

**CODE OF BEHAVIOUR**



**A. INTRODUCTION**

In accordance with relevant education legislation, i.e. the Education (Welfare) Act, 2000 and the Education Act, 1998 our Code of Behaviour was drawn up in consultation with the Principal, the Teachers, the Board of Management, the Students and the Parents/Guardians of St. Patrick’s College. This Code is subject to continuous review to ensure its effectiveness.

This Code of Behaviour outlines our expectations regarding general readiness to learn and behave appropriately. It is addressed to both students and parents. In accordance with section 20 of the Education (Welfare) Act, 2000 parents of children intending to register as students in St. Patrick’s College are provided with a copy of the Code of Behaviour prior to the child being registered as a student. In accordance with s. 23 of the Education (Welfare) Act, 2000 parents are required to acknowledge in writing that they have received a copy of this Code of Behaviour and are familiar with its provisions. **Parents/Guardians are expected to make every effort to ensure that their children comply with this Code of Behaviour and are also required to acknowledge this commitment in writing.**

Order and discipline ensure effective teaching and learning and thus enable students to reach their full potential. It is the **Policy** of St. Patrick’s College to encourage and acknowledge positive behaviour and to develop qualities such as responsibility and leadership, thus preparing students to participate fully as good citizens in society.

Students are given responsibility in the school when appropriate and are involved in the development of the Code of Behaviour through the School Council.

An Assembly for each Year group takes place at the beginning of the school year where the Principal and Deputy Principal address the students and outline the standards and high expectations that are set for student behaviour.

Every class has a Class Tutor who takes care of the class and fulfils a Pastoral role relating to the class. The school rules are explained clearly too each class at the beginning of the year and a copy of this Code of Behaviour and of the Class Rules is available in each classroom.

Tutors and Year Heads explain the importance of the Code and the part students have to play in making it work.

St. Patrick’s College is characterised by the good relationship that exists between teachers and pupils and aims to promote a happy school atmosphere.

Parents are encouraged to maintain regular contact with the school through the Student Journal, telephone contact, Parent-Teacher meetings, Open Nights and Partnership Nights. They are also welcome to visit the school on other occasions by appointment to discuss their child’s progress. They can support the school by encouraging good learning behaviour.

Positive behaviour is acknowledged through positive referrals, notes in the Journal, end of term Reports, affirmation of good behaviour through classroom visits by Class Tutors, Year Heads, Deputy Principal and Principal and the Annual Awards Night.

**OBJECTIVES**

* St. Patrick’s College is characterised by high standards in all areas of school life. We aim to uphold our characteristic spirit of good discipline, a strong work ethic, high educational attainment and good relationships.
* We aim to maintain a positive climate where mutual respect and co-operation are fostered throughout the school community and where lapses are treated with constitutional and natural justice.
* We strive for reasonableness at all times in the implementation of rules and sanctions. This Code of Behaviour is implemented in a manner that is consistent and fair to all students.

1. **SCHOOL RULES**

**1. General**

* 1. We insist on genuine effort and commitment to schoolwork.
  2. Students must, at all times and including out of school hours, show courtesy to and **respect all members of school staff**, visitors to the School and their fellow students.
  3. Students must obey school staff at all times.
  4. Students must behave in an appropriate manner in school, coming to and from school and on all school outings and occasions. The Code of Behaviour applies to students whether they are on school property and/or engaged in a school activity or not.
  5. Loitering in toilets, corridors or on the School Grounds is strictly forbidden.

**2. Homework**

1. Homework and revision are essential components of schoolwork.
2. The assignment of homework should be recorded by students in their school journal.
3. Assigned homework, whether oral or written must be completed to a satisfactory standard. Failure to so complete assigned homework is a **serious** breach of this Code of Behaviour.
4. Parents/guardians may be requested by a teacher to sign homework or schoolwork where a student has not completed same to a satisfactory level. The school reserves the right not to permit the student concerned to attend a specific class or classes in general until this has been done, where requested. This is in addition to other sanctions, which may be imposed in accordance with this Code of Behaviour.

