



# **Code of Positive Behaviour**

**JUNE 2026**

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## Introduction

This Code of Positive Behaviour has been developed in accordance with the NEWB (National Educational Welfare Board) guidelines "Developing a code of Behaviour: Guidelines for Schools", and the Education Welfare Act, Section 23, which states that the code of Behaviour shall specify "the standards of behaviour that shall be observed by each student attending the school". This Code is also informed by the "A Blueprint for an Educate Together Second-level School," and the "The Ethical Curriculum Framework."

Galway Educate Together Secondary School promotes a happy and caring school environment where students are encouraged and supported to reach their full potential. The learning environment in Galway Educate Together Secondary School will be a positive one with a strong emphasis on the promotion and reward of positive behaviours. Our school will provide a caring and safe environment for our students where the values of respect, fairness, kindness, self-discipline and hard work will be expected from all of us.

The Code of Positive Behaviour supports the school community to work together to encourage good conduct and to create an atmosphere which is conducive to teaching and learning.

## Aims

The Code of Positive Behaviour is committed to:

- \* building a culture of positive relationships among students, staff, and parents/guardians, through Restorative Practice
- \* creating a safe, secure learning environment for students by promoting a sense of mutual respect among all members of the school community
- \* cultivating a sense of pride in our school, where differences and similarities are embraced
- \* encouraging students to take personal responsibility for their learning, development, and behaviour, and outlining ways in which this is acknowledged
- \* recognising and respecting the spiritual, emotional, intellectual, and physical potential of all students
- \* maintaining high expectations of student behaviour to ensure that all students reach their full potential

- \* having effective procedures in place that facilitate the day-to-day running of the school and meet the demands of current legislation
- \* outlining strategies to be used to prevent behaviour that falls short of expectations and outlining the structure of fair, consistent and agreed sanctions that will be used in response
- \* helping our young people to mature into responsible, participating citizens
- \* acknowledging that everyone has a shared responsibility in the continued growth and development of Galway Educate Together Secondary School

## Expectations & Responsibilities

### Responsibilities of Students

Students of Galway Educate Together Secondary School are responsible for adhering to high standards of behaviour at all times while on school property, while travelling to and from school and while participating in any school-related activity. In return they will benefit from the caring and supportive environment throughout their educational journey with us.

Set out below are responsibilities of each student. As an integral part of our community, parents play an active and supportive role in ensuring students understand and meet their responsibilities as well as celebrating their achievements.

#### *Responsibility 1: Attendance*

- \* Students need to attend school every day unless the absence is unavoidable. Attendances at school promotes a positive environment for learning and personal development. Full attendance enhances each student's ability to achieve his/her full potential and to benefit from all school activities and support initiatives.
- \* If the case of an unavoidable absence, parents are obliged to contact the school to explain the reason for the absence, in accordance with the Education Welfare Act 2000 (Section 18). This should be done using the VShare app. The school is obliged to report any student who misses 20 days or more within one school year to TUSLA.
- \* The school will notify parents/guardians of school absences via the school app.
- \* Students are not permitted to leave the school grounds during school hours without permission. If student needs to leave school early, a parent/guardian must grant permission on the school app

before 8.30am, so that it can be approved by administration staff. This will allow the student to sign out using the tablet in reception.

### *Responsibility 2: Punctuality*

- \* Students need to arrive to school and to each class on time. In addition to being essential for the efficient running of the school, learning to be punctual is an essential life skill and is expected in the workplace. Arriving late is inconvenient for all members of the school community and interrupts the learning of others.
- \* Where a student is unavoidably late to school, parents/guardians must inform the office via the school app. Students who arrive after 8.30am are required to sign in using the tablet in reception. This will trigger a notification of arrival to the parent(s)/guardian(s) via the school app, if the lateness has not been explained in advance.
- \* Students who are persistently late to school may be required to
  - attend an Afterschool Reflection to reflect on barriers to punctuality and set targets
  - Attend a meeting at the school with their parents/guardians to discuss punctuality supports
- \* Lateness to for lessons throughout the day will be recorded on the student's behaviour profile on VShare.

### *Responsibility 3: Respecting ourselves, others, and our school environment*

GETSS students are expected to:

- \* treat other students and staff with good manners and respect, listening to others, avoiding interrupting others, following the instruction of staff members and being respectful in their use of tone and language
- \* be polite and considerate of others, taking turns where appropriate, saying hello, smiling and greeting others in a courteous way, holding doors open for others and moving between classes in a safe and calm manner
- \* respect the school environment, their own and other people's property and avoid causing unnecessary damage
- \* keep classrooms and corridors clean by tidying up after themselves and disposing of waste

appropriately

- \* abide by the school's Anti-Bullying Policy, recognising that any kind of bullying, intimidating or threatening behaviour is unacceptable
- \* refrain from chewing gum or spitting on the school premises
- \* refrain from eating outside of specified break-times and assigned areas
- \* be aware that harassment of all teaching, learning support and ancillary staff is expressly forbidden both inside and outside the school
- \* respect the personal boundaries of others. Physical contact should be platonic and consensual in nature. Sexual conduct of any kind is inappropriate in a school environment

