

CODE OF BEHAVIOUR

Coláiste Muire is committed to developing a dynamic Christian school community which fosters spiritual and personal development. We are a voluntary Catholic school. Our distinctive Mercy ethos attempts to generate within the school a community climate that is permeated by the gospel values of freedom, love, mercy and justice.

Rationale for Code of Behaviour

Our aim is to create an atmosphere of positive co-operation where teachers, students and parents can work together to achieve success. Our code strives to acknowledge the right of each student to education in a positive learning environment. It aims to promote the values of fairness, mutual respect, consideration, courtesy and tolerance of others; to foster commitment to work and learning; to cultivate respect for the school environment, and to reward and reinforce positive behaviour

A Caring School Community

We have in place a structure of support and care to help each student achieve her full potential. A support system of class tutor, year head, pastoral deputy principal, counselling, career guidance, chaplain, and principal operates within the school.

A system of peer helpers operates in Coláiste Muire. It involves fifth year students volunteering to help first year students adapt to their new school environment. Peer helpers organise activities to encourage interaction, communication and development. Overall, the aim is to ensure that first years feel safe, happy and settled in their new school.

If a behavioural problem arises, extensive efforts are made to ascertain the causes of the problem. The following interventions may be used to assist students:

- Interview between student and member(s) of staff, such as teacher or class tutor.
- Referral to Year Head or Guidance Counsellor.
- Consultation with parent(s)/guardians(s).
- Referral by the school to an outside agency such as G.P., psychologist, Social Services, Adolescent Mental Health Services, Education Welfare Officer and/or Garda Community Officer.

Parental Involvement

The school welcomes parental involvement as an integral dimension of effective schooling. It is important that parents/guardians can be contacted during school hours. The school has an active Parent's Association and parents have formal representation on the Board of Management.

The support and encouragement of parents and guardians is integral to the implementation of our code of behaviour. It is required that all parents/guardians read the code, sign the accompanying form and return it to the school to indicate their willingness to abide by this code.

The facility to meet with individual members of staff is available in addition to formal parent/teacher meetings for each group. Please ring the school office to make an appointment. Information evenings/days are also held concerning the different programmes or aspects of education.

Rewards and Sanctions

In keeping with the school ethos a system of rewards and sanctions operates. Parents will be kept fully informed from an early stage of incidents of a serious, recurring misbehaviour and their co-operation in addressing this problem is expected.

A tiered Disciplinary Structure operates within the school: Teacher, Class Director, Year Head, Disciplinary Committee, Deputy Principal and Principal.

Students are rewarded for good behaviour and good attendance. Examples of rewards include:

- Parents/Guardians informed
- Extra-curricular events attended
- Class party
- Class tour
- Prize-giving – end of year achievement awards
- Certification – certification of achievements.

Anti-Bullying Policy

It is school policy that all students and members of staff are free to perform their work in an environment that is pleasant, safe, and free of threat, harassment or intimidation. Bullying in any form will not be tolerated.

STANDARDS OF BEHAVIOUR

Attendance

Attendance at school is a legal requirement in accordance with the Education Welfare Act 2000. The school is obliged to inform the welfare authority of all absences in excess of 20 days in any school year. This includes absences that are bona fide. The school calendar is made available to all students/parents (occasional alterations are possible). The co-operation of parents/guardians in ensuring that students attend school is appreciated.

Absences

All absences from school, whether for a whole day or part of day, must be explained through the VSware School System by the parent/guardian. In accordance with the Education Welfare Act 2000, the reason for the absence must be given. The school does not allow students to attend appointments for personal grooming during school time.

In the case of an appointment, the parent/guardian must be record details on VSware in advance of the student leaving school. Students must sign out in the appointment book in the office when leaving school grounds during the day and sign in on their return.

If a student feels sick during the school day she should request permission to leave class and report to the school office. A member of staff will contact home on her behalf. Students are not permitted to use their mobile phones to arrange to leave school. If the school arranges for the student to go home she must sign out in the office and must be collected by a parent/guardian. The parent/guardian must explain the absence on VSware on the students return.

The school has a duty of care to all students, and students must remain on the school premises for the duration of the school day. Unauthorised absence from school is regarded as a serious offence. The following sanctions apply:

- Parents are informed
- Welfare Officer will be informed
- On Report
- Suspension will apply

School Hours

Class begins at	8.55 a.m. each morning
Junior Break	10.15 – 10.30 a.m.(Mon-Thurs) 11.35 - 12.00 (Fri)
Senior Break	10.55 – 11.10 am (Mon-Thurs) 10.55 – 11.20 am (Fri)
Lunchtime	12.30 – 1.20 p.m. (Mon-Thurs)
School ends:	4.00 p.m. (Mon/Tues/Thurs) 3.20 p.m. (Wed) 2.00 (Fri)

Punctuality is important for all classes throughout the day.