**3. The School Journal**

1. The School Journal is used as a means of communication between the School and parent/guardian, in addition to the recording of assigned homework by students.
2. The school journal ***must*** be signed by a Parent/Guardian each weekend. Parents/Guardians should also check the school journal daily and ensure that assigned homework has been completed.
3. The loss of a School Journal or defacing of pages in a School Journal is a serious matter. Where this arises students must present a written explanation for same signed by Parents/Guardians. Failure to do so is a breach of this Code of Behaviour.

**4. Attendance and Punctuality**

**i. Attendance**

1. The School Timetable is as follows:
   1. First Class starts at 9.10 a.m.
   2. Lunch from 1.15 p.m. to 1.55 p.m.
   3. Last class finishes at 3.45 p.m.
2. Students are required to be in attendance at the School on every school day. The law now requires that Parents/Guardians inform the school of both the fact of absence on the part of a student and the reason for the absence. This also applies to absence for part of a school day. This should be done in writing.
3. The School records the fact of absence and the reasons given for absence by students in accordance and notifies the Department of Education & Science of same in accordance with s. 18 of the Education (Welfare) Act, 2000. Official roll call is taken during the first class in the morning. Each individual subject teacher also takes a roll call.
4. Parents/Guardians are requested to telephone the school to notify daily absences.

1. Unexplained absence, whether from a scheduled class or from the School, is a serious breach of this Code of Behaviour.
2. Students returning from an absence must present a written explanation for their absence, signed by a Parent/Guardian, at roll call on the next day of attendance. The School **reserves** the right not to permit students returning from absence to attend class **until this written explanation is furnished**.
3. If a child is absent for more than 20 days, the school is obliged to notify the National Welfare Education Board.

1. Where a student’s attendance record gives cause for concern Parents/Guardians will be invited to review same with the School authorities.
2. Students, except Transition Year, Fifth Year and Sixth Year may not normally leave the School Grounds during school hours. **Junior Students who wish to go home at lunch break must submit a written request signed by a Parent/Guardian at the beginning of the school year.**
3. Students wishing to leave the School Grounds during school hours must be signed out by a parent/guardian at the school office Students leaving school in accordance with this procedure will ‘sign-out’ at reception, and ‘sign-in’ on their return to school, if they return on the day in question. **The School does not accept liability for students who are permitted to leave the School Grounds in accordance with this procedure for the period during which the Student is absent from school, i.e. the period between the time at which the Student signs the appropriate Record Book on leaving the School Grounds and the time at which the Student signs the appropriate Record Book on arriving back to the School.**
4. Failure to comply with the above procedure for leaving the School Grounds during school hours otherwise than at lunch break is a serious breach of this Code of Behaviour.
5. **Good attendance is recognised at the annual awards presentation** and attendance in general may be addressed in school reports and references.

**ii. Punctuality**

1. Students must be punctual. Students are expected to be at school by 9.05 am to prepare for the school day. Persistent late arrival is a breach of the Code of Behaviour.
2. Students arriving late must report to the School Office before they go to class. Students who are late shall have their time of arrival recorded in their journal and in the late book.
3. Students must present a written explanation for lateness, signed by their Parent/Guardian. The school reserves the right not to permit students to attend class until an explanation has been furnished.
4. Students who arrive late on more than two occasions per week and who do not present a written explanation for their lateness shall be required to attend an after school detention on the Friday of the week they are late.

**iii. General – Attendance & Punctuality**

1. The School opens at **8.30 a.m**.and closes at **4.00 p.m.**

**The School does not accept liability for students arriving at the School Grounds before the School opens or remaining on the School Grounds after the School closes unless such students are participating in an official school activity.**

**5. The School grounds**

1. Littering on the School grounds is a breach of this Code of Behaviour
2. Students are not permitted on the School Grounds except when attending school or an activity organised by the School. Students otherwise on the School Grounds are trespassers within the meaning of the Occupiers Liability Act 1995 and are in breach of this Code of Behaviour.
3. Motor-vehicles must be used in a safe manner on the School Grounds. Failure to drive safely may result in the person concerned being prohibited from using a motor-vehicle on the School Ground, in addition to other sanctions, which may be imposed in accordance with this Code of Behaviour.
4. Student cars are not allowed on school grounds.

