rationale:**

John Scottus Secondary School promotes a positive approach to discipline in the classroom and in the school generally. This positive approach emphasises encouragement and praise rather than criticism and sanction. In such a climate, it is expected that the relationships between students and between students and staff are based on mutual respect, trust, caring and consideration for others resulting in a highly motivated learning environment and a caring and respectful school experience. The Code of Behaviour ensures that good behaviour and right relationships are fostered.

### **5. Objectives of the Code of Behaviour:**

The objectives of our Code of Behaviour are:

- a) To foster an atmosphere in the school which promotes the holistic development of the student and which allows good relationships to flourish.
- b) To create a safe and secure learning environment for all students by promoting a sense of mutual respect among all members of the school community.
- c) To nurture self-discipline and encourage students to take responsibility for their learning.
- d) To have effective procedures in place which will allow for the day to day running of the school and which meet the demands of current legislation.
- e) To help young people to mature into responsible participating citizens.

### **6. The Promotion of Good Behaviour:**

In John Scottus Secondary School, we are proactive in promoting positive behaviour and preventing inappropriate behaviour.

- a) Teachers set high expectations for student behaviour, have good class routines, give positive feedback about behaviour and model the behaviour that is expected from students. Teachers recognise the importance of developing mutually respectful relationships that balance warmth and empathy with objectivity, professional detachment, fairness and consistency.
- b) Students are clear on the contents of the code and the standards expected of them. The Student Council was involved in the formulation of the Code of Behaviour. A copy of the school's Code of Behaviour is given formally to each student on their entry to the school, a summary is printed in the Student Journal and the full document is published on the website. A reminder of the rules, the reasons for such rules and the procedures followed if

the rules are not upheld is given at assemblies at the opening of every school year. They are re-iterated with class teachers when creating the classroom charter at the start of each school year.

- c) Reference to the Code of Behaviour is consistently made by teachers. School rules and the reasons for them are discussed as part of Philosophy/SPHE and CSPE. The concepts of tolerance, self control, fairness and the principles of natural justice are explored as part of these programmes.
- d) Parental co-operation is considered fundamental to the implementation of the school's code. An introductory meeting for parents of new students takes place prior to entry. At this meeting, the values underlining the Code of Behaviour are explained. Parents are then asked to sign the Code of Behaviour and it is placed in the student file. It is accepted that parents are acknowledging acceptance of the Code of Behaviour and that they will make every effort to ensure that their child complies with every aspect of the Code. Parents are expected to meet the Principal or Class teacher or to share information on anything that might affect a student's learning/behaviour in school. John Scottus recognises the challenges faced by parents and supports the Parents' Association in the organisation of seminars on behavioural matters and on aspects of child and adolescent development.
- e) The school community rewards good behaviour by some of the following methods:
  - The recording of a achievement notes on the students profile
  - A positive comment in the Student Journal.
  - Recognition at assembly and in school publications.
  - The presentation of prizes at our end of year ceremonies.
  - Delegation of responsibilities to a student.

## **7. Terms of the Code of Behaviour**

### **7.1 Behaviour in school and at school functions:**

Students are expected to uphold the principles for which the school stands and exhibit good behaviour in class, around the school and at school events. Student behaviour should never bring the school's name into disrepute.

- All members of the school community have a right to be treated with dignity and courtesy.
- Students should respect the authority of teachers and other members of staff and follow instructions given.
- Students should not engage in actions where others may be adversely affected. This includes play fighting, running through public areas or engaging in conduct potentially harmful to themselves or others.
- Behaviour during formal events and presentations must be appropriate to the occasion.
- In relation to the school neighbourhood, all members of the School community are responsible both for living in complete harmony with our neighbours and for developing good relations with them.

### **7.2 Attendance:**

Attendance at school enables students to achieve academic excellence, to develop a sense of belonging to the school community and to benefit from all school activities.

To record attendance, all students use an electronic fob to swipe in at the designated machines on entrance to the school building. A student without a fob is required to sign in at the reception before entering the school building. Students must use the fob when they leave the premises for whatever reason, except when the class is attending a timetables sports class off premise, and at the end of the school day. A lost fob should be replaced immediately.

No student may absent themselves from class at any time. Students feeling ill should report to the office, having first informed the subject teacher. The class teacher or failing that another member of staff will then assess the situation and will authorise contact with a parent / guardian to arrange permission for student to return home. Student should then sign out/fob out.

