



Castlerea Community School Code of Behaviour

Mission Statement

Castlerea Community School is dedicated to the pursuit of excellence in education in a caring environment of mutual respect so as to foster the full potential of its students and staff. In partnership with parents we strive to create a desire for lifelong learning, respect for the individual, an awareness of the needs of the disadvantaged, concern for the environment and an appreciation of our own unique culture.

School Ethos

At the heart of school endeavours is the total welfare and wellbeing of each and every person in a positive and safe environment, building positive relationships of mutual respect and mutual support among students, staff and parents/guardians. Castlerea Community School strives to produce an environment conducive to good teaching and learning in which each student can realise their potential and maximise their opportunities for success.

Further, we aim to foster in students, lifelong values, attitudes and skills - social, practical, academic and spiritual, which will help them to meet with confidence whatever challenges life may bring. In so aiming, we are conscious of the different realities of student lives and the need for an orderly environment. In sending your child to Castlerea Community School, you the parents/ guardians understand and accept the Code of Behaviour of the school.

Castlerea Community School Code of Behaviour seeks to adopt a positive approach to the behaviour the school wishes to promote. Good manners, courtesy, cooperation and respect for others are central to this. Our school is a community of people with shared interests and goals, helping young people to mature into responsible participating citizens.

The School places particular emphasis on good behaviour, acknowledging and rewarding it when it is apparent as well as recognising the individual and collective achievements of students. This will be achieved through affirmation by teachers, internal merit system and through end of year awards ceremony.

This policy includes our policy on suspension and expulsion and should be read in conjunction with the following school policies and procedures.

- Mission Statement
- Special Educational Needs Policy
- Child Protection Policy
- Substance Abuse Policy
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Internet Policy - Acceptable Use
- Pastoral Care Strategy

- Health and Safety
- Healthy Eating Policy
- Down Town Policy
- CCTV Policy

Respect

Our actions should always be governed by respect for ourselves, others, property and our environment. Students should not behave in a way that is likely to bring themselves, their families or the school into disrepute.

School Uniform

All students are required to wear the official uniform as outlined below, in school, while representing the school and during state exams. Students not in full uniform may not be allowed to class, parents may be contacted or the school will provide a uniform for the day.

Girls - Official School Skirt (Knee length) or School Trousers, Navy school jumper, White blouse, Navy/black socks/ tights. Black leather shoes.

Boys - Official grey trousers, Navy school jumper, Grey shirt, Navy/black socks. Black leather shoes.

If students wish to wear a t-shirt under the school shirt, only collarless white t shirts may be worn.

School Jacket:

The School jacket is compulsory for incoming First years from September 2015 onwards. No jackets may be worn within the school building and only school jackets are permitted while on activities representing the school.

Hair / Make up / Jewellery:

In the interests of health and safety students are expected to be neat and have a well groomed appearance. Minimal /discrete make up and natural hair colour only are acceptable. Inappropriate hairstyles are not acceptable. For health and safety reasons jewellery should be minimal. Facial jewellery of all types are not permitted. Earrings limited to one small stud worn on each ear.

The school reserves the right to decide if a students' uniform and general appearance is inappropriate and students will be asked to remove unsuitable accessories.

PLC dress code - smart casual.

School journal - Each student must have their school journal for every class. It is an important learning tool and method of communication between students, parents and teachers. The journal is not a private diary and can be inspected at any time by a member of staff. Students have responsibility for their own journal and should not deface it in any way or allow another student to do so. Students must meet the cost of replacement journals if deemed necessary.

The journal is used;

By students to record homework and help organise work

By parents to record notes for absences and lateness, to request permission to leave school, to explain non completion of homework and monitor progress of student

By teachers to correspond with parents

The school journal should be checked regularly by parents and *signed each week*.

Successful students are organised and come to school prepared and ready to learn i.e. having the appropriate attitude and the necessary books and equipment. Lockers should be used to benefit organisation with students organising materials in the morning prior to first class, at break-time and lunchtime.

Homework

Homework and revision are essential components of schoolwork. Students are advised to keep a balance between school work and extracurricular activities. In the event of a student being absent from class, responsibility rests with the student to get the work completed in class and to do the homework assigned.

Attendance and punctuality

Students are required to be in attendance each day. Students must attend all classes in accordance with their timetable. Unauthorised absence from school or from class is a serious offence. The law requires that parents inform the school of both the fact and the reason for the absence. Schools are obliged to record the reasons for absences. (Education Welfare Act 2000, section 18). A note of explanation is required in the school journal for each absence and late arrival. Students arriving late should sign in at the front office accompanied by a parent / guardian. Students leaving early should have a note in their journal which is to be presented to the Year- head and be signed out at the office by a parent / guardian, unless prior arrangements have been put in place.

All students must remain on the school grounds during morning breaktime. 1st, 2nd and 3rd year students must also remain on the school premises during lunch time. Students must not leave the school grounds without prior permission at any time during the school day.

Health and Safety.

