



## **BEHAVIOUR POLICY**

### **1 Board of Management:**

- 1.1 The Code of Behaviour of Coláiste Bhríde is drawn up in consultation with the parents, staff and students. It shall be based on the following key principles:
  - a) The care, safety and welfare of students and staff.
  - b) Good relationships and co-operation between and among all the educational partners.
  - c) Personal responsibility.
  - d) The equal and fair treatment of all.
  
- 1.2 The Board of Management of Coláiste Bhríde shall ensure that the Code of Behaviour shall specify:
  - a) The standard of behaviour to be observed by students.
  - b) The measures to be taken when a student fails/refuses to observe the standard.
  - c) The procedure that must be followed before a student is suspended/expelled.
  - d) The grounds for removing a suspension.
  - e) The procedures to be followed relating to notification of a student's absence from school.
  
- 1.3 Coláiste Bhríde affirms that data stored in relation to students and parents/guardians is governed by the Data Protection Act 1988 and as amended in 2003 and subsequent amendments and that information on file should be used only for the purposes for which it was intended.
  
- 1.4 The Management of Coláiste Bhríde shall ensure that an evaluation of the effectiveness and efficiency of the process, strategy and policy regarding behaviour is carried out regularly.

## **Parents/Guardians:**

- 2.1 Coláiste Bhríde affirms that, on the enrolment of a student who has not reached the age of 18 years, the parent/guardian and student must be given a copy of the school's Code of Behaviour and shall sign a declaration that the Code is acceptable to them and that they shall make all reasonable efforts to ensure compliance with said Code.
- 2.2.1 Coláiste Bhríde affirms that students who have reached the age of 18 years shall be subject to the rights and responsibilities as outlined at 2.1 above.
- 2.3 Coláiste Bhríde affirms that parents/guardians have a responsibility to actively support the staff of school in the fair application of the Code of Behaviour.
- 2.4 Coláiste Bhríde affirms that parents/guardians who have enrolled students in the school shall be encouraged to involve themselves in a positive participation in school life in order to facilitate the development of mutually beneficial links between school and home.

## **3. The Principal:**

- 3.1 The overall responsibility for discipline within the school rests with the Principal subject to the authority of the Board of Management and the Kildare and Wicklow Education and Training Committee.
- 3.2 The Principal shall endeavour to ensure that the Code of Behaviour is administered in a fair and consistent manner.
- 3.3 The Principal shall encourage a sense of collective responsibility among staff and a sense of commitment to the school among staff, students and parents/guardians.
- 3.4 The Principal shall provide guidance, leadership and support to staff, students and parents/guardians in the application of the Code of Behaviour and in disciplinary matters in general.
- 3.5 The Principal may at her discretion delegate responsibilities regarding behaviour to other professionals working in the school.

## **4. The Staff:**

- 4.1 The teaching staff of the school shall be responsible, at all times, for dealing with the behaviour of students within sight or sound of them and that they shall respond appropriately to any instance of unacceptable behaviour.
- 4.2 The teacher is responsible in the first instance for discipline in the classroom and that he/she should:
  - a) Employ stimulating methods of teaching.
  - b) Have positive expectations of students.
  - c) Demand honest effort and high standards in terms of work and behaviour.
  - d) Seek to create an attractive and positive classroom environment.

- e) Have positive regard for all students.
- 4.3 Teachers should take cognisance of the students' social, environmental and cultural context.
- 4.4 All teachers have the right to teach and carry out their professional duties unhindered and in an atmosphere that is conducive to teaching and learning.

## **5 Students:**

- 5.1 Students have the right to learn unhindered in an atmosphere that is both positive and conducive to learning and teaching.
- 5.2 Students have a responsibility to make a positive contribution to the life of the school in terms of work, behaviour and relationships.

## **6. Support Structures:**

- 6.1 The school's Pastoral Care structures will ensure a caring and positive approach to the diverse needs of students.
- 6.2 The school shall, in consultation with parents/guardian, make every reasonable effort to have students who display worrying behaviour patterns referred for counselling and/or psychological assessment where appropriate and possible.

## **7. Strategies for Dealing with Misbehaviour:**

- 7.1 The school will adopt a three part response to issues of misbehaviour:
  - a) The development of a whole school behaviour policy in collaboration with teachers, parents and students.
  - b) The development of classroom management strategies in consultation with teachers. See appendix 1
  - c) Strategies for dealing with students who are consistently difficult to manage, such as:
    - In-school support
    - Out of school support
    - Personal behaviour plan
    - Report system
    - Other relevant strategies
- 7.2 Written records will be maintained with regard to student behaviour/misbehavior.
- 7.3 Parents/guardians will be informed from the outset of instances of misbehaviour on the part of their children and their co-operation in finding a positive resolution should be sought as early as possible.
- 7.4 Praise, encouragement and reward will be used as mechanisms for the formation of good behaviour and academic excellence.