Sixth Years may leave the premises at lunchtime or during a free class. All other students must remain in school at all times.

The Education Welfare Act (2000) requires that the school should be notified if a student is absent. In accordance with section 21 of the Education Welfare Act (2000), the school is obliged to notify the National Educational Welfare Board when a student is absent for 20 days or more in any given academic year.

### **7.3 Punctuality:**

The principle behind our punctuality policy is that punctuality displays respect for teacher and fellow students. Being on time for class encourages self-discipline and is an expected habit both in the workplace and in personal relationships. Late- coming inconveniences both teachers and students.

Students need to be punctual for all classes. Pupils should move quickly but safely at the end of each class in order to be in time for the next class. Students should only go to their lockers before morning classes, at break times, and at the end of the day, except with permission from a teacher.

Students who are late will receive a late note. Lateness is also recorded in the student journal. Students entering a class late will present the homework journal or late note to the teacher.

Late students will be detained in the quiet room for a period of time before being allowed to enter class. This applies for all days including days with assembly. Parents/Guardians will be notified by standard text or email of lateness.

Students late after 9.10 will be considered as absent on the student attendance record.

To improve punctuality for students who are repeatedly late, a ladder of escalation will be enforced. This involves receiving verbal warnings from the class teacher, recording written warnings from the class teacher, meeting with the Senior Cycle Head or Junior Cycle Head and meeting with Dean Discipline until punctuality is improved.

### **7.4 Academic work**

Good work habits enable the student to contribute to the class and to be successful.

Students are expected to be prepared for, and to work in, each class. They should have the necessary textbooks and class materials, should complete homework on time and be prepared and present for all tests and examinations. If homework is not presented, a student is required to have a note of explanation from a parent / guardian, written in the journal.

Students should submit academic work, which is their own and is not copied from other sources.

### **7.5 Student Journal**

The principle behind the student journal is that learning needs a system of discipline and structure. The student journal helps to provide discipline and serves as a place to record homework and information relating to student behaviour.

Each student is required to have a school journal. The journal should be brought to all classes and should be kept neatly and free of graffiti. If a journal is lost, a replacement journal must be purchased from the school office.

The journal should be available to all members of staff for inspection and is checked regularly by class teacher.

The student journal contains:

- Homework Record
- Teacher Comment Card on behaviour
- Detention notes
- Late Notes
- Student Achievement Notes

The student journal allows for effective home-school communications and parents should check it on a consistent basis to assess student's work ethic and organisation. Parents are asked to sign off on any comments or notes entered by teachers.

### **7.6 Uniform**

The principle behind wearing a school uniform is that it develops discipline and a sense of unity amongst students. The outer appearance reflects the inner quality, and one's finest qualities should be displayed through one's appearance.

The school uniform helps promote a sense of belonging to the school community and is a visual symbol of John Scottus Secondary School. Students wearing our uniform should be conscious that they represent the entire school community and as such, their behaviour should reflect our ethos and code.

- a) Students should maintain a neat and tidy appearance. This includes shirts and blouses to be tucked in, ties to be in correct position and uniforms to be clean, correctly fitting and free from tears or holes.
- b) Full uniform must be worn when travelling to or from school. Students may wear a simple black or navy jacket that is similar to the official school jacket. Leather jackets or jackets with logos are not permitted. The school authorities are the judges of acceptable jackets.
- c) All items of uniform should be clearly labelled.
- d) Shoes should be black or navy, leather and flat. Shoes must be kept clean.
- e) Hairstyles should be moderate and either short, or else tied back, neat and off the face. Hair should not be dyed un-natural colours. No patterns should be shaved into hair. The school authorities are the judges of acceptable hairstyles.

- f) Discreet jewellery which does not detract from the uniform may be worn by girls. Girls only may wear stud earrings in the ear lobes only. Any other facial or body piercing is not acceptable. The school authorities' decision about what constitutes discreet jewellery shall be binding.
- g) The discreet use of make-up by girls is allowed for fifth and sixth year students. The school authorities' decision about what constitutes the discreet use of make-up shall be binding.
- h) Make-up of any description may not be used by students in other years, except with special permission. Students will be obliged to remove make-up.
- i) The school tracksuit and runners are required for P.E. These and the hooded sweatshirts may only be used for sport.
- j) A high visibility item of clothing may be worn on the way to and from school, if a student chooses to cycle.
- k) Students are not allowed wear scarves, caps, coats or hoodies in class or between classes. Before or after activities, PE, games or matches students must wear full school uniform
- l) Students in 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> year boys may wear suit and girls smart casual attire as an alternative to the uniform

The proper uniform attire is checked at the start of the day on entering the school premises. Any transgression of uniform is recorded with a uniform note. Students not wearing proper uniform will be asked to change into proper uniform or be supplied with appropriate clothing. Non school uniform clothing that is wore in classes or between classes will be confiscated.