Students should move throughout the school in an orderly manner.

As per Tobacco Smoking (Prohibition) Regulations 2003 smoking is strictly prohibited on the school grounds and at all times and while participating in school events. Any breaches will result in suspension and may result in the payment of cost / fines. This will include the use of e-cigarettes.

The possession / consumption of alcohol, solvents, harmful substances, the use / trafficking of illegal drugs / substances are strictly prohibited. Breaches will result in immediate suspension and other appropriate action including expulsion as deemed necessary by management. Management reserve the right to make a report to An Garda Siochana.

Dangerous items such as matches, lighters, laser lights, firecrackers, knives and items deemed to represent a hazard are forbidden. Such items will be confiscated immediately and an appropriate sanction may be imposed.

Chewing gum is prohibited and food and beverages should only be consumed in the Assembly area. In line with our Healthy Eating Policy, water only may be consumed in class, at the discretion of the teacher.

Students are encouraged to leave mobile phones and other electronic devices at home. Parents who need to contact students should do so using official channels through the main office. If students choose to have them in their possession, they must be powered off during school hours. Where a student is found to be in breach of policy and using a phone or electronic device for any mischief, playing games, taking photos or recording any person or event without permission, the phone will be confiscated immediately, the matter reported to management and the phone will be retained for a period of five school days.

Recording or posting of any images or sounds of staff members or students on social media is deemed a serious breach of the Code of Behaviour and appropriate sanction will be imposed. This kind of activity may also result in civil or criminal action.

Sexting

Sexting is the sharing of sexual text, video and photographic content using mobile phones, apps, social networking services and other internet technologies. The sharing of explicit text, images and/or video, is an unacceptable and absolutely prohibited behaviour and will have serious consequences and sanctions for those involved in accordance with the school's Code of Behaviour.

Please note that:

- All incidents involving creating, storing, or sharing of explicit text, images and/or video of children under the age of 17 years will be reported as an incident to the Gardaí and Tusla and the State Claims Agency (to the latter as there is the potential to cause injury/harm to the individual).

- Sharing of explicit text, images and/or videos of pupils in the school will incur serious sanctions including suspension and up to expulsion as determined by the Board of Management.

Property

School property is the property of the whole school community and the school has a duty to protect and maintain this for all. It is the responsibility of all students to keep the school environment litter free and use the bins effectively.

The cost of vandalism or any malicious damage of any property on the school grounds or during school activities will be recouped from students or their parent/ guardian. In line with NEWB guidelines, serious damage of school property may result in suspension or expulsion.

Each student must take responsibility for his / her own property as the school will not be held responsible for items lost stolen or damaged on the school grounds or on any school activity. Items should be clearly labelled and not left unattended. The school recommends that valuable items be left at home.

Protests / Boycotting:

As a school, we welcome and encourage students to voice their opinions, concerns or otherwise through meaningful and respectful dialogue, either formally through our Student Council or informally through everyday conversations and meetings. Organisation or participation in any unauthorised protest, which disrupts teaching and learning is a serious challenge to school authority and disrupts the smooth running of the school, will not be tolerated and those involved in the organisation or participation of such protests or boycotts will be sanctioned as appropriately, under this Code of Behaviour, up to and including suspension.

CCTV

CCTV systems are installed (both internally and externally) in CCS for the purpose of enhancing security of the building and its associated equipment as well as creating a mindfulness among the occupants, at any one time, that a surveillance security system is in operation within and/or in the external environs of the premises during both the daylight and night hours each day. CCTV surveillance at the School is intended for the purposes of:

- protecting the school buildings and school assets, both during and after school hours;
- promoting the health and safety of staff, pupils and visitors;
- preventing bullying;
- reducing the incidence of crime and anti-social behaviour (including theft and vandalism);
- supporting the Gardaí in a bid to deter and detect crime;
- assisting in identifying, apprehending and prosecuting offenders; and
- ensuring that the school rules are respected so that the school can be properly managed

Procedures for breaches of Code of Behaviour

Where the school deems it necessary to impose sanctions, these are viewed as a positive intervention and a means to improve student behaviour.

Each case of a breach will be treated on an individual basis with regard to how serious the breach is. The past record, attitude and general behaviour of the student will be taken into account.

Class teacher – Most instances of misbehaviour or indiscipline may be dealt with immediately by the class teacher. S/He has a number of options available, depending on the nature of the situation. Issues such as punctuality, homework etc are recorded in the student journal and the points system is applied. Teachers may give a written report to the Year-head outlining breaches of the code of good behaviour. On referral the Year-head will speak to the student, offer guidance and explain the consequences of further misbehaviour.

An accumulation of points will result in further sanctions which may include one or more of the following:

- completion of relevant additional work
- lunchtime detention
- report card to monitor behaviour
- withdrawal of privileges from the student such as participating in school events
- Friday evening detention
- formal meeting with parents and
- suspension.