#### *Responsibility 4: Making our best effort to learn*

Good classroom practice and organisation are essential for effective learning and teaching. GETSS students are expected to:

- \* visit the lockers at appropriate times only (before the first lesson, during break and lunchtimes, and when school finishes)
- \* be ready to learn at the beginning of each class, having the required equipment and materials (iPad, textbook, copy, pens/pencils, student journal, etc.)
- \* complete all assigned home learning on time and have it ready at the beginning of each class, in line with the schools Home Learning Policy
- \* record all home learning in the school journal
- \* take responsibility to find out and complete home learning assigned if absent due to extra-curricular participation
- \* follow the instructions of teachers during lessons, seeking clarification on any aspect of classwork or home learning of which they are unsure, and paying attention to feedback and corrections from teachers
- \* make their best efforts to engage in lessons, completing all work to the best of their ability.

#### *Responsibility 5: Student Journal*

The student journal is a valuable tool for supporting students with organising their home learning. Teachers may also use the student journal to communicate with parents and guardians on student progress.

Students are expected to:

- \* have their journal in school every day and place it on their desk at the beginning of each lesson
- \* keep journals neat and tidy
- \* log all home learning assignments in the journal

Parents are encouraged to check the student journal regularly. Students who use Assistive Technology may have permission to use a digital journal instead of the student journal.

*Responsibility 6: Behaving well in all aspects of school life, including trips and extra-curricular activities*

Extra-curricular activities and school outings are an important part of students' personal development in GETSS. They enrich and enhance school life, build school spirit, and improve relationships. Students are expected to do the following, in line with the School Trips Policy.

- \* recognise that they must behave in a way that reflects positively on the school while representing the school offsite
- \* follow the instructions of staff members during outings or activities
- \* catch up on all missed work resulting from extra-curricular participation
- \* Recognise that the school's Code of Positive Behaviour, Acceptable Use Policy and Substance Use Policy apply at school events and outings both on and off the property.

*Responsibility 7: Using mobile phones, devices, and the internet appropriately*

Expectations around using mobile phones, devices and the internet are outlined in our Acceptable Use Policy. The following rules apply:

- \* Phones must be switched off and out of sight during the school day unless use is permitted by a staff member.
- \* The point of contact for students is through the school office only. Students are not permitted to use their phones to contact home during or between classes. They may contact home through the school office. Parents are asked to contact their child through the school office only.
- \* Unsanctioned use of mobile phones will result in the mobile phone being confiscated for the rest of the day. Repeated offences of unsanctioned mobile phone use will result in parents/guardians

having to collect the phone at the end of the school day. In the event of consistent breaches of the Acceptable Use Policy, parents will be invited in for a meeting and procedures outlined on page 14 of this policy will be implemented.

- \* Students are not permitted to take photographs or video recordings of other members of the school community without their consent on any school or personal device.
- \* Students are not permitted to post images/videos taken in school to social media channels without the permission of a member of school management.
- \* Setting up school social media accounts is not permitted.
- \* Student devices (e.g. iPads) may only be used under the direct supervision and instruction of a staff member. Use of these devices outside of scheduled lessons is not permitted unless explicitly authorised by a member of staff.
- \* Students who are found to use their phone or device to bully or intimidate others may be subject to further sanctions, in line with the school's Anti Bullying Policy.
- \* If a phone has been used in a bullying incident, the phone may be passed on to an external agency (e.g. HSE/Gardai) as part of an ongoing investigation.

#### *Responsibility 8: Adhering to the School's Substance Use Policy*

The school aims to encourage a healthy lifestyle for every member of the school community. For this reason:

- \* The possession, use or supply of tobacco, e-cigarettes or vapes and alcohol is always forbidden in school buildings and on school grounds.
- \* The possession, use or supply of illegal drugs or controlled substances and associated paraphernalia, and all substances covered by the Misuse of Drugs Act (1977), or the attempt to arrange same, is forbidden in all parts of the school.
- \* The intent to supply illegal drugs or controlled substances and associated paraphernalia, and all substances covered by the Misuse of Drugs Act (1977) to other members of the school community is forbidden.
- \* Solvents may only be used for their legitimate function by members of staff, and by pupils when under the direct supervision of a member of staff.
- \* Tippex and aerosols are discouraged and inappropriate use of these is forbidden.

- \* Medication of any kind may only be used in accordance with the terms of this policy document. This includes CBD and CBD products, which may only be used with written advice from a doctor and must be submitted in advance of use in school.
- \* A maximum of one student is permitted in a toilet cubicle or in a single gender-neutral toilet at all times.

This list is not exhaustive. Further detail is available in the school's Substance Use Policy.

#### *Responsibility 9: Compliance with all school policies*

Students are expected to adhere to all school policies, including, but not limited to, those listed below. Policies are available on the school website.