On repeated transgression of uniform the Dean of Discipline will inform parents, and if repeated the student will not be allowed to enter the school premises until the uniform is complete.

Uniform spot checks will be conducted by Senior/Junior Cycle Heads/Deputy Principal/Principal. Names on uniform are to be checked at start of year.

### **7.7 School Environment**

Students are to respect and be aware of their environment. The principle behind this is that a clean and ordered environment supports a clear and bright mind. The school building and everything in it must be treated with respect. All rooms are to be kept clean and tidy.

Move without rushing, particularly:

- Do not run or jump up and down the stairs.
- In passageways and on the stairs, keep left, and stand to the side for a teacher or an adult.

Food is to be eaten in the two refreshment rooms. No food is allowed in the school classrooms, corridors or playgrounds. No food may be brought from the refreshments room to other parts of the School, except with teacher permission. No chewing gum is allowed on the school premises. Eating food in front of the school building is also prohibited, whether or not school has finished.

Sixth Year pupils may have snack foods in their study. They may not bring in any substantial food and they may consume their own refreshments only in that room.

### **7.8 Lost Property and Lockers:**

All property and lockers must be treated with respect.

All property should be clearly labelled. The school cannot be held responsible for lost property. Lost property may be retrieved at specific times during the week and at the end of term.

Lockers are the property of the school and should not be damaged/defaced in any way. The Principal/Deputy Principal reserves the right to search a student's locker in the presence of that student.

Students are supplied with lockers and are required to look after the key and to report any damage to the locker or loss of the key to the Deputy Principal. Students must not interfere with the locker of another. Each student must keep their own locker neat, keep the locker door closed and keep the school environment neat and tidy.

### **7.9 Information and Communication Technology Acceptable Usage Policy**

(Please refer to ICT Acceptable Usage policy)

The proper use of ICT can increase learning and develop attention.

All use of technology should be for the support of learning. ICT devices are to be used (e.g. tablets, notebooks, laptops, headphones etc) only under teacher supervision.

Teachers will confiscate ICT devices when there are misused. Devices confiscated will be placed in the School Office for 3 days. Only the parent/guardian of the student may reclaim the device. If the device is needed for a weekend the parent/guardian may reclaim the device only on the understanding that it is returned on the following Monday.

All new students to the school will sign the ICT Acceptable Usage policy

In relation to the use of the Internet:

- a) Students are expected to use computers and computer networks solely for the purpose of education and academic research. Students must not tamper with or reconfigure any computer software without the permission of a teacher.
- b) Students may not misuse electronic mail or have access to Internet sites that violate any aspect of this Code of Behaviour.
- c) Any student using Information and Communication Technology (ICT) for the purpose of bullying a fellow student, insulting or defaming a teacher or any other member of staff associated with the school and/or bringing the school into disrepute in any fashion will risk suspension, pending consideration of the case by the Board of Management.

In relation to the use of mobile phones:

- a) Where a student brings a mobile phone to school, the phone must be switched off before entering the school premises. It may not be used for any purpose on school premises or in the grounds, unless with permission.
- b) If a phone is confiscated, for health and safety reasons the SIM card may be returned before 3 day confiscation period has elapsed.

- c) No photographs may be taken or recordings, video or audio, made in school with a mobile phone. Using phones in such ways can seriously infringe on people's rights and appropriate sanctions may be imposed.
- d) Incidents where students use mobile phones to bully other students or send offensive messages or calls will be investigated under the Anti-Bullying policy. It should be noted that it is a criminal offence to use a mobile phone to menace, harass or offend another person. As such, the school may consider it necessary to involve the Gardai in such incidents.

In relation to cameras and portable music devices:

- a) No student is allowed to take a photograph of another person in school or at any school event without the express permission of that person.
- b) A student may be allowed to take photographs at an event in an official capacity.
- c) Portable music devices are not to be used in school, unless with permission from a teacher.

### **7.10 Smoking, Alcohol and Substance Use**

(Please refer to the Substance Misuse policy)

Life is best kept simple and there is no need to feed a young body with harmful substances.

