

# Code of Behaviour

*Coláiste Chiaráin*



*Neart le chéile*

Coláiste Chiaráin  
Athlone, Co Roscommon

## Mission Statement and Aims

Coláiste Chiaráin, Athlone, Co Roscommon will be a Voluntary Catholic Secondary School under the trusteeship of the Diocese of Elphin.

In partnership with parents the College strives to educate their children in accordance with the teachings of Jesus Christ and his Church. It aims to foster students' spiritual, moral, intellectual, physical and creative development and thereby develop their full potential.

### Coláiste Chiaráin, Athlone will endeavor to:

- Provide students with a Catholic education that has a sound spiritual, faith, academic and practical content.
- Nourish the building up of a personal relationship with God according to **Catholic** wisdom as lived out in the community of the church.
- Respect and facilitate the spiritual/human development of students from all religious traditions or faith stances.
- Assist students to reach their full potential by encouraging the talents and gifts unique to each one.
- Develop a sense of self-respect and responsibility among students for themselves and for those whom they can serve, and to foster a sense of community within the school.
- Foster an environment which enables staff and students to promote quality teaching and learning in an atmosphere which is enriching for everybody.
- Inspire students to respect and love their cultural and religious heritage and develop as responsible citizens.
- Encourage students to be creative in their use of leisure through the extra-curricular activities offered.

## Code of Behaviour

### Introduction

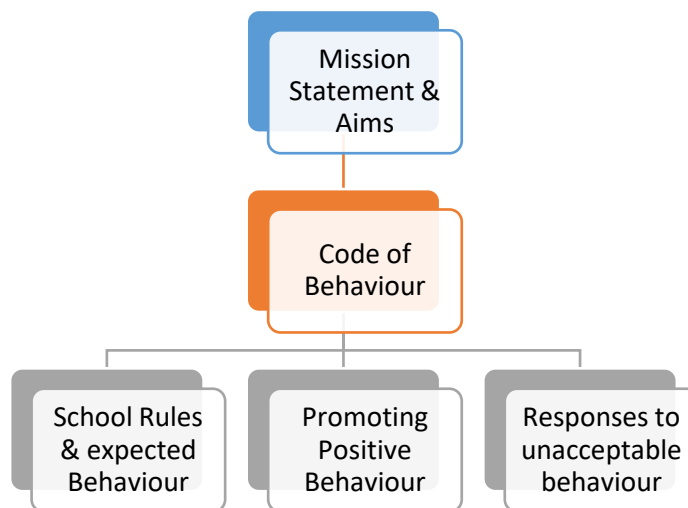
Good behaviour is essential for effective teaching and learning to take place in school. This Code provides a just and reasonable system to ensure responsible behaviour by students, staff and parents/guardians. Affirmation and reward of good behaviour by school and home is a fundamental part of this Code of Behaviour.

As part of this mission, Coláiste Chiaráin has a Code of Behaviour which relates to all school activities. The Code is in keeping with the National Educational Welfare Board's "Developing a Code of Behaviour: Guidelines for Schools" (2008).

### The Structure of the Code

The Code outlines the following:

1. School Rules & Expected Behaviour
2. Promoting Positive Behaviour
3. Responses for Unacceptable Behaviour



## Section 1: School Rules and Expected Behaviour

### 1. Students should attend school every day and arrive on time for each class

*This means:*

- That you arrive each day before 8:50 to prepare for classes that begin at 9:00
- That you attend everyday unless it is absolutely unavoidable
- That absences must be explained by a note from your parents; written and signed in your journal.
- That if you must leave school during the day, you must be signed-out by a parent/guardian at the office. You are not allowed leave the school grounds during lunchtime, unless you have permission from the school and parents/guardians.
- That you arrive at all classes on time and not delay on the way.