**6. School Uniform and Dress Code**

**i. Uniform**

1. Students must wear the complete School Uniform at all times during school hours and official school functions. Students who do not have a complete school uniform must report to the Deputy Principal.
2. Students who do not comply with the above will not be allowed into class.
3. Parents will be notified in advance of ‘non-uniform’ days or occasions on which students are not required to wear the School Uniform.
4. The school uniform comprises of the following:-

**Girls:** Green Jumper with College Crest

White Blouse/White Polo Shirt

Green Skirt/**Grey** Flannel Trousers

**Boys:** Green Jumper with College Crest

White Shirt/White Polo Shirt

**Grey** Flannel Trousers

**Junior Cert students must wear flat black or blue leather shoes. Runners are not permitted.**

Trousers and school jumpers must not be ripped.

In addition to the uniform there is also a navy jacket with the school crest available.

**ii. Appearance**

1. Students must be neat and tidy in appearance. This also applies if students are given permission not to wear school uniform (e.g. non-uniform days, school tours or other extra-curricular activities connected with the school).
2. For Health & Safety reasons, the following specific provisions apply to student’s appearance:

Hair must be neat and tidy. The wearing of jewellery will be confined to ears when attending the school or engaged in any school activities.

Visible tattoos are not permitted

**iii. General – School Uniform & Appearance**

1. Failure to comply with the above rules concerning the School Uniform and students’ appearance is a breach of this Code of Behaviour.
2. The School reserves the right to decide whether any aspect of a student’s appearance is in compliance with this Code of Behaviour.

**7. Property**

**i. General**

1. Each student is responsible for his or her own property. Student’s property should be clearly marked with name and contact details.
2. Interference of any kind with another person’s property including property belonging to the School is a serious breach of this Code of Behaviour. Interference includes but is not limited to theft.
3. Students should not bring valuable or irreplaceable items or large sums of money to school except where absolutely necessary. The School does not accept liability for property or money lost, stolen or damaged while on the School Grounds.
4. Parents/Guardians may be required by the School to pay for the repair or replacement of property damaged by students.
5. Deliberate damage to property or vandalism is a serious breach of this Code of Behaviour, whether occurring on school grounds and during school hours or not. Parents/Guardians of students responsible will be required to pay for the repair or replacement of property damaged deliberately or vandalised as appropriate in addition to other sanctions, which may be imposed on students in accordance with this Code of Behaviour.
6. Stealing is a serious breach of this Code of Behaviour, whether the incident of theft occurs on school grounds and during school hours or not. Parents/guardians of students responsible will be required to pay for the replacement of stolen property in addition to other sanctions, which may be imposed on students in accordance with this Code of Behaviour.
7. Incidents of vandalism and theft may be reported to the Garda Síochána.
8. Chewing gum is not allowed in the School and will be confiscated if brought to school, in addition to any other sanctions, which may be imposed on students concerned in accordance with this Code of Behaviour.
9. The use of mobile telephones is prohibited in the School buildings between the hours of 9:00am to 4:00pm. Mobile telephones must be switched off in classrooms. Mobile telephones used in breach of this rule will be confiscated and returned by the Principal/Deputy Principal, in person, to a Parent/Guardian of the student concerned.

**ii. Lockers**

1. Students will have access to their lockers during the following times:

* Before the first class in the morning.
* During morning break.
* During lunch break.
* Evenings
* At other times, with permission of staff.