- 7.5 The school will actively pursue the appointment of a home-school liaison officer to support the Pastoral Care structure in the school.
- 7.6 The following strategies will be used to promote good behaviour:
- a) Communication with parents/guardians.
  - b) The rewarding of students regarding positive behaviour.
  - c) Early identification of “at risk” students regarding behaviour.
  - d) Establishment of a “care team” for the purpose of identifying and supporting “at risk” students.
  - e) Establishment of close links with the homes of “at risk” students.
  - f) Fostering, promoting and establishing contacts by the school with other schools and bodies engaged in youth work.
  - g) The development of programmes of activities, designed to encourage positive behaviour and personal responsibility in students.
  - h) The development of whole school structures in a positive and pro-active attempt to deal with the issues of attendance and behaviour.
  - i) Regular evaluation of the school’s operation as it relates to attendance and behaviour issues, with a view to encouraging an atmosphere of positive cooperation and good behaviour in the school.
  - j) The fostering of school and community awareness of the possible adverse effects on behaviour of the following:
    - Participation by students in employment.
    - Entertainment/social activity.
    - The abuse of alcohol/drugs.
  - k) Reasoning with the student.
  - l) Reprimand, including advice on how to improve.
  - m) Temporary separation from peers, friends and others.
  - n) Loss of privileges.
  - o) Restitution.
  - p) Detention during breaks or outside of school hours.
  - q) Prescribed additional work. Lines are not recommended.
  - r) Suspension on a temporary basis.
  - s) Expulsion.
  - t) Any other strategy that may be of relevance to the needs or circumstances of the school.
- 7.7 Good behaviour in school is dependent on the good example of all, parents/guardians, staff and students.

## **8. Sanctions:**

- 8.1 There is a need for sanctions with regard to non-compliance with the Code of Behaviour on the part of students in school, in order to register disapproval and to inculcate values of responsibility, effective cooperation and positive behaviour among students.

- 8.2 A graded system of sanctions suitable to the particular needs and circumstances of the school is in place.
- 8.3 Students are made aware of the distinction between minor and more serious misbehaviour and of the sanctions applied thereto.
- 8.4 The school ensures that the basic rules of natural justice as set out here under apply in the context of dealing with student misbehaviour:
- 8.4.1. *Audi alteram partem* – the duty to give a person affected by a decision a reasonable opportunity for presenting their case.
- 8.4.2. *Nemo iudex in causa sua debet esse* – One cannot be a judge in one's own case and a duty to reach a decision untainted by bias.
- 8.5 Students who are removed from class should not be left in an unsupervised situation. Subject teachers are responsible for students allocated to them on the school timetable and they have a duty of care to those students that must be adhered to.
- 8.6 When detention outside of school hours is used as a sanction, parents will be advised of such detention, in advance, and they will be given precise details of when and where the sanction is to be imposed and for what period. This is without prejudice to the rights of the school authority to take appropriate and/or immediate disciplinary action in the interests of the good management of the school.

## **9. Suspension:**

- 9.1 Staff, students and parents/guardians should be fully aware of the suspension procedure and its place in the context of the school's Code of Behaviour.
- 9.2 Suspension is only one strategy within the school's Code of Behaviour.
- 9.3 When all other strategies have been exhausted, suspension can allow students time to reflect on their behaviour, to acknowledge and accept responsibility for the behaviour which led to the suspension and to accept responsibility for changing their behaviour to meet the school's expectations in the future. It can also allow time for the school personnel to plan appropriate support for the student to assist with successful re-entry.
- 9.4 Suspensions may occur after the Principal has as far as is possible:
- a) ensured that all discipline options under the Code of Behaviour have been applied and documented
  - b) ensured that all school appropriate support personnel have been involved
  - c) ensured that discussion has occurred with the student and parent/s regarding specific misbehaviour which the school considers unacceptable, and which may lead to suspension
  - d) provided a formal written warning detailing these misbehaviours, as well as clear expectations of what is required of the students in the future and the consequences of non-compliance
  - e) recorded all actions taken
  - f) copied all correspondence