### 2. Students should do your best to work both in class and at your homework.

*This means:*

- That you listen to your teachers and concentrate on learning
- That you allow teachers to teach and fellow students to learn
- That you do not disturb the class
- That you do your homework each night, it must be completed to the highest possible standard

- That you always carry your school journal and take down your homework. Failure to produce the journal when required to do so by a teacher is a breach of the code of behaviour. The journal is a means of communication between parents/guardians and teachers.

### **3. Students must come to school in full uniform, clean and tidy**

*This means*

- That you only wear the prescribed uniform: school shirt, jumper, trousers or skirt and black/navy shoes
- Full uniform must be worn with pride from the time you leave your home until you return, and during out of school activities.
- No jewellery is allowed except a watch, single pair of small earring (i.e. ear studs or sleepers, one in each earlobe. Facial piercings are not permitted
- Only a discreet amount of make-up or nail varnish may be worn
- Hair must be worn neatly (i.e. tied back) and if dyed is a natural hair colour.

**Note:**

- Any student that attended St Aloysius College or St Joseph's College may wear their existing uniform until they leave or need to have it replaced.
- School jacket compulsory for 1st years. Other years must wear a school approved jacket; i.e navy/black or dark grey
- Leaving Certificate Repeat students are not required to wear uniform. The school expects these students to wear appropriate clothing.

### **4. Students must have respect, courtesy, consideration and good manners in your dealings with others**

*This means*

- Every individual has the right to be treated with respect, tolerance and understanding.
- Helping other students if they need help
- Not bullying or excluding others; physically, socially or through social media (see anti-bullying policy)

- Not physically assaulting others in or out of school. The school reserves the right, but not the obligation, to deal with after school incidents which affect the students, staff or the reputation of Coláiste Chiaráin
- You respect the property of students, teachers, school property and the property of others.
- Possession or use of item that may cause harm to others is strictly forbidden

#### **5. That you respect the school environment**

*This means*

- You help keep the school clean and free of litter
- No chewing gum on school property
- You do not damage school property

#### **6. The school forbids the use, possession or supply of cigarettes (including e-cigarettes) alcohol or drugs on the school premises or engaging in school activities.**

*This means:*

- The policy is in adherence to the current legislation including the Public Health (tobacco) Act 2004.
- The school will be obliged to inform parents/guardians and the relevant authorities of any incidents.
- You cannot attend school or school related activities while under the influence of any of the aforementioned substances

#### **7. Students are not permitted to use mobile phones, digital recording or playing devices at any time during the school day .**

*This means*

- Any student found using any type of mobile phone, recording or playing device on the school campus, during the school opening hours (including evening study) will have that phone or device (including sim card) confiscated immediately by a member of staff. It will only be returned to a parent/guardian by the Principal or Deputy Principal by appointment after a minimum of 2 school days.

- Students who refuse to hand over their phone may have the length of time the phone is confiscated for increased, and in serious cases may be suspended.
- Should there be a second breach of this school rule, the length of time that the phone will be confiscated may be increased.
- The school accepts no responsibility to investigate the loss of, theft of or damage to mobile phones etc. The school accepts no responsibility to replace said items

## Section 2: Promoting Positive Behaviour

Promoting good behaviour is one the main objective of the school's Code of Behaviour. Through its ethos, policies and practices, Coláiste Chiaráin actively promotes positive behaviour and seeks to prevent inappropriate behaviour.

The school is actively committed to consistency in promoting good behaviour.

This can be achieved by mutually respectful relationships between student and teacher.

- Students are given responsibility and are encouraged to understand why the Code is important.
- The Code is made to work in a fair and consistent way.
- Standards are clear, consistent and widely understood and high expectations are set.
- The school climate and atmosphere are created by the actions of everyone who is connected to the school: teaching staff, other staff, parents/guardians and students.
- Parents/Guardians, students and teachers are invited to be involved in seeking to promote good relationships through positive interactions.
- Adults model the behaviour expected from students.
- Clear boundaries and rules are set for students.
- Students are helped to recognise and affirm good behaviour.
- Positive feedback is provided through the school Journal where merited.

Coláiste Chiaráin acknowledges, promotes and rewards good behaviour in a variety of ways.