- \* Dress Code
- \* Acceptable Usage Policy (iPad and ICT)
- \* Anti-Bullying Policy
- \* Substance Use Policy
- \* Home Learning Policy
- \* Other relevant policies

#### **Responsibilities of Teaching Staff and Management**

A restorative approach ensures that staff always model positive and constructive communication, allowing them to build respectful rapport with students. Staff will endeavour to maintain a consistent, fair and restorative approach to supporting positive behaviour by:

- \* Fostering mutually respectful relationships between students, parents/guardians, and colleagues
- \* Rewarding positive behaviour, learning achievements, effort, and general progress
- \* Following and adopting clearly defined procedures in a restorative, fair, respectful manner
- \* Implementing appropriate teaching strategies and active methodologies to enable all students to achieve their potential
- \* Enhancing student wellbeing through a structured support system and a range of targeted wellbeing programmes

- \* Providing students with access to appropriate guidance and psychological services
- \* Communicating proactively with students and parents/guardians to promote, reinforce, and sustain positive behaviour

### *Year Heads*

Year Heads play a key leadership role in fostering a positive and supportive environment, guiding students while promoting high standards of behaviour, wellbeing, and engagement within their year group.

- \* Promoting and upholding a culture of positive behaviour, respect, and inclusion within the year group
- \* Monitoring student behaviour, attendance, punctuality, and overall wellbeing
- \* Supporting teachers in managing behaviour through a fair, consistent, and restorative approach
- \* Responding to behavioural concerns in a timely and appropriate manner, implementing interventions where required
- \* Communicating regularly and constructively with parents/guardians regarding student progress and behaviour
- \* Working collaboratively with the Student Support Team, senior management, and relevant external agencies
- \* Recognising, encouraging, and reinforcing positive behaviour, effort, and achievement
- \* Maintaining accurate and up-to-date records of behavioural incidents and interventions
- \* Encouraging students to take responsibility for their actions and to engage in restorative practices

### *Positive Behaviour Support Team*

The Positive Behaviour Support (PBS) Team, under the leadership of the PBS Coordinator, plays a central role in promoting positive behaviour and providing targeted supports and interventions to meet the needs of students.

- \* Promoting positive behaviour through proactive, restorative, and inclusive practices
- \* Designing and delivering targeted programmes and interventions for individuals and small groups
- \* Supporting students with additional behavioural or wellbeing needs

- \* Working collaboratively with Year Heads, teachers, and the Student Support Team
- \* Monitoring student progress and reviewing the effectiveness of interventions
- \* Providing guidance and strategies to staff to support positive behaviour in the classroom
- \* Liaising with parents/guardians and external agencies where appropriate

## Responsibilities of Parents/Guardians

Parents/Guardians, along with teachers are significant adults in the lives of the young people at school.

Parents/Guardians will encourage positive student behaviour by:

- \* Supporting the school in its high expectations of positive behaviour and high standards of personal achievement and by encouraging and supporting their children's progress
- \* Informing the school of concerns which may affect the child's progress, via the Year Head
- \* Providing feedback to the school in relation to policies and procedures

## Rewards

The quality of relationships is one of the most powerful influences on student behaviour and achievement. At GETSS, we aim to foster mutually respectful relationships, balancing warmth and empathy with objectivity, professionalism, and fairness. The quality of daily interactions both inside and outside the classroom is central to our efforts to promote good behaviour. We also recognise the importance of rewarding students who make a positive contribution to school life.

Every effort is made to reward positive behaviour, student achievement and effort. This may be done in a variety of ways:

- \* positive verbal comments by teachers, including praise for effort, participation, or achievement in class
- \* positive written comments on work in copies/OneNote/journal
- \* positive comments on VShare or via assessment reports
- \* positive telephone calls, postcards, or emails to parents/guardians
- \* recognition of student achievements
- \* displays of student work

- \* displays of team photos
- \* opportunities to represent the school at activities and events
- \* motivational reward schemes such as Student of the Week, Class of the Month, Hardest Worker, Most Improved Worker, Spirit Award
- \* student awards events
- \* end-of-term fun days/trips/events
- \* opportunities to undertake student leadership roles

GETSS also uses a Merit System and a House System to reward positive behaviour and student achievements.

### House System

To help promote a sense of community across year groups, students will be divided into 6 houses. House names will be colours from our school logo – Red, Green, Yellow, Purple, Blue, Orange. Each House has Student House Captain to lead and motivate the house.

Students can earn rewards in the form of house point systems in a variety of ways:

- House Events: Subject departments will organise events where students can earn points for their house each year for example, art competitions, artistic performance activities, sports day events, etc.
- House Token System: All staff members will have tokens to distribute generously in class, at breaktimes and during extra-curricular activities. Students will be rewarded for effort, improvement, attitude, teamwork, inclusive behaviour, excellence, engagement, initiative, empathy, kindness, helpfulness, positivity, resilience and respect. This is not an exhaustive list. These tokens will be placed by students in large token jars, which are on display Tokens are counted periodically and totalled.
- House Prize: The winning house will be rewarded at the end of the year.