- Students are not permitted to smoke in a school or its environs.
- Students are not permitted to smoke on school related activities or when in school uniform.
- The possession/ consumption of alcohol is strictly forbidden in school, during school related activities or while wearing school uniform.
- The possession, use or handling of illegal substances are strictly forbidden in school, during school related activities or while wearing school uniform.

Following Child Protection guidelines, if the school has reason to believe that a student is engaging in risky behaviour outside of school time, the parents will be informed.

### **7.11 Anti-Bullying Policy**

(Please refer to our Anti-Bullying policy)

Conduct which is injurious to the mental or physical well being of others is not conducive to good school morale or to a secure learning environment.

Students should not engage in any activity that could be interpreted by others as harassment, intimidation or bullying.

Bullying is defined as repeated aggression conducted by an individual or a group against others – such aggressive behaviour may be verbal, psychological or physical. The term bullying encompasses harassment, including any form of unwanted conduct in relation to any of the nine grounds named in equality legislation, i.e. gender, marital status, family status, age, disability, sexual orientation, race, religion, membership of the travelling community – that has the purpose or effect of violating a person's dignity and creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading or offensive environment for the



victim. Bullying includes sexual harassment, i.e. any form of unwanted verbal, non-verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature that has the purpose or effect of violating a person's dignity and creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading or offensive environment for another person.

All allegations of bullying will be investigated according to the procedures outlined in the Anti-Bullying policy and appropriate sanctions will be taken against those who bully.

## **8. Efforts to understand behaviour**

John Scottus Secondary school has a student centred approach. Every effort is made to understand an individual student's behaviour and to help them cooperate with the school's Code of Behaviour.

- The class teacher is the front-line source of help for students. The class teacher deals with routine incidents and events and every effort is made to find ways in which the student can be supported to co-operate with the Code of Behaviour. Contact with home is made if necessary.
- Subject teachers provide feedback to the class teacher directly or through meetings to develop strategies to help individual students
- The Disciplinary committee, headed up by the Deputy Principal/Dean of Discipline, attempts to probe the reason/causes for repeated inappropriate behaviour and to provide monitoring of a period during which the student intends to change their behaviour.
- A full case conference may be held if all else fails. This is a meeting of parents, class teacher, and other involved staff members. They attempt to understand a student's behaviour and to support a change in behaviour in a co-ordinated manner.
- Special needs children who may present behavioural difficulties are catered for by the Special Needs Department of the School, the Care Team and the Class Teacher. Specific behavioural targets are set out on their IEPs (Individual Education Plans) and these are developed collaboratively by pupil, parents and teachers.

## **9. Disciplinary Sanctions**

The purpose of a sanction is to bring about a change of behaviour by:

- Helping students to learn their behaviour is unacceptable.
- Helping them to recognise the effect of their actions and behaviour on others.
- Helping students (in ways appropriate to their age and development) to understand that they have choices about their own behaviour and that all choices have consequences.
- Helping them to learn to take responsibility for their behaviour.

A sanction may also:

- Reinforce the boundaries set out in the Code of Behaviour.
- Signal to other students and to staff that their well-being is being protected.

In instances of more serious breaches of school standards, sanctions may be needed to:

- Prevent serious disruption of teaching and learning.

- Keep the student, or other students or adults safe.

Examples of possible sanctions are:

- Reasoning with the student.
- Reprimand (including advice on how to improve)
- Temporary physical separation from the classroom, if a student is sent to another classroom
- A community task such as picking up litter in the school
- Loss of privileges
- Detention after school
- Prescribing additional written work or homework.
- Putting students on report card.
- A penalty point
- Suspension by the Principal (in accordance with the school's policy on Suspensions).
- Recommendation to the Board by the Principal for Expulsion (in accordance with the school's policy on Expulsions).

## 9. Discipline Code and Procedures

Students need to be aware of consequences of their actions. Sanctions are the natural consequence of breaking rules and regulations.

The Discipline code is based on raising levels of awareness in the student and parent of behaviour which is affecting learning and teaching and to bring about a change in behaviour. Thus there is a constant recording of mis-behaviour, from low level misdemeanours to high level serious offences which, is continually communicated to the student and the parent. For continual low level misbehaviour or some serious offences a Behaviour Intervention Plan may be specified in consultation with the parent.