If a student is late for school, she must sign at the office and present a note explaining why she is late. Students who are repeatedly late for class will be placed on detention.

Lunch-time

1st year students are not allowed go up town at anytime.

2nd year students are allowed up town **only** on their designated day – Monday

3rd year students are allowed up town **only** on their designated day – Wednesday

Senior Cycle students are free to go up town at lunch-time.

If a student has breached the Code of Behaviour this privilege may be withdrawn.

Behaviour in class

- We believe all students have the right to learn.
- Any behaviour which disrupts the learning environment is unacceptable.
- Students must bring all textbooks/homework/other necessary materials to class.
- Every student must have a school journal which she should maintain in good condition. The journal is used to record homework and to facilitate communication between teacher and parent(s)/guardian(s). Parents should monitor the journal on a regular basis. Journals will also be monitored by teachers and Department of Education and Science inspectors.

Behaviour out of class

- Student welfare is our main concern.
- We encourage all students to respect each other, all members of staff and the school environment.
- Polite, responsible behaviour is expected of all students at all times.
- No student should engage in behaviour that would bring our school into disrepute.
- Eating and drinking is confined to the G.P. and Leaving Cert areas.
- Litter should be placed in the bins provided.
- Graffiti is not permitted.
- The school reserves the right to confiscate any items deemed inappropriate or unsafe.
- Students are expected to be responsible for their possessions.
- Students have no right to interfere with the belongings/possessions of another.
- Students should not bring large sums of money or valuable items to school, but if, occasionally, it is necessary to do so, they should lodge the money/item in the school office for safe-keeping.
- School management cannot be responsible for loss or theft.

Lockers

- Students are provided with individual lockers which should be kept in good condition.
- Food should not be stored in lockers overnight.

- Lockers should be kept locked at all times.
- Lockers remain the property of the school, and may be opened/searched on occasion.

Mobile phones, digital cameras and electronic devices

Coláiste Muire accepts that most students bring a mobile phone to school, but the following conditions will apply:

- Parent(s)/Guardians(s) who need to contact their daughter during the school day are requested to send a message through the school office (Phone: 065-6829497), rather than contacting her by mobile phone.
- Junior cycle students (1st, 2nd & 3rd years) are not allowed to use their phones during the school day (i.e. 8.55 – 4.00/3.20/2.00)
- If students need to contact home they should do so through the school office.
- Mobile phones must never be used in class, or between classes, for any purpose.
- Mobile phones should not be brought into any examination.
- Students are forbidden to make audio or visual recordings or to take still or moving images without the prior permission of the individuals concerned.
- The school cannot accept responsibility for lost or stolen mobile phones/iPods/digital cameras, etc.
- If a student is found using her phone inappropriately it will be confiscated. It will be kept safely by the Principal until collected by a parent/guardian at the end of the school day.
- In the case of students re-offending phones/cameras will be confiscated and held for a term.

Use of texting and social networking sites (e.g. Facebook)

- Any incident in which a mobile phone or social networking site is used to bully another member of the school community will be treated as a serious breach of school discipline. It is a criminal offence to use a mobile phone to menace, harass or offend another person. The school may consider it necessary to involve the Gardaí in such incidents. All sanctions, up to and including expulsion, may be considered.
- No comments, images or recordings of any member of the school community should be uploaded to personal or public websites without the prior permission of the individuals concerned. Any such invasion of an individual's privacy will be treated as a serious breach of school discipline. All sanctions, up to and including expulsion, may be considered.
- **Parents/Guardians should regularly monitor their daughters' mobile phone and social networking site usage, safeguarding them from inappropriate use.**
- **It is the responsibility of the Parents/Guardians to safeguard their daughters' use of social media. In the event of a serious incident Parents/Guardians may need to refer to Gardai.**

Uniform

- The full school uniform must be worn on the way to and from school, in school and on school related business.
- The prescribed school jacket is the only jacket to be worn.
- Uniform skirts must be knee length.
- Navy school pants must conform to uniform standard. Denims/non-school trousers are not permitted.
- Appropriate dark shoes should be worn. Runners are not allowed.
- No extreme hair colours or styles are permitted.
- Nose or facial jewellery is strictly forbidden.
- Sanctions include a record being kept in the Uniform Book and canteen duty. Management reserves the right to impose other sanctions if a student's appearance is deemed inappropriate.

Junior Uniform

Green School Jumper with Crest

White Blouse

Black watch tartan skirt/Navy School Pants

Dark Navy Socks **OR** navy/black plain opaque tights

The above are all available in Pynes of Abbey Street, Ennis.

School Jacket (available in school)

Dark Shoes

White short sleeved polo shirts are allowed for Junior Cycle students during warm weather.