## Merits for Positive Behaviour on VSware

Where a staff member feels that a student deserves acknowledgment for positive behaviour, demonstrating Junior Cycle key skills or engaging well with their learning, Merits may be awarded on VSware. Staff members will specify the positive behaviour from a list of options and will include further detail, where necessary.

Year Heads and Tutors monitor the VSware Behaviour Log regularly.

Parents/Guardians can access and monitor this record using their VSware logins and are encouraged to do so regularly.

There are periodic rewards for students with consistently high levels of Merits.

Positive		
	Being Literate	0
	Being Numerate	0
	Communicating	0
	Managing Information & Thinking	0
	Managing Myself	0
	Other	0
	Postcard home	0
	Postcard recommendation	0
	Staying Well	0
	Working With Others	0

## Accountability & Consequences

### Restorative Practice

GETSS adopts a restorative approach to behaviour. This includes the use of restorative questions such as those listed below to respond to challenging behaviour. Restorative conversations seek to uncover the underlying causes of an incident.

*Using restorative questions to respond to challenging behaviour:*

- What happened?
- What were you thinking about at the time?
- What have your thoughts been since?

- Who has been affected by what you did?
- In what way have they been affected
- What do you think you need to do to make things right?

## Procedure for Supporting Challenging Behaviour

We recognise that students may fall short of what is expected of them in terms of behaviour, and we have procedures and systems in place to help support students on these occasions. The aim of these procedures and systems is to intervene in a way that brings about a positive change in behaviour. They also signal to other students and staff that their well-being is being protected. Behaviour support interventions will be tailored to meet students' individual needs.

Teachers and Learning Support Staff will use a variety of classroom management strategies to maintain a safe and productive learning environment for students, such as those listed in our procedure for supporting student behaviour on page 15 of this document.

Teachers will also use VSware to flag issues, by logging specific behaviours and assigning Demerits. The process encourages students to take responsibility for their own behaviour. It also helps identify patterns in student behaviour, so we can offer further support with behaviour interventions.

Parents/Guardians can access and monitor this record using their VSware logins and they are encouraged to regularly do so.

Demerits are not stand-alone consequences and are accompanied by restorative conversations. Restorative Practice is central to our ethos and informs each of the steps outlined in our Behaviour Support Procedure.


In the case of serious breaches of the Code of Positive Behaviour, staff may refer student behaviour directly to the Tutor or Deputy Principal, who will respond in accordance with the procedure outlined on page 15 of this document.

Further steps may be taken by the Deputy Principal, the Principal, or the Board of Management, as outlined

	Arguing with teacher/student
	Being disrespectful to others
	Breach of Health & Safety
	Chewing Gum
	Disrespecting school property
	Disruption of learning
	Disruption of their own learning and of others learning
	Lack of Punctuality between lessons
	Laughing at/humiliating another student

in the Behaviour Support Procedure.

# Behaviour Support Procedure

Personnel	Possible Interventions and Consequences
 <b>Class Teacher</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Non-verbal communication, including eye contact, proximity to student and check-in with student</li> <li>• Seat change</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Direct behaviour reminder, including advice on how to improve.</li> <li>• Possible note in journal</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• RP discussion after class or at another suitable time</li> <li>• Possibility of logging behaviour on VSware</li> <li>• Possibility of Demerit</li> </ul>
	<p>If behaviour persists:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Demerit with RP discussion</li> <li>• Contact Parent/Guardian</li> <li>• Possible Behaviour Referral to Year Head</li> </ul>
	<p>If serious breach of Code or serious interruption of learning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Behaviour Referral to Year Head</li> </ul>
<b>Year Head</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Monitoring of VSware Behaviour Log weekly</li> <li>• Direct behaviour reminder/RP discussion with student</li> <li>• Behaviour Referral if:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Student receives 3 Demerits in one day</li> <li>- Student receives 5 Demerits in one week</li> <li>- Student’s behaviour profile suggests a pattern of concerning behaviour (Year Head informs parent/guardian)</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Agree behaviour support intervention/s and/or Behaviour Improvement Plan, in consultation with the Positive Behaviour Support Team.</li> <li>• Possible <i>Afterschool Reflection</i> for repeated or serious breaches of Code of Positive Behaviour (Year Head informs parent/guardian)</li> <li>• Possible referral to Deputy Principal or Principal in cases of a very serious COPB breach</li> </ul>
<b>Deputy Principal</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Contact parents/guardians</li> <li>• Agree further behaviour support intervention/s and/or Behaviour Improvement Plan in consultation with the Behaviour Support Team.</li> <li>• Meeting with parents/guardians</li> </ul>
<b>Principal/BOM</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• May engage the support of:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Education Welfare Officer</li> <li>- Relevant outside agencies</li> <li>- Behaviour Review Sub-Committee of Board of Management</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Interventions may include:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Suspension</li> <li>- Expulsion (BOM)</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

*This procedure may skip steps and/or be replaced by alternative approaches, depending on the context. The chart above should be read within the wider context of the overall policy.*

Other consequences may include, but are not limited to:

- \* the steps outlined in the Home Learning Policy, including communication with home, Home Learning Club support, etc.
- \* extra class work/home learning given to make up for time lost
- \* withdrawal of privileges
- \* monitoring sheets for behaviour/punctuality/home learning
- \* behaviour contracts
- \* being asked to carry out a useful task in the school in the student's free time

Failure to attend an Afterschool Reflection without an acceptable reason is deemed to be a serious breach of the Code of Positive Behaviour and may lead to a more serious sanction, up to and including suspension.