The procedures for dealing with incidents of unacceptable behaviour are referred to as our 'ladder of referral'. The higher up the ladder an incident is dealt with, the more seriously it is viewed. The ladder of referral comprises:

| Stage   | Person Responsible                          | Mechanism  |
|---------|---|--|
| Stage 1 | Subject Teacher                             | Student Journal Comment Card   |
| Stage 2 | Subject Teacher and Class Teacher           | Behaviour Notes, Behaviour Intervention Plan   |
| Stage 3 | Senior/Junior Cycle Heads/Deputy Principal  | Detention  |
| Stage 4 | Deputy Principal and Disciplinary Committee | Conduct Book, Penalty Points, Behaviour Intervention Plan, Report Card, Time-out, Mentor |
| Stage 5 | Principal                                   | In-school suspension, Full suspension  |
| Stage 6 | Board of Management                         | Suspension and Exclusion   |

### **Stage 1: Misdemeanours incurring Journal Comment Card Entry**

The subject teacher has primary responsibility for discipline in his/her classroom and deals with minor infringements as they arise.

Students will receive entries in the Student Journal Comment Card for behaviour that prevents learning and teaching from taking place. Any entries on the Comment Card will be signed by parents on a weekly basis and reviewed by the class teacher. Comment Card entries may be given in the following situations:

- Late for class
- No book, copy or equipment
- No homework
- Not working in class
- Negative attitude
- Disruptive behaviour
- Side conversations

### **Stage 2: Misdemeanours incurring Behaviour Notes**

Students may receive a Behaviour Note for behaviour that prevents learning and teaching from taking place. The class teacher will meet with student to discuss Behaviour Notes.

If there is a pattern of repeated Behaviour Notes, a formal letter will be sent to parents from class teacher informing them of the nature of mis-behaviour and asking for suggestions to remedy the situation.

If the pattern of Behaviour Notes continues a conference is organised involving class teacher, parents and relevant subject teachers and a Behaviour Intervention Plan is specified.

Behaviour Notes may be given in the following situations:

- No Student Journal
- Eating or drinking in class
- Not wearing correct uniform
- Incorrect use of ICT devices including possession of mobile phone
- Students speaking disrespectfully to others

### **Stage 3: Misdemeanours incurring Detention**

Detention may be given to a student by Senior/Junior Cycle Heads, Dean of Discipline or Principal after meeting the student. Detention may be recommended by class teachers and subject teacher using a Behaviour Note and referring it to Heads or Dean Discipline. Parents are informed of detention in writing. If the detention letter is not signed, the school may contact the parent.

Detention will take place after school and work will be provided for students to do.

If the student is absent from detention the parent of the student must contact the school before 11.00am on the day of the day of detention in order to arrange an alternative day for the detention.

A student who is absent from detention with no contact from parents to arrange an alternative detention date, incurs an entry into the Conduct Book.

Detention may be given in the following situations:

- Persistently having no book, copy or equipment or misuse of same
- Persistently being late
- Persistently having incorrect uniform
- Persistently disruptive in class
- Serious disrespect to others

#### **Stage 4: Misdemeanours incurring Conduct Book Entry**

Students who have been in detention 3 times will be entered into the Conduct Book. Also, students who have committed a serious misdemeanour may be entered immediately into the Conduct Book. On entry to the Conduct Book, the Disciplinary committee chaired by the Deputy Principal/Dean of Discipline will schedule a case conference involving parents and relevant teachers. The purpose of this meeting will be to detail a Behaviour Intervention Plan to support improved behaviour. The Dean of Discipline will review the plan to ensure that the behaviour is improving.

In addition students may:

- Be placed on a Report Card whereby a student must have the card signed by the teacher at the end of each class for a nominated number of days.
- Be given Time-Out whereby they are placed in another room for 3 lessons.
- Have a teacher mentor assigned
- Receive a penalty point which will form part of their school record for a period of 24 months.

Students may be recorded in the Conduct Book for the following reason:

- Does not arrive at detention
- Receives 3 detentions
- Not having Student Journal
- Smoking on school grounds
- Absent from class or leaving school without permission
- Persistent negative and un-cooperative behaviour that prevents learning
- Refusal to hand-up ICT device for confiscation
- Damage to property
- Serious disrespect to others
- Serious disruptive behaviour
- A display of gross respect to a teacher
- Bringing the school's good name into disrepute by bad behaviour or otherwise
- Persistent breaches of school rules

### **Stage 5: Misdemeanours incurring suspension**

After 3 entries in the Conduct Book or three penalty points, a conference will be scheduled involving parents, Principal and/or Dean of Discipline. At this stage suspension may apply on the next entry in the Conduct Book. This may be in-house or the student may be sent home for a period of 3 days.

