



PATRICIAN SECONDARY SCHOOL
NEWBRIDGE, CO. KILDARE.

Meánscoil Phádraig, Droichead Nua, Co. Chill Dara.



CODE OF BEHAVIOUR: Patrician Secondary School

The Patrician Secondary School as a Christian Community School commits itself to the development of all of its members in an environment of co-operation and mutual respect.

The Code of Behaviour has been developed in accordance with the school's mission statement. The rationale of the Code of Behaviour in our school is to promote and maintain a sense of order and behaviour, which creates a community within the school where everybody's rights are recognised, respected and upheld. Our code takes account of the very important role of parents and depends on their co-operation in its implementation. Enrolment in Patrician Secondary School will only be considered on acceptance by the students and parents of the Code of Behaviour. In accordance with the Education Welfare Act 2000, parents are required to sign a form to state that they accept the Code of Behaviour.

The aims of our Code are:

- To create a climate that encourages and reinforces good behaviour and participation.
- To create a positive and safe environment for teaching and learning.
- To encourage students to take responsibility for their learning and behaviour.
- To help our students to mature into responsible participating citizens.
- To build positive relationships of mutual respect and mutual support among students, staff and parents.
- To ensure that the schools high expectations for the behaviour of all of the members of the school community are widely known and understood.

Our Code is supported by and encompasses the following policies:

- Attendance and Participation Policy
- Pastoral Care Policy
- Homework and Study Policy
- Personal Electronic Device Policy
- Anti-Bullying Code
- Board of Management Policy on Fighting
- Board of Management Policy on Violent Behaviour
- Acceptable User Policy for IT and the Internet
- Substance Abuse Policy

It should be noted that the vast majority of students operate within our code of behaviour and they experience our Code as a positive support of their learning. We strive to acknowledge, promote and affirm positive behaviour through our daily interactions and communications with students, use of the student journal, our Credit System, the Gradam Acaduil and assemblies. The schools Pastoral Care policy, curriculum and co-curricular activities promote and support positive behaviour across the school community. Nevertheless it is important that

all students, parents and teachers have a clear understanding of how we deal with behaviour that may infringe on each student's right to learn in a safe environment.

Details of this Code of are circulated to the parents of incoming first year pupils and reinforced to each year group at the start of each school year. At the start of first term the Class Tutor fully explains the Behaviour Code to the First Years in his/her charge and the way the discipline policy is operated. Great efforts are made to ensure that our code is fair, just and consistent. Pupils are given a clear understanding of what is expected from them. The aim is to help pupils to realise the need for them to discipline themselves as they mature and to make them aware that their behaviour affects not only themselves but also those with whom they live or come into contact. The positive aspects of good behaviour are stressed before attention is drawn to the punitive consequences of anti-social behaviour. Through our curriculum and co-curricular activities our students are taught the following:

- Behaviour for learning skills
- Social and Emotional Literacy skills
- Academic Literacy, Learning and Study skills
- Positive Health and Wellbeing skills

The Code of Behaviour covers among other things the following areas: behaviour in class, behaviour outside class, coming to and from school, attendance, uniform, respect for one's self, for one another, for parents, teachers and those in authority, and respect for property. It also covers school tours, educational trips and all school related activities. It also includes lunchtime and journeys to and from school.

The administration of Code in the school is structured as follows:

- The Class or Subject teacher is the front line source of help for students. As a leader of learning, and someone with an established relationship of trust, the teacher will have a strong influence with the students. The teacher will deal with routine incidents of misbehaviour through classroom management strategies. These may include extra work assigned to the student, short periods of detention or meeting with the student one-to-one. This will minimise the need for further interventions.
- The Year Head in conjunction with the Principal and Deputy Principal is responsible for the implementation of the Code of Behaviour for each year group. Persistent misbehaviours and serious breaches of discipline will be referred to and dealt with by the Year Head and sometimes directly by the Deputy Principal and/or Principal. A term of suspension may be warranted where serious breaches have occurred. In extreme cases of gross misbehaviour, as outlined in this document, the Principal may refer the incident to the Board of Management where permanent exclusion of the student may be considered.
- The Principal is the ultimate authority within the school and is consulted in all cases that might involve serious sanctions.
- The Board of Management, which manages the school on behalf of the Patrons, has overall responsibility for ensuring that a code of Behaviour exists and that the Principal, under the direction of the Board carries it out in a fair and equitable manner.