- 9.5 Students may be suspended as follows pending investigation and/or discussion with parents:
- a) For serious misbehaviour
  - b) For an unacceptable level of repeated misdemeanours
  - c) For bullying, insulting, aggressive, threatening or violent behaviour towards others in the school, or when identifiable with the school
  - d) For the supply/possession/use of alcohol and or illegal drugs
  - e) For the supply/possession/use of weapons/dangerous materials/substances
  - f) For behaviour that may be a danger to self or others, under the terms of the Health and Safety Act 1989
  - g) For racist behaviour and/or the supply/possession/use of racist material
  - h) For behaviour that is contrary to the terms of the Equal Status Act 2000
  - i) For sexual harassment and /or the possession /supply /use of pornographic material
- 9.6 The Principal has the right to suspend a student or students with immediate effect, pursuant to subsections 3.1 and 9.5 above.
- 9.7 The Principal has the right to suspend a student or students for breaches of the School's Code of Behaviour for a maximum of five consecutive school days without recourse to the Board of Management.
- 9.8 All suspensions will be notified to the Board of Management at the earliest opportunity.
- 9.9 Where there are repeated instances of misbehaviour, the parents/guardians shall be requested, in writing, to attend the school, or other suitable location, for discussion. If the parents/guardians and/or the students do not give an undertaking that the student will behave in an acceptable way in the future, the pupil may be suspended for a period to be determined by the Principal or the Board of Management, as appropriate.
- 9.10 The parents/guardians of students enrolled in the school shall be informed of their right to appeal suspensions to the Board of Management.
- 9.11 The formal letter of notification of suspension to parents/guardians will include:
- a) Notice of suspension
  - b) Effective date of suspension
  - c) Duration of suspension
  - d) Reasons for suspension
  - e) Expectations of student while on suspension (study programme may be attached)
  - f) Importance of parental/guardian support and assistance in resolving the matter
  - g) A statement that the student is under the care and responsibility of the parents/guardians while on suspension
  - h) A statement that the Educational Welfare Board has been informed (if the suspension is of 6 days or more duration, or if the student has been suspended for more than 20 days during the school year to date)
  - i) Information on appeal rights

- j) Requirements which need to be in place when the student returns to school following suspension
  - k) If consideration is being given to proceeding to expulsion
- 9.12 The Education Welfare Officer will be informed of suspensions as follows:
- a) Where the period of suspension is for 6 or more consecutive school days
  - b) Where the aggregate number of days on which a student has been suspended in any school year is 20 or more days
- 9.13 The grounds for removing a suspension will include:
- a) Successful appeal
  - b) The Principal / Board of Management may agree that another sanction may be applied after discussion with the parent/s
  - c) When and if new relevant circumstances come to light
  - d) Other relevant factors

## **10. Expulsion:**

- 10.1 Expulsion should be considered only in the gravest of circumstances and only after every reasonable effort at the rehabilitation of the student has failed and every other sanction has been exhausted, except as outlined in subsection 10.2 below.
- 10.2 When an act of gross misconduct occurs, expulsion may be necessary to protect the health, safety, well-being and rights of others in the school community without recourse to the provisions outlined at 10.1 above. The principles of natural justice and fair procedure must continue to apply.
- 10.3 The procedure outlined hereunder should be followed prior to a student being expelled:
- a) Where expulsion may be the outcome of a breach of the Behaviour Policy of the school, the Principal, Deputy Principal and/or other nominated and appropriate person may conduct an investigation into any reported misbehaviour or breach of school rules on the part of a student.
  - b) A student/students may be suspended pro tempore pending a full hearing of the case, provided this does not interfere with the said students' statutory rights or with the principles of natural justice and fair procedures.
  - c) During the course of any investigation, all relevant persons pertinent to the investigation shall be interviewed and notes shall be taken of any such interviews.
  - d) The principal shall write to the parents/guardians of the student concerned (or to the student if s/he has reached the age of 18 years) informing them of the allegations and inviting them to the school, or other suitable location, for appropriate discussion and dialogue.

- e) The Principal may, at his/her discretion call an emergency meeting of the Board of Management and recommend that the student be suspended pending a full hearing, if this is considered to be in the best interests of the student and/or of other members of the school community.
- f) The Principal may make a decision to recommend expulsion and s/he shall then notify, in writing, the parents of the student concerned (or the student if s/he has reached the age of 18 years) and the Educational Welfare Officer, where appropriate, of the decision and that this decision is subject to the approval of the Board of Management. Copies of notes taken and statements made in the course of the investigation should be forwarded to the parents and/or the Educational Welfare Officer. Where there may be a breach of confidentiality a summary of notes taken and statements made shall be forwarded instead.
- g) The Principal will notify the parents of the student concerned (or the student if s/he has reached the age of 18 years) and the Educational Welfare Officer, where appropriate, of their right to be heard before the Board of Management. The Principal will also invite the parents/guardians to make a written submission, in advance, of the Board meeting.
- h) A meeting of the Board of Management shall be convened within 10 working days of the notification as outlined at 10.3 (f) above.