## Conflict Resolution

We take a restorative approach towards resolving conflict. The following conflict resolution approaches.

### 1. Using restorative questions to help those harmed by others' actions

- What did you think when you realised what had happened?
- What have your thoughts been since?
- How has this affected you and others?
- What has been the hardest thing for you?

### 2. Negotiation

The students are taught the skills needed to negotiate with others in times of conflict. We teach the students to clearly and directly communicate if another student or a member of staff is behaving in a way that is upsetting them.

The students are encouraged to say 'Stop' if someone is teasing them or annoying them in any way.

We see this assertive communication as a particularly important step in each child's personal development.

Through our SPHE (Social Personal & Health Education) programme students are asked to take four steps

if they find themselves in a conflict situation. (i.e., Stop, Ask, Listen, Talk) We also discuss conflict resolution in our Ethical Education lessons.

### **3. Mediation**

Mediation is regularly used to help students resolve conflict. The mediator helps the students in a dispute to resolve their differences amicably and aims to create ‘win-win’ solutions. Mediators encourage the students to communicate their feelings and to give an account of what has happened. In the mediation process students are encouraged to listen and to understand the situation from both sides.

### **4. Arbitration**

Unfortunately, not all conflicts are resolved through negotiation and mediation. Sometimes conflicts are resolved through arbitration where the teacher or principal intervenes and decides whether sanctions are necessary to end a conflict.

## **Suspension and Expulsion**

This part of the Code of Positive Behaviour relates to sanctions of Suspension and Expulsion that the school management may adopt when dealing with serious breaches of the Code of Positive Behaviour.

### **Legal Context**

Galway Educate Together Secondary School is required under Section 23 of the Education Welfare Act 2000 to include procedures for suspension and expulsion in our Code of Positive Behaviour. This policy and the procedures herein have been prepared in line with the NEWB (National Education Welfare Board) guidelines ‘Developing a Code of Behaviour – Guidelines for Schools.’

### **Objectives**

The aims of our policy are:

- \* To maintain a safe, secure learning environment free from disruption for all members of our school community
- \* To outline the strategies to be used where students are in a serious breach of our Code of Positive Behaviour that led to Suspension or Expulsion

## Roles and Responsibilities

### *The Principal*

- (a) The Principal or, in the Principal's absence, the Deputy Principal, has the authority to suspend any student for a limited period and may recommend a longer suspension or expulsion of a student to the Board of Management.
- (b) Expulsion is the ultimate sanction imposed by the school for serious breaches of the Code of Positive Behaviour and may be imposed only by the Board of Management. The Board of Management has the responsibility to deal with such issues in accordance with the principles of fairness and natural justice.

## Suspension

Suspension is defined as absenting the student from classes for a specified period.

### *Grounds for Suspension*

The decision to suspend a student requires serious grounds such as that:

- \* Ongoing persistent low-level disruption which sanctions and supports as outlined in the Code of Positive Behaviour have failed to resolve
- \* The student's behaviour has had a seriously detrimental effect on the education/welfare of other students and/or
- \* The student's continued presence in the school, at this time, constitutes a threat to safety and/or
- \* The student is responsible for serious damage to property

A single incident or first offence of serious misconduct may be grounds for suspension. Examples of such would include:

- \* A serious threat of violence against a member of the school community and/or
- \* Actual violence or assault against a member of the school community and/or
- \* Gross defiance and/or
- \* Drug, alcohol, or other criminal offences This list is not exhaustive.

Such incidences of serious breaches of the Code of Positive Behaviour may also incur the sanction of expulsion.

### *Rationale for Suspension*

Suspensions can provide a respite for staff and the student, give the student time to reflect on the link between their action(s) and its consequences and give staff time to plan ways of helping the student to change unacceptable behaviour to meet the school's expectations in the future.

Suspension is most effective when it highlights the parent(s)/guardian(s) responsibilities for taking an active role in partnership with the school in working with their son or daughter to help them to improve their behaviour as required.

### *The Period of Suspension*

With permission from the Board of Management at a BOM meeting the Principal may suspend a student for 3 days. The Principal may suspend for five school days in exceptional circumstances, in consultation with the Chairperson of the Board of Management. A longer term of suspension will require approval from the Board of Management. Where a student is suspended for a period of six or more continuous days or for a cumulative total of 20 days in one school year, the Principal is required to inform the Education Welfare Officer (EWO) who may contact the family.