This includes the following:

- Verbal recognition
- Written notes in journal acknowledging positive behaviour or work
- Merit system for students:
  - Teachers can formally acknowledge positive behaviour by awarding merits. At the end of term/mid-term students who receive the most merits may be awarded privileges or prizes
- School Spirit awards
  - Students who make a positive contribution to the school outside of classes may be recognised through a school spirit award.

## **Section 3: Responses for Unacceptable Behaviour**

It is the policy of the school to intervene early and positively when a student's behaviour does not meet standards expected. It is hoped that a student and his parents/guardians will respond positively to any sanctions imposed and that the student will reflect on their unacceptable behaviour, accept responsibility and change their future behaviour to meet the expectations of the school.

It is the responsibility of Coláiste Chiaráin to:

- To maintain a safe and welcoming classroom and school environment for all students, teachers and other school staff.
- To maintain a positive learning environment that supports every student and ensures continuity of education.

***Sanctions for misbehaviour are usually progressive. In serious incidents of misbehaviour, normal disciplinary procedures will be abridged and the issue will be referred directly to the Deputy Principal or Principal.***

## Step 1

- **Class Teacher** will work with the student to resolve any difficulties. The teacher may use the following actions:
  - Verbal warning stating that the behaviour is inappropriate and advising that the student makes a sensible choice and return to task
  - Additional homework including penalty exercises
  - Moving student to a different place in classroom
  - Note to/from parent/guardian in journal
  - Request for homework to be completed during lunchtime supervision

## Step 2

- **Year Head** referral from the class teacher where there is no evidence of improvement:
  - The Year Head may organize an interview. Parents/guardians will be informed of this by phone. The student will be interviewed by Year Head and Deputy Principal. Parents/guardians may be invited to attend. Alternatively, feedback will be sent to parents/guardians by letter / phone,
  - Following interview, student's behaviour will be monitored, including **Class Report Card**. Class teachers, students and parents sign the report card. The signed report is checked at the end of each school day by the principal/deputy principal or year head.
  - Where satisfactory progress is deemed to have been attained, this will be affirmed by Year Head.

## Step 3

- **Deputy Principal/Principal** interview the student and/or Parent/guardians where year Head interventions fail to improve behaviour or in relation to a serious incident:
  - The Deputy Principal invites parents to attend meeting with Principal and Deputy Principal. History of misbehaviour will be outlined to parents at this meeting.
  - The student signs a **Contract of Behaviour**. This is co-signed by Principal and Deputy Principal.
  - The student's behaviour will be monitored by teachers and management.
  - The Deputy Principal/Principal may decide on **detention** during lunchtime or after school.
  - The Deputy Principal/Principal may decide on **in-school withdrawal** from the students normal timetable

## Step 4

- **Principal/Board of Management** may suspend/expel a student for serious incidents or persistent breaches of the code of behaviour.
  - The Principal has the written authority for the Board of Management to suspend a student for up to 3 days.
  - In exceptional cases a decision may be made by the Board of Management that a breach or breaches of the code of behavior may warrant expulsion.



# Suspensions Policy

## General Principles

Suspension is a serious sanction and, normally, other interventions will be tried before suspension is considered. The Code of Behaviour outlines the standards of behaviour expected of our students and the rules and sanctions of the school. The school community recognises the excellent behaviour, work and cooperation of so many of its pupils at all times.

Under the Articles of Management for Secondary Schools, the principal has authority to suspend “any pupil for a limited period and shall report any such suspension to the Board of Management as its next meeting”. In addition, the Board of Management has formally delegated to the principal the authority to suspend a pupil.

In the event of the absence of the Principal on approved leave or if the Principal is otherwise engaged on school business, the authority to suspend is delegated to the Deputy Principal.