Class Tutors

While the Class Tutor in each year group has a supportive and consultative role in the area of promoting positive behaviour his/her primary role is a pastoral one. He/she will have contact with the class for some periods in the week. The Class Tutor in First Year will help the pupils to familiarise themselves with the layout of the school and explain to them how the various systems work. He/she will help pupils to settle in and be alert to any problems, which might cause anxiety in individual pupils. Such problems might include being bullied, having no friends, inability to cope with the transition to second level, as well as the many other factors that cause a pupil to feel insecure. The pupils in each year group should see the Class Tutor as someone to trust and confide in. The Class Tutor will strive to get to know the family background of each pupil. Any information volunteered by parents concerning the pupil's health or problems in the home should be noted and conveyed, if the Class Tutor thinks necessary and with the permission of the parents, to the rest of his teachers.

Year Head

The Year Head will normally take charge of the students in their first year and remain as their Year Head throughout their five years in the school. Apart from his/her discipline role the Year Head works closely with the Class Tutor to ensure that students are afforded every opportunity to get the best from their time spent in the school. The Year Head is in contact with the pupils during their difficult period of adolescence. This is why it is important that he/she remains with the group giving him/her the chance to get to know and be sensitive to the needs and problems of each pupil. The Year Head is the first recourse available to a teacher if there is a problem with a student. He/she may take one or more of the following steps:

- (1) Try to ascertain the reasons there might be for the pupil's misbehaviour. Advise the pupil, point out to him the unacceptable elements in his behaviour, and remind him of the consequences of his actions. The Year Head may refer the student to the schools Care Team or Guidance Counsellor. Contact will be made with student support services using the appropriate referral procedures as deemed appropriate. NEPS (National Educational Psychological Service), CAMHS (Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services) and KYS (Kildare Youth Services) are examples of such support services.
- (2) Allot penalty points and put the pupil on a Conduct Report Sheet or Homework Monitoring Sheet. These sheets monitor the pupil's performance and it demands that the pupil gets it signed by the teacher at the end of each class as well as by one of his parents when he goes home each evening. Write to the parents and if necessary invite them to the school to discuss the problem.

Use of the Conduct Report Sheet

The Conduct Report Sheet is most likely to be used in addressing Category A misdemeanours (see below), especially irritating or disruptive behaviours. It should be used to try and change negative behaviour patterns and to encourage a more responsible and positive attitude from the student. The student may be given a Report Sheet following a number of notes in the student's journal.

The Conduct Report Sheet is intended to;

- Monitor the pupil's performance over a period of time and to give him the chance to reflect on and improve his behaviour
- Afford the parents the opportunity to contribute to remedial action

- Afford the teacher the opportunity to see how the pupil is performing in other classes.
- Promote student responsibility.

Sanctions

Our Code helps young people to experience the value of being responsible participating members of our school community. The Code uses a penalty points system to signal various levels of inappropriate behaviours. Students incur penalty points for breaches of discipline. Every effort is made to keep students from reaching high penalty points. Individual teachers will only report a student to the Year Head after they have taken steps to improve the student's behaviour. These steps, which in most cases prove to be effective, include notes in the student's journal or a phone call to the parents/guardian, meeting the student one-to-one, assigning extra work or a short period of detention.

If a pupil amasses 20 penalty points, both he and his parents/guardians are advised that any further transgression of the rules may result in a suspension. Pupils can shed penalty points with positive behaviour. Minor breaches will incur four penalty points. More serious breaches, such as insolence or serious disruption of class, usually incur not less than ten penalty points but each report is judged separately. Bullying is a most serious matter and may warrant on-the-spot suspension (see our Anti-Bullying Code). Vandalism or damage to school property or personal property is a serious offence and incurs high penalty points or suspension or permanent exclusion. It is also the policy of the school that pupils responsible for such damage bear the burden of repair costs.