The School has the right to sanction suspension with immediate effect for very serious misdemeanours

Students may be suspended for the following reasons:

- Damage to property
- Illegal behaviour within school buildings
- Serious sudden misbehaviour
- Unfounded, frivolous or vexatious complaints about a teacher
- False allegations about a teacher
- On-going misbehaviour that results in more than 3 entries in Conduct Book

### **Stage 6: Referral to Board of Management**

For serious offences and situations where suspension does not result in improvement of behaviour, exclusion may be applied. At this stage the matter is referred to the Board of Management.

In the situation of on-going misbehaviour resulting in at least 15 accumulated days of suspension, the matter is referred to the Board of Management with all documentation on the student. Parents are notified, invited to attend Board meeting and given an outline of future consequences including possible exclusion.

Students may be expelled for the following reasons:

- Accumulated suspensions of more than 20 days. Parents are invited to attend Board of Management meeting. Board considers options, up to and including exclusion.
- Major serious offences. In this situation student is suspended pending a meeting of the Board of Management. Parents are notified and invited to attend the Board meeting. If the Board decides to suspend the student for 6 consecutive days, a report is sent to the National Educational Welfare Board.

In the event of exclusion the Board of Management notifies the parents of their rights to appeal within 42 days. A report is sent to the National Educational Welfare Board.

### **Penalty points**

Penalty points form a part of the record of a pupil in the school in the course of year. Their function is to make it clear to everyone in our school that there are serious consequences for poor conduct.

- a. A Penalty point stays on a student's record for 24 months, and is deleted only after that time expires.
- b. A penalty point is awarded by Deputy Principal/Dean of Discipline or Principal at Stage 4 of Discipline code.
- c. After pupil gets to 7 penalty points, the last three points will be entered by the Principal. This is to reflect the seriousness of obtaining 10 points.

- d. When a pupil gets to 10 points, he/she will be suspended.
- e. Before returning, the parents and the pupil will meet the Principal and the Class Teacher to indicate how matters have changed over the suspension period. The pupil will need to provide a written undertaking that behaviour will improve and this will be signed by parent or guardian.
- f. If the pupils get another 5 penalty points, the issue will be referred to the Board of Management with a recommendation for permanent exclusion from the school.

## **10 Suspension**

### **10.1 Definition:**

Suspension is defined as requiring the student to absent herself from the school for a specified, limited period of school days.

### **10.2 Authority to suspend:**

The Board of Management has formally delegated to the Principal the authority to suspend a student. In implementing a decision to suspend, the Principal shall adhere to the procedures for suspension as set down in the Code of Behaviour of the school. Paragraph 11.6 of Developing a Code of Behaviour: Guidelines for Schools (NEWB:2008)

In the event of the absence of the Principal on approved leave or school business, the authority to suspend is delegated to the Acting Principal subject to the provisions of (1) and (2) above.

### **10.3 The grounds for suspension:**

Suspension is a serious sanction and should be a proportionate response to the behaviour that is causing concern. It may be considered in the following circumstances:

- the student's behaviour has had a seriously detrimental effect on the education of other students
- repeated deliberate breaches of the Code of Behaviour
- the student's continued presence in the school at this time constitutes a threat to safety
- the student is responsible for serious damage to property
- accumulation of 10 Penalty Points
- A single incident of serious misconduct may be grounds for suspension.

### **10.4 Factors to consider before suspending a student:**

The following factors will be considered before suspending a student:

- 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 a proportionate response
- The possible impact of suspension.

### 10.5 Forms of Suspension:

**Immediate suspension:** The Principal may consider an immediate suspension to be necessary where the continued presence of the student in the school at the time would represent a serious threat to the safety of students or staff of the school or any other person.