1. Students should report damaged lockers immediately. Failure to do so will result in the student concerned being held responsible for the damage.
2. Students are responsible for all items left in their locker whether such items belong to the student or not.
3. In the interests of maintaining safety and discipline in the School, students may be required to open and empty their locker in accordance with the following procedure:
   1. The student will be requested to **open and empty the locker** in the presence of the Principal/Deputy Principal, another adult nominated by the Principal/Deputy Principal and, if the student requests, another member of school staff or a student nominated by the student whose locker is to be opened and emptied.
   2. If the student **agrees,** the locker will be opened by the Student and its contents examined in the presence of the student and the other persons described above.
   3. If the student **refuses** to permit the locker to be opened Parents/Guardians of the student concerned will be contacted and asked to come to the School. Pending arrival of a Parent/Guardian the student’s locker key will be confiscated.
   4. On arriving at the School **Parents/Guardians** will be requested to **consent** to the student’s locker being opened and emptied in the presence of the Principal/Deputy Principal, another adult

nominated by the Principal/Deputy Principal, the Parents/Guardians and the student.

* 1. If **Parents/Guardians** **consent** to the procedure described above the locker will be opened and its contents examined in the presence of the Parents/Guardians and the student concerned.
  2. If **Parents/Guardians refuse** to permit the locker to be opened or are unable to attend the School as described above the School may contact the Garda Síochána. The student’s locker key will remain confiscated pending a search of the locker by members of the Garda Síochána.
  3. Failure to comply with a request to open a locker and empty its contents in accordance with the procedure described above is a **serious breach of this Code of Behaviour** by the student concerned.
  4. Where it is **not practical** to operate this procedure (i.e. where the student concerned is absent from school) the Principal/Deputy Principal accompanied by another member of school staff may open a locker and examine its contents. Prior to doing so the Principal/Deputy Principal will make reasonable efforts to contact the student concerned and his/her Parents/Guardians in order to enable them to attend the School should they so wish, in which case the normal procedure described above will apply.

**iii. Stolen property & dangerous items/substances**

1. A dangerous item/substance is any item/substance which could cause harm or damage to a person or to property possession of which item/substance is not necessary for a school sanctioned activity.
2. Where the School has reasonable grounds for believing that a student has in his/her possession stolen property or a dangerous item/substance the procedure described above in relation to lockers will be applied as regards the student’s person and property, i.e. the student will first be requested to voluntarily disclose contents of pockets/schoolbags in the presence of witnesses, failing which Parents/Guardians will be contacted etc.
3. Under no circumstances will school staff attempt to affect a search of a students’ person.
4. Where an incident to which this provision applies occurs outside the Republic of Ireland i.e. on a school tour the School may contact appropriate police authorities in place of the Garda Síochána.
5. Possession of a dangerous item/substance is a serious breach of this Code of Behaviour, whether the item/substance is brought onto the School Grounds or not.

**8. Bullying**

1. Bullying in any form is a serious breach of this Code of Behaviour.
2. Where an incident of bullying comes to the School’s attention the following measures will be taken:
   1. The incident will be reported to and investigated by the Class Tutor and Year Head of the students concerned. If the Class Tutors and Year Heads considers that bullying may have taken place the Principal/Deputy Principal will be informed.
   2. The Parents/Guardians of students concerned will be informed of the School’s concerns.
   3. Parents/Guardians will be requested to attend at the School and meet with the Class Tutor and Year Head of the students concerned and the Principal/Deputy Principal.
   4. If it is established that bullying has taken place, counselling will be provided as appropriate to all students concerned, i.e. victims and bullies.
   5. If it is established that bullying has taken place disciplinary action may be taken in accordance with this Code of Behaviour.
3. The School has a **comprehensive Anti-Bullying Policy in place**. It is the responsibility of all students and their Parents/Guardians to familiarise themselves with the provisions of the School’s Anti-Bullying Policy.
4. The School’s Anti-Bullying Policy applies to *any* incident of bullying which the School becomes aware of, whether it occurs on school property and/or during a school activity or not.