Categories of Discipline Problems

Categorizing discipline problems makes it easier for the Year Head to alert students to inappropriate behaviour and to achieve consistency when it comes to allotting penalty points. An analysis of past complaints would suggest that offences could easily be divided into three categories. (This was recognised in our first discipline document, published in 1981 and has been reviewed regularly since then).

Samples of the most common misdemeanours are listed in each case. Offences not listed can be assessed in terms of seriousness by using the samples given as a gauge, whether they occur in the classroom, corridor, yard or elsewhere.

Reporting Procedure

All complaints reported to the Year Head are in writing

Pupils on Points

Once a pupil reaches 10 penalty points the Year Head must inform the parents. A student who reaches 20 penalty points may face suspension. Parents will be informed of this possibility. Any decision to suspend, following discussion between the Year Head and the Principal, will be conveyed in a letter to the home and will be signed by both. It is normal for a number of days to elapse between the decision to suspend and the start of the suspension. At times an immediate suspension may be deemed more effective by the Principal or it may suit the parents or guardians.

where the Year Head feels that a 10 point penalty is not sufficient he/she should discuss the matter with the Principal or Deputy Principal.

Where a student continually incurs penalty points for such behaviours and the behaviour is persistently interfering with the teaching and learning process then the Principal may refer the student to the Board of Management where permanent exclusion of the student may be considered.

The Board will permanently exclude a student whose behaviour is a persistent cause of significant disruption to the teaching and learning process.

Category C: 20 points

Because of their seriousness most Category C offences should be referred by the Year Head to the Principal or Deputy Principal as it may be necessary to make immediate contact with the home and a term of suspension may be warranted. In extreme cases the matter may be referred to the Board of Management.

Examples:

- Fighting (B.O.M. Policy on Fighting in place)
- Bullying (verbal, physical, cyber, racism etc.) (B.O.M Policy on Bullying in place)
- Foul language, sexual innuendo directed at a teacher or deliberately used to cause embarrassment to a teacher. (B.O.M. Policy on Violent Behaviour)
- Aggression towards a teacher (B.O.M. Policy on Violent Behaviour)
- Abuse directed towards a teacher outside the school (B.O.M. Policy on Violent Behaviour)
- Any wilful act that could cause injury to another or even to the student himself.
- Malicious damage to school property, the property of a teacher, or a student
- Vandalism going to or coming from school
- Involvement in public disorder
- Theft
- Being involved with or in possession of prohibitive/illegal substances on school grounds or on a school related activity (See Policy on Substance Abuse)
- Involvement with or in possession of illegal substances outside of school (See Policy on Substance Abuse)
- Inappropriate use of the internet, personal electronic devices and social media (See Personal Electronic Device Policy and Acceptable Users policy)

In accordance with Board of Management policies covering many of the above offences, mandatory suspensions will apply. In certain cases including persistent disruption of the teaching and learning process, expulsion is possible. In other exceptional cases where there may be mitigating circumstances and it is felt that penalty points would be more a deterrent a minimum 20 points will apply to a Category C offence.

Reducing Penalty Points

Category A: 4 Penalty Points

Category A includes the common, persistent classroom irritations. The following are some examples:

- looking for attention
- talking out of turn
- turning around
- Not paying attention
- distracting others
- forgetting homework diary, books, equipment
- bringing inappropriate items to class or being in possession of such items in class
- arriving late for class
- throwing paper or littering
- eating in class
- misuse of locker
- misuse of journal
- doing other subject work
- abuse of Report Sheet
- wilful failure to do homework

Normally a teacher will report such incidents only after he/she has made a reasonable effort, using his/her classroom management skills or personal sanctions to resolve the problem. The teacher may also contact the parents/guardians through the Homework Journal letter or phone call and will liaise with the Year Head. The Category A behaviours become more serious when they have a cumulative impact on the teaching and learning process, interfering with the learning of other students.

On receipt of such a Category A complaint, the Year Head may allot 4 penalty points. The Year Head may or may not put a student on a Report Sheet at this stage.