### *Suspension during a State Examination*

If the Principal or, in the Principal's absence, the Deputy Principal forms the opinion that the behaviour of a student sitting either Leaving or Junior Certificate/Cycle examinations constitutes a threat to good order in the conduct of the State examination or a threat to the safety of other students and personnel or a threat to the right of other students to do their examination in a calm atmosphere, then the Board of Management may approve the suspension of that student.

### *Procedures in respect of Suspension*

As a general rule, suspension will be applied only after other interventions in our Code of Positive Behaviour have failed to change the behaviour problem.

Where a preliminary assessment of the facts confirms a serious breach of the Code of Positive Behaviour that could warrant suspension, the student and his or her parent(s)/guardians(s) will be informed about the complaint, how it will be investigated and that it could result in suspension, should the complaint be substantiated.

This initial communication will usually be by post although there may be circumstances where, following the preliminary assessment, an immediate suspension is warranted for the safety of the student, other students, staff, or others. In such a case a phone call will be made to the parent(s)/guardian(s), and they may be required to come to the school to collect their child. The formal investigation of the complaint will commence as soon as possible after the alleged misbehaviour has occurred.

#### *Opportunity to Respond*

Parent(s)/guardian(s) and student will normally be given an opportunity to respond to the complaint before a decision to suspend is made. Ideally this response will be made at a meeting involving the student, the student's parent(s)/guardian(s) and the Principal (or in the Principal's absence, the Deputy Principal). If this is not possible, a phone call will be made to the parent(s)/guardian(s) to discuss the complaint and provide an opportunity to respond. If a student and his or her parent(s)/guardian(s) fail to attend a scheduled meeting, the Principal will write advising the parent(s)/guardian(s) of the gravity of the matter, the importance of attending a re-scheduled meeting and, failing that, the duty of the school authorities to make a decision to respond to the findings of the initial assessment. Written records will be retained in the school of all stages of the above procedures.

#### *Implementing the Suspension*

The Principal will notify the parent(s)/guardian(s) and the student in writing of the decision to suspend. The letter will confirm:

- \* The period of the suspension and the dates on which the suspension will begin and end the reasons for the suspension
- \* Any study programme to be followed that the student will be in the care of their parent(s)/guardian(s) during the period of their suspension from school
- \* The arrangements for returning to school, including any commitments to be entered into by the student and the parent(s)/guardian(s) (for example, parent(s)/guardian(s) and the student may be asked to reaffirm their commitment to the Code of Positive Behaviour)
- \* The provision for an appeal to the Board of Management
- \* The right to appeal, if appropriate, to the Secretary General of the Department of Education and

Skills (Education Act 1998, Section 29). Students are advised to use the period of suspension for serious study and revision as well as reflection on the incident in question or overall behaviour.

School work may be assigned to be completed during the period of suspension

### *Right to Appeal*

Where a decision is made by the Principal to suspend a student, the parent(s)/guardian(s) have the right to appeal the decision to the Board of Management. The suspension will not normally be implemented until after such an appeal unless the behaviour in question warrants an immediate suspension.

If the appeal is heard after the suspension has been implemented and if the appeal is upheld, then the record of the student will not include the suspension.

A decision by the Board of Management to suspend a student cannot be appealed unless the total number of days for which the student has been suspended in the current school year reaches twenty days. In such a case, the parent(s)/guardian(s), or a student aged over eighteen years, may appeal the suspension under Section 29 of the Education Act 1998, as amended by the Education (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2007. This appeal must be made within 42 days of receipt of the notification of the suspension.

At the time when parent(s)/guardian(s) are being formally notified of such a suspension, they and the student will be told about their right to appeal to the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Skills under section 29 of the Education Act 1998 and should be given information about how to appeal.

### *Grounds for Removing a Suspension from a Student's Record*

A suspension may be removed from the records of a student at the discretion of the Board of Management or if the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Skills directs that it be removed following an appeal under section 29 of the Education Act 1998

Procedures for the Re-introduction of the Student into the School The parent(s)/guardian(s) and the student may be requested to attend a meeting with the Principal, Deputy Principal or Year Head before the student returns to class. The purpose of this meeting is to emphasise the seriousness of the misbehaviour that gave rise to the suspension and to ensure parental support for the school's Code of Positive Behaviour. It is also an opportunity to stress parental/guardian responsibility in supporting the school in its efforts to help their

son/daughter to behave well when he/she returns to school. In addition, the supports that the school intends to put in place to support the student on his/her return may be outlined at such a meeting.

The parent(s)/guardian(s) and/or the student may be requested to sign their commitment to the Code of Positive Behaviour, Student Report, or other conditions as deemed appropriate by the Principal or Board of Management. The parent(s)/guardian(s) and the student will be informed in advance of any such other conditions.

When the suspension is completed, the student will be given the opportunity and support for a fresh start. Although a record is kept of the breach of the Code of Positive Behaviour and any sanction imposed, on completion of the sanction the school will expect the same behaviour of this student as of all other students.