### Grounds for suspension include:

- Serious or continued misbehaviour inside or outside class.
- Serious or continued misbehaviour on the way to school or from school or at break-times.
- Refusal to accept the authority of a teacher, principal or deputy principal.
- Non-compliance with the rules as set out in the Code of Behaviour.
- Persistent disruption of class.
- Aggressive or threatening behaviour.
- Foul language to or disrespect for a member of staff.
- Bullying as outlined in the school’s anti-bullying policy.
- Persistent refusal to do school work in class or at home.
- Damage to property.
- Stealing.
- Striking another pupil or fighting either on the school premises, going to or from school or at break-times.
- Misbehaviour or bringing the school’s name into disrepute while on a school trip or school related activity.
- Shoplifting on the way to or from school or at break-time or refusal to attend detention.
- Breach of rules regarding the abuse of alcohol or illegal substance; smoking on the school premises.
- Persistent failure to bring in notes explaining absence from school.
- Persistent failure to wear the school uniform.

### Suspension during the State Examination Period

Serious misbehaviour during the state examination period which is referred by the examinations superintendent to the school authority is referred by the Principal to the State Examinations Commission. Every measure is taken to protect the integrity of the State Examinations and where appropriate a separate centre will be requested for a student who is disruptive during the state examination period.

### **Immediate Suspension**

In exceptional circumstances, where the continued presence of a student in the school at a particular time would represent a serious threat to the safety of students or staff or any other person in the school, the Principal may decide that an immediate suspension is warranted. In this, as in all exclusions, fair procedures will be applied. In such a situation a parent/guardian will be contacted by telephone to collect the student. The situation will be explained and written documentation will follow by post.

### **Procedures in Respect of Suspension:**

The implementation of the process of suspension should always be fair and impartial. The Year Head may discuss the situation with the Principal and they will decide whether suspension is the most appropriate response. Should suspension of a student occur the following procedures are used:

- There will be a written account of the incident or behaviour
- The Principal will phone a parent and will give a formal account of the behaviour and the conditions of the suspension. The student will be informed after the parent/guardian.
- The original letter of suspension will be posted to the parent/guardian.
- A photocopy of the original letter of suspension will be given to the student to be handed to his parent/guardian.
- A photocopy will be kept on the school's file.
- On occasions parents may be requested to attend a meeting with the Principal
- Parents/Guardians and students are given an opportunity to respond to proposed suspension.
- Coláiste Chiaráin has due regard to its duty of care for the student and in no circumstances should a student be suspended without first notifying parents/guardians so that in the case of an immediate suspension parents/guardians may make arrangements for the student to be collected.

### **Periods of Suspension**

Except in exceptional circumstances a student should not be suspended for more than 3 school days. Where cumulative periods of suspension through a single school year would bring the number of days for which a student has been suspended to 20 school days or more the Education Welfare Officer will be informed as a matter of course by the school's Attendance Officer. This applies in the case of students under 16 years of age. The Principal is to ensure that the school Attendance Officer is supplied with a photocopy of each suspension form.

### **Appeals**

All suspensions may be appealed to the Board of Management of Coláiste Chiaráin, and when parents/guardians are being formally notified of a suspension they are also informed of this right to appeal. A Section 29 Appeal may be taken where the total number of days for which an individual student has been suspended in the current school year exceeds 20 days.

## **Implementing a Suspension:**

The Principal notifies the parents and the student in writing of the decision to suspend. The letter confirms:

- The period of the suspension and the dates on which it will begin and end.
- The reasons for the suspension.
- The arrangements for returning to school, including any commitments to be entered into by the student and the parents.
- The provision for an appeal to the Board of Management.
- The right to appeal thereafter to the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Science. This appeal “to be made within a reasonable time from the date the student/parent/guardian was informed of the decision” (Education Act 1998 Section 29).

## **Grounds for Removing a Suspension:**

A suspension may be removed if the Board decides to remove the suspension for any reason 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. .

## **Clean slate**

The student will be given the opportunity and support for a fresh start. Although a record is kept of the behaviour and the sanction imposed, once the sanction has been completed the school expects the same behaviour of this student as of all other students.