**Suspension during a State examination:** This sanction must be approved by the Board of Management and should only be used where there is:

- a threat to good order in the conduct of the examination
- a threat to the safety of other students and personnel
- a threat to the rights of other students to do their examination in a calm atmosphere

### 10.6 Procedures in respect of suspension:

Fair procedures are followed when proposing to suspend a student. Where a preliminary assessment of the facts confirms serious misbehaviour that could warrant suspension, the following procedures will be observed:

- a. The student and his/her parent(s)/guardian(s) will be informed of the complaint, will be told how it will be investigated and will be informed that it could result in suspension.
- b. Parents and student will be invited to meet the Principal and will be given an opportunity to respond to the complaint before a decision is made and before any sanction is imposed.
- c. In the case of an immediate suspension, parents will be notified and arrangements made with them to collect their son/daughter from the school. A formal investigation will then be initiated with a meeting between all parties arranged for a later date. Parents and student will be given an opportunity to respond to the complaint before any decision is made and any further sanction imposed.
- d. Penalty points may be imposed in accordance with the number of days for which the student was suspended.

### 10.7 The period of suspension:

In general, a suspension should be no longer than three days. If a suspension longer than five days is proposed by the Principal, the matter will be referred to the Board of Management for consideration and approval. In circumstances where a Board of Management meeting cannot be convened in the time frame necessary, the Principal with the approval of the Chairperson may impose a suspension.

No student will be suspended for more than 10 days on any one period of suspension.

The Board will formally review any proposal to suspend a student, where the suspension would bring the number of days for which the student is suspended in the current school year to 20 days or more. Any such suspension is subject to appeal under section 29 of the Education Act 1998.

### 10.8 Appeals

The decision of the Principal to suspend a student may be appealed to the Board of Management.

Where the total number of days for which the student has been suspended in the current year reaches 20 days, the parents, or a student aged over 18 years, may appeal the suspension under section 29 of the Education Act 1998.

### **10.9 Implementing the suspension:**

The Principal will notify the parents and the student in writing of the decision to suspend. The letter should confirm the following:

- a) the period of the suspension and the dates on which the suspension will begin and end
- b) the reasons for the suspension
- c) any study programme to be followed
- d) the arrangements for returning to school, including any commitments to be entered into by the student and the parents
- e) the provision of an appeal to the Board of Management
- f) the right to appeal to the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Science (Education Act : Section 29) in particular circumstances.

### **10.10 Grounds for removing a suspension**

A suspension may be removed if the Board of Management decides to remove the suspension for any reason or if the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Science directs that it be removed following an appeal under Section 29 of the Education Act 1998.

### **10.11 After the suspension ends**

A period of suspension ends on the date given in the letter of notification to the parents about the suspension. A support team for the suspended student may be established in accordance with the student's needs. One member, often the Class Teacher, will be assigned, if necessary, to help the student re-integrate into school.

### **10.12 Records and Reports**

Written records will be kept of:

- the investigation ( including notes of all interviews held)
- the decision making process
- the decision and rationale for the decision
- the duration of the suspension and any conditions attached to the suspension

The Principal should report all suspensions of 5 days and over to the Board of Management, with the reasons for and the duration of each suspension.

The Principal is required to report suspensions in accordance with the NEWB reporting guidelines.

### **10.13 Review**

The Board of Management will review the use of suspension periodically to ensure that its use is consistent with school policies, that patterns of use are examined to identify factors that may be influencing behaviour in the school and to ensure that the use of suspension is appropriate and effective.



## 11. Expulsion

### 11.1 Definition

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

### 11.2 Authority to expel

The Board of Management has the authority to expel a student.

### 11.3 The grounds for expulsion

Expulsion should be a proportionate response to the student's behaviour and should only be taken in extreme cases of unacceptable behaviour.

A proposal to expel a student requires serious grounds such as:

- 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.

There may be grounds for considering that a student be expelled for a first offence. The kind of behaviours that might result in a proposal to expel includes the following:

- a serious threat of violence against another student or member of staff
- actual violence or physical assault
- supplying illegal drugs to other students in the school
- sexual assault

### 11.4 Factors to consider before proposing to expel a student:

The factors to consider before proposing to expel a student are:

- The nature and seriousness of the behaviour
- The context of the behaviour
- The impact of the behaviour
- The interventions tried to date
- Whether expulsion is a proportionate response
- The possible impact of expulsion

### 11.5 Procedures in respect of expulsion:

Where a preliminary assessment of the facts confirms serious misbehaviour that could warrant expulsion, the following procedural steps will be taken:

#### **A detailed investigation is carried out under the direction of the Principal**

The Principal will inform the student and their parents in writing about the details of the alleged misbehaviour, how it will be investigated and that it could result in expulsion.

A meeting will be arranged with the Principal to give the parents and student every opportunity to respond to the complaint of serious misbehaviour before a decision is made and a sanction is imposed.