#### *Records and Reports*

Formal written records will be kept of:

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

The Principal will report all suspensions to the Board of Management, with the reasons for and the duration of each suspension.

The Principal is required to report to the Educational Welfare Officer (EWO) all suspensions of six days and longer, or any suspension where the total number of days for which the student has been suspended in the current school year reaches twenty days.

#### *Review of Use of Suspension*

The Board of Management will review the use of suspension in the school at regular intervals 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 use of suspension is appropriate and effective.

## Expulsion

Expulsion is the ultimate sanction imposed by the school and may only be exercised by the Board of Management.

### *Grounds for Expulsion*

The expulsion of a student is a very serious step, and one that will only be taken by the Board of Management in extreme cases of breaches of the Code of Positive Behaviour.

The school will usually have taken significant steps to address the misbehaviour and to avoid expulsion of a student including, as appropriate:

- \* Meeting with parent(s)/guardian(s)/guardian(s) and the student to try to find ways of helping the student to change their behaviour
- \* Making sure that the student understands the possible consequences of their behaviour if it should persist
- \* Ensuring that all other possible options have been tried
- \* Seeking the assistance of support agencies (i.e. National Educational Psychological Service, Health Service Executive Community Services, the National Behavioural Support Service, Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services, National Council for Special Education)
- \* A proposal to expel a student requires serious grounds such as that the student's behaviour is a persistent cause of significant disruption to the learning of others or to the teaching process
- \* The student's continued presence in the school constitutes a real and significant threat to safety
- \* The student is responsible for serious damage to property of others or belonging to the school
- \* The student is in possession of uses or intends to or supplies drugs/ drug paraphernalia or other illegal substances in the school, on school activities, on school transport or during the school day including if offsite on a break

There may be exceptional circumstances where the Board of Management forms the opinion that a student should be expelled for a first offence. Examples of such serious breaches of the Code of Behaviour are:

- A serious threat of violence against another student or member of staff
- Gross misuse of social media and/or other online platforms such as to cause potential professional damage to a member of staff or to systematically bully another student or member of the school community
- Actual violence or physical assault against a student or staff member
- The student has had an incident involving possession, use or supply or intention to supply of drugs/ drug paraphernalia or illegal substances on the school grounds, on school transport, on a school activity and if offsite during the school day for breaks or other school activities
- Sexual assault

This list is not exhaustive. There may be other times where the Principal decides to refer a student to the Board of Management for possible expulsion for a first offence.

#### *Determining the appropriateness of expulsion*

Given the seriousness of expulsion as a sanction, the Board of Management will undertake a very detailed review of a range of factors in deciding whether or not to expel a student. These factors will include:

- 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

#### *Procedures in respect of expulsion*

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 the Educational Welfare Officer
6. Confirmation of the decision to expel

*Step 1: Detailed Investigation carried out by Principal*

A detailed investigation will be carried out under the direction of the Principal. In investigating an allegation in line with fair procedures, the principal will

- a) Inform the student and his/her parent(s)/guardian(s) about the details of the alleged serious breach of the Code of Positive Behaviour, how it will be investigated and that it could result in expulsion.
- b) Give parent(s)/guardian(s) and the student an opportunity to respond to the complaint before a decision is made and before a sanction is imposed.

Parent(s)/guardian(s) will be informed in writing of the alleged breach of the Code of Positive Behaviour and the proposed investigation. Parent(s)/ guardian(s) and the student will be given an opportunity to respond to the complaint before a decision is made about the veracity of the allegation, and before a sanction is imposed.

Where expulsion may result from an investigation, a meeting with the student and their parent(s)/ guardian(s) will be arranged so that parent(s)/ guardian(s) and their son or daughter will have the opportunity to respond to the allegation and to ask questions about the evidence of serious misbehaviour, especially where there is a dispute about the facts.

This meeting will also be an opportunity for parent(s)/guardian(s) to make their case for lessening the sanction, and for the school to explore with parent(s)/guardian(s) how best to address the student's behaviour. If a student and his/her parent(s)/guardian(s) fail to attend a meeting, the Principal will write to the parent(s)/guardian(s) advising them of the gravity of the matter, the importance of attending a rescheduled meeting and, failing that, the duty of the school authorities to make a decision to respond to the serious breach of the Code of Positive Behaviour. The school will record the invitation issued to parent(s)/guardian(s) and their response.

### *Step 2: Recommendation made to Board of Management*

A recommendation will be made to the Board of Management by the Principal. Where the Principal forms a view, based on the investigation of the alleged breach of the Code of Behaviour, that expulsion may be warranted, the Principal will make such a recommendation to the Board of Management. The Principal will:

- a) Inform the parent(s)/guardian(s) and the student that the Board of Management is being asked to consider expulsion
- b) Ensure that parent(s)/guardian(s) have records of the allegations against the student, the investigation, and Board of Management is being asked to consider expulsion
- c) Provide the Board of Management with the same comprehensive records as are given to parent(s)/guardian(s)
- d) Notify the parent(s)/guardian(s) of the date of the hearing by the Board of Management and invite them to that hearing
- e) Advise the parent(s)/guardian(s) that they can make a written and oral submission to the Board of Management
- f) (Ensure that parent(s)/guardian(s) have enough notice to allow them to prepare for the hearing

### *Step 3: Consideration by the Board of Management of the Principal's recommendation and the holding of a hearing*

The Board of Management will review the initial investigation and satisfy itself that the investigation was properly conducted in line with fair procedures. The Board will undertake its own review of all documentation and the circumstances of the case. It will ensure that no party who has had any involvement with the circumstances of the case is part of the Board's deliberations.