## **Records and Reports**

Formal written records are to be kept of

- Investigation prior to the decision to suspend a student.
- The duration of the suspension and any conditions attached to the suspension.
- As the Principal is required to report suspensions in accordance with the NEWB reporting guidelines, a log of suspensions will be kept by the school.

## **Expulsion Policy**

The Board of Management alone has the authority to expel a student. Only serious cases of unacceptable behaviour will warrant consideration of expulsion.

## **Grounds for expulsion include:**

- Behaviour that is a persistent cause of significant disruption to the learning of others or the teaching process.
- The student’s continued presence in the school constitutes a real and significant threat to the safety of him / herself, other students and/or staff members.
- Serious damage to property.

- Misconduct that might lead to a proposal to expel would be very serious examples of those that could lead to suspension. In cases of persistent misconduct expulsion would be considered only as a last resort and will only occur where all other interventions and attempts at addressing the misconduct have been exhausted.

**A single act of serious misconduct might form the basis of a proposal to expel.**

**Such misconduct could include:**

- A serious threat of violence against another person.
- Actual violence or physical assault.
- Sexual assault.
- Possession or dealing in drugs or illegal substances.

### **Procedures in respect of misconduct**

The school will follow the procedures in Developing a Code of Behaviour: Guidelines for Schools (2008), paragraphs 10.3-10.6, pages 67-68 and paragraph 11.5, pages 74-75., as may be amended or updated by the N.E.W.B. Following serious misbehaviour that could warrant expulsion the following steps will be taken after a preliminary assessment of the facts:

1. The principal directs a detailed investigation. This includes informing the student and her parents/guardians, in writing, of the nature of the complaint, how it will be investigated and that it could result in expulsion. The principal will assure the student and parents/guardians that they will be given every opportunity to respond before any decision is made and before any sanction is imposed.
2. The principal recommends to the Board of Management to consider expulsion. The parents/guardians and the student are informed, in writing, of the decision and the grounds to recommend expulsion. They and the Board are provided with all relevant documentation. A hearing is arranged to which the student and parents are invited. This will be held at a time and date that will allow time for the parents and the student to prepare their presentation. They can make a written and oral submission to the Board.
3. The Board considers the principal's recommendation and arranges a hearing at which the student and their parents/guardians may put forward their case. As a first step, the Board will consider the manner of the investigation and assure itself that all procedures were followed properly and in accordance with the principles of fairness and natural justice. Any member of the Board of Management who has had any direct involvement in the case, with the exception of an investigating member of staff, or a close connection with a party to the case will not be allowed to participate in the Board's deliberations.

If the Board decides to consider expulsion it will hold a hearing that is properly conducted in accordance with Board procedures. At the hearing the principal and the student and her

parents/guardians each put their case in the presence of the other. Each side is allowed to question the other. The Board is impartial as between the principal and the student. If parents/guardians wish to be accompanied, the Board will make every reasonable effort to facilitate this subject to reasonable notification.

After the hearing, the Board deliberates in private in the absence of the Principal and the student and her parents/guardians.

4. The Board has the responsibility of deciding, first, whether the allegation is substantiated and, if so, whether expulsion is the appropriate sanction. If the Board does decide to expel it will, as required by law, notify the Educational Welfare Officer (EWO) in writing of its opinion and the reasons for this opinion. The expulsion cannot take effect for twenty school days from the date the EWO receives notification. The Board informs the student and parents/guardians, in writing, of its conclusions and the next steps in the process.
5. The EWO engages in consultations with all parties. The Board may take steps to ensure that good order is maintained and the safety of students is secured in the school.
6. If, after the twenty-day period of notification to the EWO has elapsed, the Board remains of the view that the student should be expelled, the Board will formally confirm the decision. Parents will be notified immediately, and told of the right of appeal.

## **Appeal**

A student who is expelled has the right to appeal the expulsion (Education Act, 1998, Sec 29) to the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Skills. An appeal may also be brought by the N.E.W.B. on behalf of a student. Further details about the appeal process, including documentation, is available in the school.