

DUNMORE COMMUNITY SCHOOL
DUNMORE
Co. GALWAY



CODE OF
BEHAVIOUR POLICY
2021-2022

CODE OF BEHAVIOUR.

Dunmore Community School is no different from any other institution used by the public. For any institution to function successfully, it must lay down an appropriate code of behaviour. If all adhere to this code, we can look forward to working in relative peace, harmony and security. The following code is drawn up on the fundamental principle that Dunmore Community School is a community where mutual respect, co-operation and natural justice are integral features. It has regard to the rights and responsibilities of all parties concerned in school life: management, teachers, students, parents and visitors. Our code is designed to promote the rights and responsibilities of all members that comprise the school community namely, students, teachers, parents and guardians, visitors and the local community the school seeks to serve.

The relationship between teachers and students is the single most dominant influence on student behaviour. Our Code of Behaviour seeks to promote and support this influence positively. Our teachers seek to implement the code in a fair, impartial and consistent manner. Our students understand the importance of the code of behaviour in seeking to establish a school community where mutual respect flourishes and diversity is cherished. Positive behaviour is acknowledged and rewarded and is recognised as a fundamental building block towards a positive vibrant school community.

This Code of Behaviour specifies:

- The standards of behaviour that shall be observed by each student attending the school.
- The measures that may be taken when a student fails or refuses to observe those standards.
- The procedures to be followed before a student may be suspended or expelled from the school concerned.
- The grounds for removing a suspension imposed in relation to a student.
- The procedures to be followed relating to notification of a child's absence from school.

EXPECTED STANDARDS OF BEHAVIOUR

Students are expected:

- To show respect and courtesy to all school personnel, bus drivers, visitors and to peers.
- To be serious about his/her academic pursuits and co-operate with teachers.
- To have regard for the school, its property and its environment.
- To avoid smoking, chewing gum, possessing alcohol or other harmful/illegal substances or drug-related paraphernalia in the school or in the school environs.
- To adhere to the established dress code as stated in the student's handbook and to reasonable standards of good grooming.
- To co-operate with teachers when engaged in extra-curricular activities.
- To co-operate with any enquiry into breaches of school rules.

TRAVELLING TO AND FROM SCHOOL

Students must:

- Co-operate with the bus drivers.
- Come directly to school.
- Students not availing of school transport should proceed directly to school.
- While waiting for the bus in the evening, please respect the rights of shop owners, members of the public and please put your litter in the bins provided.

Note: School Authorities will not accept responsibility for students who fail to come directly to school in the morning.

TRUANCY

The school will not take responsibility for students who leave home in the morning and fail to attend school. The school reserves the right to sanction students who are found guilty of truancy. The Sanction may include detention/suspension.

LUNCH ARRANGEMENTS

In the interest of hygiene and the cleanliness of the school, eating will be confined to the times and places designated by the management. Those who wish to go home for lunch may be permitted on the presentation of a request form signed by parent(s)/guardian(s) to the office at the start of the year for the attention of the Year Head.

RELEASE OF STUDENT DURING THE SCHOOL DAY

The following arrangements have been put in place by the Board of Management governing students leaving school during the school day:

- A permission slip signed by the parents must be posted in the Year Head's post box before 9a.m. on the morning.
- The permission slip must state the time of departure and the proposed time of return where relevant.
- The Parent/Guardian/Nominated person must sign the student out in the book provided in the main office.
- Where a "nominated person" is signing a student out of school, the school must have received confirmation from the Parent/Guardian of their nomination.

BEHAVIOUR IN CLASS

It is expected that students adhere to the classroom policy displayed in each classroom. The following is the Classroom Policy:

- To be on time for class and have in their possession the School Journal at all times.
- To do their homework as assigned by the teacher.

- To show courtesy and respect to everybody in their class.
- To respect each student's right to learn and each teacher's right to teach.
- To keep their classroom clean and tidy.
- Students must sit in a seat assigned by a teacher.
- Students must be prepared for class and have in their possession all necessary class materials.

If a student is disruptive in class and/or fails to do their homework regularly, the subject teacher will adopt one or more of the following procedures:

- Discuss the problem with the student.
- Impose appropriate sanctions e.g. Points on VSWare.
- Contact parents/guardians by telephone or a note in Diary.
- Contact year head.

In the event of persistent disruption, the student will be referred to the Year Head. The Year Head will discuss the matter with the student and may impose sanctions, including detention. A student may be referred to the Deputy Principal/Principal.

CHEWING GUM

The chewing of gum is not permitted in the school or on the school grounds and breaches will be dealt with under the school's Code of Behaviour.