10.4 The procedure outlined hereunder should be followed in the course of a Board of Management hearing at which it is proposed to expel a student:

- a) The Principal shall present the case on behalf of the school and shall propose expulsion.
- b) The parents of the student concerned (or the student if s/he has reached the age of 18 years), and/or the Educational Welfare Officer, where appropriate, shall be afforded the opportunity to respond.
- c) Members of the Board of Management shall have the right to question the principal and/or the parents of the student concerned (or the student if s/he has reached the age of 18 years) or the Educational Welfare Officer as appropriate.
- d) Each side shall be afforded the opportunity to cross-examine each other through the Chair.
- e) Each side shall be afforded the opportunity to sum up, by way of final comment.
- f) The Principal, the parents/guardians of a student/s under the age of 18 years, the student, if he/she has reached the age of 18 years, the Educational Welfare Officer and their representatives shall withdraw to enable the Board to make a decision.
- g) In the absence of the Principal, the members of Board shall elect a recording secretary from among their members.
- h) The Board may make the following decisions:
  - i. To recommend to Kildare and Wicklow Education and Training Board (KWETB) that the student/s be expelled from the school.

- ii. To suspend the student/s from the school for a period to be decided by the Board.
- iii. To refer the matter back to the Principal for further investigation.
- iv. To reinstate the student/s in the school.

- 10.5 The Board shall not decide to recommend the expulsion of a student/s without first having considered the following:
- a) The age of the student/s.
  - b) The student's previous record at the school and the degree to which the student was offered school help and support in the context of his/her misbehaviour within the school.
  - c) Any particular aspect of the social, cultural and / or environmental context of the student, which should be taken into account.
  - d) The extent to which parental/guardianship, peer or other pressure may have contributed to the behaviour under review.
  - e) The gravity of the offence.
  - f) The seriousness and / or frequency of the behaviour and the likelihood of it recurring.
  - g) Whether or not the behaviour impaired or will impair the normal functioning of staff and / or other students in the school.
  - h) Whether or not the behaviour occurred on school premises or when the student was otherwise in the charge of school staff or when the student was identifiable with the school.
  - i) The degree to which the behaviour was a violation of one or more of the rules contained in the school's Code of Behaviour and the relative importance of the rule(s).
  - j) Whether the incident was perpetrated by the student on his / her own or as part of a group.
  - k) Whether consideration was given to seeking the support of other agencies.
- 10.6 The procedure outlined hereunder should be followed at the conclusion of a hearing before the Board of Management at which it is decided to recommend that the student/s be expelled or suspended:
- a) Where the Board decides to recommend expulsion or suspension, parents of students who have not yet reached the age of 18 years (and students who have reached the age of 18 years) and the Educational Welfare Officer, where appropriate, shall be informed in writing by the Principal/Secretary, Board of Management of the decision of the Board of Management and of their right to appeal this decision under the terms of the Education Act 1998 Section 29. The appeal shall follow the procedures as laid down in Department of Education and Skills Circular Letter M48/01. This appeal must be made within 14 calendar days of the decision being handed down.
  - b) When the Board of Management is of the opinion that a student who is of compulsory school going age (or where a student has not completed 3 years of second level education) should be expelled from a school, it shall notify the Educational Welfare Officer in writing of its opinion and the reasons therefore and it shall co-operate, in as far as it practicable, with the Educational Welfare

Officer in this regard. A copy of this letter shall be sent to the parents/guardians of the student who has not yet reached the age of 16 years.

- c) A student shall not be expelled from a school before the passing of 20 school days following receipt of the written notification by the Educational Welfare Officer.

This is without prejudice to the right of the Board of Management to take such other reasonable measures, as it considers appropriate to ensure that good order and discipline are maintained in the school concerned and that the safety of students is secured.

- d) Where the 20 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 from the school, the Board of Management should formally confirm the decision to expel (this task may be delegated to the Chairperson and the Principal and if so should be recorded in the official written records of the Board of Management). Parents/guardians should be notified immediately in writing that the expulsion will now proceed. Parents/guardians and the student should be told about the right to appeal 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 from the school.
- e) If, having considered the Board of Management decision, or an appeal of that decision, the Kildare and Wicklow Education and Training Board Section 29 Appeals Committee decides to uphold the recommendation of the Board of Management and expels a student, the parents/guardians of a student who has not yet reached the age of 18 years (and students who have reached the age of 18 years) and the Educational Welfare Officer, where appropriate, shall be informed of their right to further appeal this decision to the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Science under the terms of the Education Act 1998 Section 29.

## **11. Corporal Punishment:**

- 11.1 The use of corporal punishment is strictly forbidden.

## **12. Smoking:**

- 12.1 Smoking by students is prohibited in schools under The Public Health (Tobacco) Act and breaches of this may have serious implications for students and for the school.

## **Appendix 1**

School Code of Behaviour