Parents will be notified of detention through the school journal (to be returned signed). The fact that Friday evening detention may be inconvenient will not excuse the student from this sanction. In the event that a student misses detention, appropriate school sanctions will be applied. Course work / relevant additional work may be assigned for completion during detention or suspension.

All reports by teachers are discussed at a weekly meeting. A file is kept on each student to monitor their progress.

It will be in the remit of the Principal / Acting Principal, in line with NEWB guidelines, to suspend a student for up to 3 days. In consultation with the Chairperson of the Board of Management, a student may be suspended for a period of up to 5 days. In exceptional circumstances, it may be deemed necessary to suspend a student for up to 10 days, following a meeting of the BOM. Students may be suspended from class internally pending a meeting with parents/guardians. A decision to suspend a student from school will be communicated to the parents/ guardians by letter. Students may only return after suspension following a meeting of the student concerned and his/her parents/guardians with the Principal/Deputy Principal.

In the event that students are involved in behaviour outside of school (time) that impacts negatively on any member of the school community, school management reserves the right to intervene.

The school reserves the right to decide which course of action is taken in instances of breach of discipline. The Board of Management reserves the right to exercise expulsion for breaches of the Code of Behaviour.

SUSPENSION/EXPULSION POLICY

The Board of Management recognises its duties under the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act, 1989, to provide a safe place of work and a safe system of work for its employees and for students. The Board is committed to ensuring that good order and discipline is maintained in the school and that the safety of all employees and students is safeguarded. This policy statement is to be considered in conjunction with the Code of Behaviour and other relevant policy statements. When considering cases for suspension or expulsion, the following procedures will apply in accordance with Chapters 10, 11 and 12 of the NEWB Guidelines (2008).

Short-term suspension:

Short-term suspension is viewed as a constructive measure. It provides the student with a period of reflection so that he/she will be able to participate in school in a positive and effective manner on his/her return.

Under normal conditions when a student is suspended from school the following procedure is adhered to.

1. The student and their parents / guardians will be made fully aware of the allegation and will have an opportunity to discuss and respond to the allegation.
2. Parents/Guardians are informed in writing of a decision to suspend, prior to the period of suspension.
3. The reason for the suspension is stated.
4. The duration of the suspension is stated.
5. The right of the Parents/Guardians and students over 18 years to appeal the decision to suspend to the Board of Management is stated.
6. Should the Parents/Guardians decide to appeal the decision to the Board of Management a date and time for the Appeal Hearing is arranged. All appeals, stating the reason for such appeal must be lodged in writing with the Secretary of the Board of Management within a specified period of time.
7. Parents/Guardians have the right to be present at the 'Appeal Hearing'.
8. If attending, they must inform the Secretary, BOM, of their intention within two days of the meeting.
8. Parents/Guardians are required to meet the principal or her representative on the student's return to school after a period of suspension.

In exceptional circumstances immediate suspension may be required in which case parents/guardians are contacted at the earliest opportunity and asked to remove the student from the school premises.

Following a period of suspension, the student and parent / guardian must meet with management and they may be required to sign a special contract of good behaviour, agreeing to

1. accept the Code of Behaviour and
2. fully support the Code of Behaviour.

Permanent Exclusion/Expulsion

Exclusion from school is considered a serious matter and the decision to exclude is not taken lightly. Permanent exclusion is considered for a disruptive student when the behaviour is a cause of significant disruption to teaching and learning and when all efforts at rehabilitation have been exhausted.

Permanent exclusion is also considered in the following circumstances:

- A. Where a student presents a real and significant threat to the safety of the school community, students or school personnel.
- B. The student is responsible for actual violence or physical assault towards a member of the school community.
- C. The student is involved in the sale or supply of illegal drugs to other students during the school day, on the school premises or on school activities.
- D. Sexual assault

When permanent exclusion is considered, the following procedure will apply in accordance with the NEWB Guidelines (2008)

1. A detailed investigation is carried out under the direction of the principal.
2. A recommendation is made to the Board of Management by the principal that student X be permanently excluded from the school.
3. The principal will inform the parents and the student that a recommendation is being made to the Board of Management to consider expulsion and the reason for the recommendation is stated.
4. The right of the Parents/Guardians and students over 18 years to appeal to the Board of Management the recommendation of the principal to expel is stated.
5. Should the Parents/Guardians decide to appeal the recommendation to the Board of Management a date and time for the Appeal Hearing is arranged. Parents/Guardians are advised that they may make a written and oral submission to the Board.
6. Following the hearing the Board decides and the decision of the Board is communicated to the Parents/Guardians by registered letter.

Appeals

With regard to suspension and expulsion, Section 29 of the Education Act (2000) provides, in certain circumstances, for an appeal to the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Science. The Board will advise parents of this right should the need arise.

This Code of Behaviour has been drawn up in consultation with students, Parents Council and staff members and was ratified by the Board of Management on: Tuesday, 23rd June 2015

The Code of Behaviour was last reviewed and amended by the Board of Management on Wednesday, 6th November 2019