**9. Substance Use**

1. Smoking is forbidden on the School Grounds. Smoking on the School Grounds at any time is a serious breach of this Code of Behaviour.
2. Students found smoking on the school grounds shall be sent to the Deputy Principal.
3. The Deputy Principal shall inform the students’ parents through the school journal and detain the student.
4. For a second smoking offence, the school shall write to the student’s parents and detain the student.
5. In the event of a third offence, the students’ parents will be required to attend a meeting to discuss their child’s smoking.
6. The School has a zero-tolerance approach to incidents of substance abuse. Possession, use or distribution of harmful or illegal substances including alcohol and tobacco will not be tolerated at *any* time and under *any* circumstances and may lead to suspension or expulsion in accordance with this Code of Behaviour. This applies whether students are on school property and/or engaged in a school activity or not.
7. The School has a comprehensive Substance Use Policy in place. It is the responsibility of all students and their parents/guardians to familiarise themselves with the provisions of the Substance Use Policy.

**10. Chewing Gum**

Chewing Gum is strictly forbidden in St Patrick’s College for hygiene and Health and Safety reasons. Chewing gum will be confiscated if bought to school. Chewing gum will be considered a Level One Demerit.

1. **DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURE**

Our disciplinary procedure is based on a merit/demerit system that is as follows:-

**Level One Demerit include**

* Late to class
* No diary or diary not signed
* No P.E. gear/Incorrect PE gear
* Incorrect school uniform
* Not having correct equipment
* Homework not completed
* Littering/ Chewing Gum

**Level Two Demerits include:**

* Disturbing other students
* Interrupting the teacher
* Failing to follow teachers instructions
* Not completing class work
* Rough play
* Swearing

**Level Three Demerits include:**

* Disobeying the teacher
* Insolent behaviour
* Significant disruption of the lesson

1. Where the Code of Behaviour has been breached the following strategies will apply:
   1. Classroom Teacher will deal with minor breaches of school rules, usually a verbal reprimand, additional homework or punishment exercise.
   2. Misbehaviour may result in a demerit which will be written in the student’s journal. The Class Tutor will then speak to the student and may use one or more of the sanctions listed at 1 above or may put the student on community service after three level on demerits.
   3. Further Demerits may result in student being put on three days Lunch Time Detention by the Year Head. Parents will be informed of 1st set of detentions by a note in the journal. Teacher in charge of Detention to be informed by Year Head and Detention Form to be filed in student’s file.
   4. Any further Demerits – Year Head will deal with student. Sanctions may include: -

Reprimand.

Letter of Apology to be written by student.

Lunch time detentions. Notification to Parents by letter.

Removal from class and placed under the care of a Senior Staff member.

Loss of privileges e.g. exclusion from school events.

Extra work.

Referral to Counsellor or Pastoral Care team

5. Any further Demerits **or** very serious breaches of School Rules will be dealt with by the Deputy Principal/Principal.

Sanctions may include: -

Letter to Parents/Guardians.

Meeting with Parents/Guardians *(in school in accordance with section 9(e) below)*

In school Suspension.

After school detention

Referral to Principal with written file where appropriate

Referral to Board of Management.

Immediate suspension may be incurred for certain offences as set out in Section D (iii).

1. Where After school Detention is imposed as a sanction Parents/Guardians will be notified in writing of the fact that detention has been imposed, the reason for same and the time, place and duration of the detention.
2. Teachers or Year Heads may also refer students to members of the Pastoral Care Team for help and advice.
3. Written records and/or incident report forms as appropriate will be kept in relation to breaches of the Code and measures taken in response to same.
4. Where a student’s behaviour warrants it: -

Parents/Guardians will be requested to come to the school to meet with the Year Head/Principal/Deputy Principal. Parents/Guardians will be given as much notification in advance of this meeting as is reasonably possible. Teaching staff who have had dealings with the student concerned may also be requested to attend this meeting.

* 1. School Management will notify Parents/Guardians of their concerns.
  2. The sanctions described above at (a) may be implemented at any stage in this process.