TIPPEX

TippeX is not allowed in the school except where provided by the teacher.

CARE OF PROPERTY/SCHOOL GROUNDS

All school property must be treated with respect at all times. Any accidental damage by students to property must be reported immediately. In the case of accidental damage, students will be expected to pay for the repair/replacement costs.

Those guilty of wilful damage to property will have sanctions imposed including suspension and students will be expected to pay for the repair/replacement costs. Such incidents may be reported to the Gardai for an independent investigation.

All students are expected to care for the school grounds and make every attempt to enhance the beauty of our school.

SMOKING:

Students are encouraged to respect their health and the health of others by not smoking on school grounds. Government statute prohibits smoking on the school premises. The policy of the Board of Management is that students may not use or be in possession of tobacco products on school grounds or in the vicinity of the school or while representing the school in a school-sponsored activity. Dunmore Community School is to be smoke-free to students. The school grounds are defined as "all property vested in the trustees and managed by the Board of Management".

Smoking or the possession or control of tobacco in any form by a student is strictly forbidden in any part of the school, school grounds or at a school-sponsored activity. Tobacco products will be confiscated, and students will face the following sanctions according to the Code of Behaviour:

- students found smoking will be suspended for one day for a first offence.
- two for a second offence.

This sanction will run on an incremental basis. Under anti-smoking legislation, a student found smoking on school property is liable for a fine of €3000.

MOBILE PHONES/CAMERA PHONES/OTHER IMAGING DEVICES/ELECTRONIC DEVICES

Mobile phone technology has many positive aspects to it, however, the misuse of mobile technology in school can be very disruptive, interferes with teaching and learning, breaches people's privacy rights and can lead to bullying and harassment.

The Board of Management after consulting the Partners has agreed the following:

- Mobile phones, camera phones, Smart Watches etc and other such devices must be switched off and digitally disconnected while students are at school or within the school environment i.e. from that time a student arrives in school in the morning until he/she departs the school in the evening.

Students who are in breach of this regulation will have these devices (including SIM cards) confiscated. We wish to advise Parents that where such item(s) are confiscated every effort will be made to store them in safe keeping, however, the Board of Management will not take responsibility for such items in the unlikely event that they become damaged or lost.

Where such communication devices are used for:

- harassing others
- compromising the privacy of others
- circulating malicious information
- Transmitting any abusive, obscene, threatening, defamatory, offensive or harassing images or material

In addition to confiscation, students will also face sanctions under the normal discipline system.

Parents/Guardians are asked to cooperate and support this policy by refraining from making contact to their child's mobile phones during the school day.

In the case of emergency, a student may contact home or home may contact the student using the office phone: 093-38203 with the permission of the Year Head/Deputy Principal or Principal.

Please see our updated Mobile Phone Policy on our Website.

OFFENSIVE WEAPONS, MATERIALS ETC.

The school reserves the right to confiscate items from students which may cause injury or have the potential to cause injury to others and sanction students accordingly.

GENERAL BEHAVIOUR

Students are expected to behave properly and correctly at any event in which the school or its students are represented or involved. Students are not allowed to use the school environs to organise events, trips or outings without the Principal's consent.

LOST PROPERTY

Students must take responsibility for all their property while at school. Books, bags, clothes, P.E. gear etc. All items must be clearly marked with the student's name.

THEFT

Any student involved in stealing either school property or property belonging to individuals (school personnel or students) may be suspended and/or referred to the Gardaí.

INTERNET ACCESS

Access to the Internet is provided to the students according to the terms and as outlined in the ICT Acceptable Use Policy on the school website.

Inappropriate use of the facility may result in such access being removed and, in particular cases suspension or expulsion from the school, and the involvement of the Garda Síochána depending on the nature and/or level of such misuse.

RE-APPLICATION

Students, who substantially interfere with the smooth running of the school through their indiscipline in a particular year, may be requested to apply to the Board of Management for re-admission to the school for the following year. When such an application is refused through the Board of Management the applicant may appeal the decision to the secretary General of DES under section 29 of the Education Act '98.

DRUGS, ALCOHOL AND OTHER HARMFUL SUBSTANCES

Under no circumstances are harmful substances to be sold, distributed or consumed on the school premises during the school day or during any school activity organised by the school. Students are forbidden to enter the school or the grounds of the school under the influence of the above substances. Students in breach of these regulations may be suspended/or expelled.

UNACCEPTABLE BEHAVIOUR / BULLYING/HARASSMENT/SEXUAL HARASSMENT

(With regard to sexual harassment, note separate nationally agreed policy.)

The equal status act (2000) prohibits sexual harassment, bullying and any other forms of harassment.