Senior Uniform

Navy School Jumper with Crest

Blue Blouse

Blue Pinafore/Navy School Pants

Dark Navy Socks **OR** navy/black plain opaque tights

The above are all available in Pynes of Abbey Street, Ennis.

School Jacket (available in school)

Dark Shoes

Smoking, Drugs and Alcohol

Students are not permitted to smoke, (including use of e-cigarettes), drink alcohol or take drugs during the school day or during any school activities.

If students are found abusing cigarettes, alcohol or drugs, parents/guardians will be informed, the student will be put on report and suspended from school. For serious offences expulsion may apply. The Board of Management will be informed and the matter may be reported to the Gardaí.

School Sanctions

The following sanctions may be applied for breaches of school discipline. It is our experience that most issues are resolved at an early stage.

Verbal reprimand/reasoning with student.

Extra written work.

Referral to Class Tutor, Year Head and/or Deputy Principal.

Incidents recorded in Report Book.

Detention

On Report

Suspension

Expulsion

In-School Detention

Students are detained in the school at lunch-time from 12.45 – 1.10 on Thursday.

During the detention students are expected to complete assigned written work but are not permitted to do homework.

Students are placed on detention by either the class teacher, the Year Head, the Deputy Principal or Principal. Detention may be imposed for repeated or frequent minor breaches of the Code of Behaviour for more serious breaches on a once-off basis. When a detention is imposed, a letter setting out the reason for the detention is sent to the parent/guardian not later than the post on the Monday prior to the Thursday on which the detention is to be served. The letter will be counter-signed by the students Year Head. Students are expected to attend and be on time on the given date. Failure to do so will normally result in a second detention being imposed.

On-Report

The following types of misbehaviour may result in the student being placed “On Report” for one week.

- Repeated disruption of class.
- Repeated breaches of Code of Behaviour.
- Acts of insolence or defiance.

When a student is being placed “On Report” Parent(s)/Guardian(s) are informed in writing.

Subsequently, the student collects a Card from the school authorities which she must present to the teacher at the start of each class. The teacher comments on (i) Punctuality; (ii) Uniform; (iii) Homework; (iv) Class work; (v) General behaviour.

Following completion of “On Report” Year Head appraises student’s progress and discusses same with student/parent/guardian. If appraisal is unsatisfactory, student may be placed “On Report” for a further week. (see copy of report sheet above).

Procedures for Suspension

When proposing to suspend a student the school will always adhere to fair and just procedures.

Written records of behaviour are kept throughout the student's career. The student will be given every opportunity and support for a fresh start.

Parent/Guardian will be given notice in writing re. suspension. However, there may be circumstances where suspension will be effected by telephone call with Parent/Guardian.

- After the period of suspension the student is expected with Parent/Guardian to meet with the school authorities in order to facilitate improved behaviour on return.
- All suspensions are notified to the Board of Management.
- Immediate Suspension occurs in the event of serious misbehaviour by a student which poses a serious threat to the health and safety of any person in the school community. Students may be brought home to the care of Parent/Guardian and asked to return with Parent/Guardian, at an appointed time, to resolve the issue.
- Automatic Suspension occurs for the following named behaviour
(i) Smoking; (ii) Drug and alcohol abuse; (ii) unauthorised absence from school. Maximum number of days for suspension is 3 days.
In accordance with the Education Act all suspensions over 5 days will be notified to the N.E.W.B.

Exclusion/Expulsion

In extreme cases of misconduct, the Principal may recommend to the Board of Management that a student be excluded from the school.

If all reasonable efforts at rehabilitation fail, and the judgement of the Principal is that a pupil should be excluded from the school, the matter shall be referred to the Board of Management for decision.

Exclusion for a First Offence

The following particular named will merit exclusion

- Actual violence or physical assault.
- Serious threat of violence against another student/member of staff.
- Supplying illegal drugs to other students in the school.
- Sexual assault.

Exclusions are a decision of the Board of Management.

Procedure

- Investigation carried out under direction of Principal.
- Parents Informed.
- Recommendation to Board of Management by Principal.
- Board of Management Hearing. An opportunity for parents and student to outline their case to the Board.
- Board of Management deliberates and proposes action.
- Consultations/meetings arranged with Education Welfare Officer.
- Confirmation of decision to exclude/expel.

NOTE

In accordance with the relevant Education legislation i.e. The Education Welfare Act 2000 Sec 23, our Code of Behaviour was drawn up in consultation with the Principal, the Students, the Teachers and the Parents of Coláiste Muire, Ennis. This policy is subject to Continuous renew to ensure its effectiveness in the light of changing social conditions and in response to changes in legislation.

The Board of Management reserves the right to modify this policy statement at short notice as circumstances may require.

Appeal

Parents have the right to appeal under Section 29 of the Education Act 1998. All details of Appeal Procedure are available from the school authorities.