**D. DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURE - SUSPENSION**

Where a student’s behaviour warrants suspension the following procedures will apply:

i The Principal may suspend a pupil for up to five school days. Parents/Guardians have the right to appeal the Principal’s decision to the Board of Management. Where such an appeal is taken the suspension will not take effect until after the meeting of the Board of Management at which the appeal is heard.

ii Where a student’s conduct justifies a longer period of suspension than the Principal may impose, or expulsion, Parents/Guardians will be requested to attend with the student at a meeting of the Board of Management to discuss the student’s on-going participation in the school. Parents/guardians will be given as much notification in advance of this meeting as is reasonably practicable. Teaching staff who have had dealings with the student concerned may also be requested to attend this meeting as appropriate. **If the Board of Management suspends or expels a student, Parents/Guardians or, in the case of a student who is over the age of 18,** the student may **appeal** this decision, in the first instance, to the Mayo Vocational Education Committee and thereafter to the Secretary General of Department of Education & Science, in accordance with subsection (1) Section 29 of the Education Act 1998.

* 1. The Principal may also suspend a student **immediately** in the following circumstances:

- where he or she considers that the student’s behaviour is a **threat** to the safety, welfare and/or property of other members of the school community.

- Where the student is guilty of serious misbehaviour as defined below **at (E),**

- where he or she considers that suspension of the student is necessary to **maintain discipline** within the school.

* 1. If a student is suspended in these circumstances Parents/Guardians will be asked to attend at a **meeting of the** **Board of Management** as above at (i). This meeting will be held as soon as is reasonably possible after the suspension is imposed.
  2. Where a student is suspended Parents/Guardians will be notified in writing of the reason for the suspension, the period of suspension, the condition(s), which will justify the lifting of the suspension and the fact that the student will be regarded as in the care of his or her Parents/Guardians from the end of the school day on which the suspension is imposed.

vi. A notice of suspension will set out the conditions, which must be fulfilled before the suspended student is permitted to return to the School. Conditions which may be imposed include one or more of the following:

- **written undertakings** by the Student to be of good behaviour,

- return to School subject to **loss of** **specified privileges**,

- a successful appeal to the Board of Management (if the suspension is imposed by the Principal) or to the Department of Education & Science (if the suspension is imposed by the Board of Management),

* the elapse of the time for which the suspension is stated to apply.
* Re-admission to the School on successful application to the Board of Management.
* The foregoing are merely examples of conditions, which may be attached to suspensions and are without prejudice to the **School’s right to impose different conditions as appropriate.**

**E DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURE – EXPULSION**

i. While suspension or expulsion are generally used only when all other options have been tried, a student may be suspended or **expelled** for a single serious breach of discipline or for consistent breaches of discipline of a less serious nature.

ii. Where the Board of Management decides to expel a student Parents/Guardians will be notified in writing of the expulsion, the reason for same and the fact that the student will be regarded as in the care of the parents from the end of the school day on which the expulsion is imposed.

iii. The following constitute serious misbehaviour :

* 1. behaviour which **disrupts the learning** of other students,
  2. **acts of violence** towards any person, whether occurring on school property and/or during a school activity or not,
  3. behaviour which is **threatening** towards any person, whether occurring on school property and/or during a school activity or not,
  4. interference with another **person’s property** including property belonging to the School,
  5. interference with **emergency equipment**, i.e. fire alarms, fire extinguishers etc.,
  6. breaches of the School’s **zero-tolerance policy regarding substance abuse,** whether occurring on school property and/or during a school activity or not,
  7. **bullying**,
  8. **possession of a dangerous item/substance**,
  9. **behaviour described as a serious breach of this Code of Behaviour elsewhere in the Code**.

**The definition of serious breach of discipline includes but is not limited to the examples given above.**

**Appeals to the Board of Management must be made in writing to the Chairperson of the Board.**

Please returned signed to

Class tutor

Code of Behaviour Contract

I agree to accept the code of behaviour as set out herein.

Signed: Date:

Student

I agree that the code of behaviour is acceptable and I will support the College in upholding the standard set out under the code.

Signed: Date:

Parent/Guardian

Signed: Date:

Principal