Where a Board of Management decides to consider expelling a student, it will hold a hearing.

At the hearing, the Principal and the parent(s)/guardian(s), or a student aged eighteen years or over, put their case to the Board in each other's presence. Each party will be allowed to question the evidence

of the other party directly. The parent(s)/guardian(s) may also use the occasion to make their case for lessening the sanction.

Parent(s)/guardian(s) may wish to be accompanied at hearing and the Board will facilitate this, in line with good practice and Board procedures.

After both sides have been heard, both the Principal and the parent(s)/guardian(s) will leave the meeting while the Board considers the issue.

#### *Step 4: Board of Management deliberations and actions following the hearing*

Having heard from all the parties, it is the responsibility of the Board to decide whether or not the allegation is substantiated and, if so, whether or not expulsion is the appropriate sanction.

Where the Board of Management, having considered all the facts of the case, is of the opinion that the student should be expelled it will notify the Educational Welfare Officer (EWO) in writing of its opinion and the reasons for this opinion (Education (Welfare Act 2000, s24 [1]). The Board of Management will follow the National Educational Welfare Board Reporting Procedures for proposed permanent exclusions. While the Board may be of the opinion that there are firm grounds that the student should be expelled, the actual decision to expel the student cannot be taken before the passage of twenty school days from the date on which the Educational Welfare Officer receives written notification of the Board's opinion that the student should be expelled and the reasons for this opinion (Education (Welfare) Act 2000, s24 [1]).

The Board of Management will inform the parent(s)/guardian(s) in writing about its conclusions and the next steps in the process. Where expulsion is proposed, the parent(s)/guardian(s) will be told that the Board of Management will be informing the Educational Welfare Officer (EWO) in writing.

#### *Step 5: Consultations arranged by the Educational Welfare Officer (EWO)*

Within twenty days of receipt of a notification from a Board of Management of its opinion, the Principal and /or Deputy Principal may meet the Educational Welfare Officer (EWO) to plan for the student's future education in the interests of the educational welfare of the student.

Pending these consultations about the student's continued education, the Board of Management may take steps to ensure that good order is maintained, and that the safety of all students is secured

(Education (Welfare) Act 2000, s24 [5]). The Board may consider it appropriate to suspend a student during this time especially where there is 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.

#### *Step 6: Confirmation of the decision to expel*

Where the twenty-day period following notification to the Educational Welfare Officer (EWO) has elapsed, and where the Board of Management remains of the view that the student should be expelled, the Board of Management will formally confirm the decision to expel student. The Board of Management may delegate this task to the Chairperson and the Principal.

Parent(s)/guardian(s) will be notified immediately that the expulsion will now proceed. Parent(s)/guardian(s) and the student will be told about the right to appeal within 42 days and supplied with the standard form on which to lodge an appeal.

A formal record should be made of the decision to expel the student.

#### *Appeals*

A parent/guardian/guardian, or a student aged over eighteen years, may appeal within 42 days a decision to expel to the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Skills.

An appeal may also be brought by the National Educational Welfare Board on behalf of a student.

#### *Review of Use of Expulsion*

The Board of Management will review the use of Expulsion in the school at regular intervals 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 this measure is used appropriately.

## **Criteria for Success**

We will recognise that this Code is effective if:

- \* It encourages and promotes positive behaviour and fosters an atmosphere that is conducive to teaching and learning.

- \* It promotes respect, teamwork, positive relationships, and the pursuit of excellence.
- \* It promotes a happy and caring school environment
- \* It is understood and accepted by the school community.

## Review and Evaluation

This policy has been drafted in conjunction with the School Ethos and other relevant policies of the school. This Code of Positive Behaviour will be reviewed annually and may be amended following consultation with the school community.

This code is not exhaustive, and the Principal may, on occasion, need to take a decision for the good of other students and staff of the school. Relevant parents/guardians and the Chairperson of the Board of Management will be informed in the event of such an occurrence.

If you would like to discuss anything in this policy, please email us as per below contact details.

*Email: [admin@galwayetss.ie](mailto:admin@galwayetss.ie)*

*Website: [www.galwayetss.ie](http://www.galwayetss.ie)*

*Roll Number: 68347V*

## Ratification:

Ratified by the Board of management on June 4<sup>th</sup>, 2026.

Signed by Chairperson:



Brian Hughes

Signed by Principal:



Sarah Molloy