If the parents and students fail to attend the meeting, the Principal will write explaining the gravity of the issue, the importance of attending a rescheduled meeting, and failing that, the duty of the School Management to make a decision to respond to the inappropriate behaviour.

A record of the invitation issued and the response of the parents will be kept on file.

### **A recommendation to the Board of Management by the Principal**

Where the Principal forms a view, based on the investigation of the alleged misbehaviour, that expulsion may be warranted, the Principal makes a recommendation to the Board of Management to consider expulsion. The Principal will:

- inform the parents and student that the Board of Management is being asked to consider expulsion
- ensure that parents have records of the allegations against the student, the investigation, and written notice of the grounds on which the Board of Management is being asked to consider expulsion
- provide the Board of Management with the same comprehensive records as are given to parents
- notify the parents of the date of the hearing by the Board of Management and invite them to that hearing
- advise the parents that they can make a written and oral submission to the Board of Management
- ensure that parents have enough notice to allow them prepare for the hearing.

### **Consideration by the Board of Management of the Principal's recommendation and the holding of a hearing**

The Board will review the initial investigation and ensure that the investigation was properly conducted in line with fair procedures.

The Board will review all documentation and the circumstances of the case. No party who has had any involvement with the case will be part of the Board's deliberations.

If the Board decides to consider expelling a student, a hearing will be arranged.

At the hearing, the Principal and the parents, or a student aged 18 years or over, will put their case to the Board in each other's presence. Each party should be allowed to question the evidence of the other party directly. Parents may wish to be accompanied to the hearing.

After both sides have been heard, the Principal and parents will withdraw and the Board will deliberate in private.

### **Board of Management deliberations and actions following the hearing**

It is the responsibility of the Board of Management to decide whether or not the allegation is substantiated and, if so, whether or not expulsion is the appropriate sanction.

Where the Board, having considered all the facts of the case, is of the opinion that the student should be expelled, the Board will notify the Educational Welfare Officer in writing of its opinion, and the reasons for this opinion. The student cannot be expelled before the passage of twenty school days from the date on which the Educational Welfare Officer receives the written notification.

The Board will inform the parents in writing about its conclusions and the next steps in the process. Parents will be informed that the Educational Welfare Officer will be notified of the decision.

### **Consultations arranged by the Educational Welfare Officer**

Within twenty days of receipt of the notification from the Board of Management of its opinion that a student be expelled, the Educational Welfare Officer must:

- Consult with the Principal, parents and student
- Convene a meeting of those parties who agree to attend.

The purpose of the meeting is to ensure that arrangements are made for the student to remain in education. Pending these consultations about the future education of the student, the Board may consider it appropriate to suspend the student if there is a likelihood that the continued presence of the student during this time will seriously disrupt the learning of others or represent a threat to the safety of other students or staff.

### **Confirmation of the decision to expel**

Where the twenty-day period following notification to the Educational Welfare Officer has elapsed and where the Board of Management remains of the view that the student should be expelled, the Chairperson and the Principal will be delegated to formally confirm the decision to expel. Parents will be notified that the expulsion will now proceed. Parents will be informed about the right to appeal and will be supplied with a form on which to lodge an appeal. A formal record will be kept of the decision to expel the student.

### **11.6 Appeals:**

A parent, or a student over 18 years, may appeal a decision to expel to the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Science. An appeal may also be brought by the National Educational Welfare Board on behalf of the student.

### **11.7 Review:**

The Board of Management will review the use of expulsion in the school annually to ensure that its use is consistent with school policies, that patterns of use are examined to identify factors that may be influencing behaviour in the school and to ensure that expulsion is used appropriately.

## **12. Bringing a concern about a behaviour matter**

In John Scottus Secondary School, we foster an openness to dialogue with parents and students.

When concerns arise, parents are encouraged to contact the class teacher or the Principal with the intention of resolving the matter.

Students may inform a teacher verbally of issues of concern to them. Parents may inform the Class Teacher of their concerns in writing, by telephone or by arranging a meeting. The Class Teacher will then complete an Incident slip to record the issue and to inform another Class Teacher if necessary. The parent or student will be informed of the progress of the investigation and of the final outcome by the Class Teacher.

## **13. Monitoring**

The Code of Behaviour will be monitored by the Principal and Deputy Principal and the Senior Management Team on a regular basis and will be formally reviewed in 2018/2019.

**Reviewed 09 June 2016**