Category B: 10 Penalty Points

These are unacceptable offences by a pupil and include the following examples:

- Any incident of gross disruptive behaviour
- Skipping class
- Belligerent arguing with the teacher or answering back
- Mocking the work of the teacher
- Mocking the efforts of other pupils
- Aggressive attitude towards another student
- Refusal to obey a reasonable request from a teacher e.g. to change seats; to remove a jacket, to hand over a mobile phone or similar device, etc.
- Throwing of any object that could possibly cause superficial injury e.g. ruler, pen
- Failing to show for detention
- Inappropriate comments made to another person
- Spitting

Serious incidents such as the above should be reported to the Year Head without delay. A standard 10 penalty points which is the minimum for such offences will be allotted. In exceptional cases

On the Friday of the week following the week when the pupil last received penalty points, in the case of Category A, the pupil will drop 4 penalty points if he has kept a clean sheet in the meantime. On subsequent Fridays, provided there are no further complaints, the pupil will drop a further 6 points, and then 8 points until all points have disappeared.

If in the meantime the pupil incurs penalty points the process of reduction is interrupted. In the case of a complaint incurring a 4 point penalty, the penalty points are added to his current total. The pupil must wait until the Friday of the following week before any reduction takes place.

Where the complaint incurs a 10 point penalty or 20 point penalty, these points are added to his original total before remission, not his current total. The process of remission must begin again from the beginning.

When a decision is being made to suspend a pupil all matters concerning his behaviour will be taken into account.

Suspension

The Year Head will deal with breaches of discipline wherever they occur. Some serious incidents of misbehaviour may be reported directly to the Principal or the Deputy Principal and dealt with directly by him/her. Whenever it is found necessary to impose serious sanctions the Year Head will discuss the matter with the Principal. The Class Tutor will also be consulted. The Board of Management will be informed of all suspensions. Only the Principal can sanction a suspension in consultation with the Deputy and Year Heads.

Parents will be informed in writing:

- Of the reason for suspension.
- Of the period of suspension.
- Any study program to be followed
- That the pupil will be regarded as being in the care of the parents from the end of the school day on which he is suspended.
- The parents have a right to appeal the decision to the Board of Management
- Arrangements for returning to school, including any commitments to be entered into by the students and the parents.

A pupil returning from suspension must meet with the Principal or the Deputy before he returns to class. The Board of Management will follow procedures in respect to suspension as outlined in section 11.5 of the NEWB Guidelines (2008) and the Education Welfare Act (2000).

Permanent Exclusion

Only the Board of Management may finally decide to expel a pupil. Expulsion will only be contemplated when it is considered by the Board that the continued attendance of the pupil at the school would be actually harmful to the education of other pupils, or that the point has

been reached where the offending pupil could not be helped in any way by remaining in the school. Parents of pupils whose expulsion is being considered will be given the opportunity of attending the Board Meeting.

The Board will consider permanent exclusion of a student on the following grounds:

- The student's behaviour is a persistent cause of significant disruption to the learning of others or to the teaching process
- The student's continued presence in the school constitutes a real and significant threat to safety
- The student is responsible for serious damage to property.

The Board will only permanently exclude a student when it feels all possible interventions have been exhausted.

In exceptional circumstances the Board may decide to permanently exclude a student for a first offence.

A serious single breach could be as follows or of the same extent:

- A serious threat of violence against another student or member of staff
- Actual violence or physical assault
- Supplying illegal drugs to other students
- Sexual assault

The Board of Management will follow procedures in respect to permanent exclusion as outlined in section 12.4 of the NEWB Guidelines (2008), and the Education Welfare Act (2000).

A parent, or a student aged over eighteen years, may appeal a decision to expel to the Secretary General of the Department and Skills.

The Code of Behaviour will be reviewed at regular intervals following consultation with students, parents and teachers. The Code of Behaviour was reviewed and updated during the school year 2012/13 involving consultation with students, teachers, parents and Board of Management. The review was guided by the NEWB Guidelines: Developing a Code of Behaviour.

This policy was ratified by the board of Management on 9th May 2013.

Signed: Pat O'Leary

Pat O'Leary (Secretary to Board of Management)