Sexual harassment takes place where a person subjects another person – the "victim" to an act of physical intimacy, requests sexual favours from the victim or subjects the victim to any act or conduct with sexual connotations including spoken words, gestures or the production, display or circulation of written words, pictures or material including the inappropriate use of internet social networking web sites.

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.

Harassment takes place when a person subjects another person – "the victim" to any unwelcome act, request or conduct, including spoken words, gestures or the production or display or circulation of written words, pictures or other material, which in respect of the victim is based on any discriminatory ground and which could reasonably be regarded as offensive, humiliating or intimidating to him or her.

Here in Dunmore Community School, we insist that all students experience an education environment that is free of fear, harassment, or intimidation of any nature. Behaviour such as fighting, intimidation, name calling, isolating students, making life unpleasant for students constitutes bullying and is not acceptable.

When bullying takes place, the following procedures will have to be followed as laid down by the Department of Education and Science Circular M42/93:

- The incident will be recorded.
- A full investigation will take place.
- Every effort will be made at reconciliation between parties.
- Where reconciliation fails, parents/guardians of victims and bullies will be informed by the Year Head/Deputy Principal/Principal so that an opportunity is given to discuss the matter.
- Parents will be advised of the availability of counselling where it is deemed necessary.
- Sanctions, including suspension, may be imposed.

Bullying should never be trivialised as "he/she was only messing".

ON REPORT

An uncooperative student may be put on report by a subject teacher in consultation with the Year Head.

Putting a student on report means that for a specified time the students' behaviour will be closely monitored. The procedure will be as follows:

- The student will be given an "on report" card by the Year Head.

- The Year Head will decide the length of period "on report" and mark it on the card.
- The Year Head will inform the student's teachers that he/she is on report.
- At the beginning of each class period, the student will hand the card to the teacher in charge of the class. At the end of the class, the teacher will initial the card and assign a grade/comment.
- The card remains the responsibility of the student and **must be signed each night** by the parent/Guardian.
- The student must present the report card to the Principal/Deputy Principal/Year Head when requested.
- Failure to have the report card signed or to comply with the procedure for the report card may result in the period being extended/further sanctions.

At the end of the period on report the card is placed in the student's file.

DETENTION

Penalty points will be allocated to students who are in breach of the Discipline Code. Parents may access these points on our VSWare system on a trial basis. Teachers, at their discretion, may award up to 5 points. In the event of persistent disruption, the Year Head may send a report to parents and may impose a sanction, including detention. A student may also be referred to the Deputy Principal/Principal.

A student may be allocated with all 10 points by their Year Head/Principal/Deputy Principal for a very serious breach of discipline. Students who accumulate 10 points will be put into a Detention. If for some reason the student is absent on the day of his/her detention, he/she will be required to sit the detention on the next day that he/she attends school. (This will also apply to a student who fails to attend detention and further sanctions will apply) Detention takes priority over all extra-curricular activities.

Negative Points may be imposed for conduct or misbehaviours for example:

- Unexcused lateness to school or to any class.
- Being in an out-of-bounds area inside the school grounds.
- Littering the school or grounds area.
- Failure to bring in an absence note.
- As a sanction by an individual teacher for unacceptable behaviour in class where warnings have not had an effect.
- Talking out of turn.
- Cheeky or impertinent remarks.
- Failure to bring materials to class.
- Writing/and or passing private notes in class.
- Other misbehaviour of a similar nature to above.

POSITIVE POINTS

Teachers, at their discretion, may award positive points in recognition of positive behaviour of a student, and a record of such positive behaviour is kept on the student's record. Please note that students may also have some negative penalty points deducted if good behaviour is maintained over a long period. Each term, students who accumulate no penalty points will be recognised by the Year Head and subsequently awarded positive points in recognition of their excellent behaviour.

FRIDAY AFTERNOON DETENTION

This is an integral part of our schools' Code of Behaviour.

Year Heads, the Principal or Deputy Principal will use this sanction for students who accumulate 20+ points and/or for once off more serious breaches of the Code of Behaviour.

Students must present themselves for this detention on time & in full uniform. It will take place from 1.15 p.m. to 2.45 p.m. Students who fail to turn up to this detention will automatically serve an afterschool detention on the next day they return from 4:15 – 5:45.

Failure to comply will lead to suspension. It is the duty of parents to provide transport from this detention.

SUSPENSION

Suspension is defined as requiring the student to absent himself/herself from the school for a specified number of school days. During the period of suspension, the student retains their place in the school. The Board of Management has the authority to suspend a student and delegates this authority to the Principal.

Forms of Suspension:

- **Automatic Suspension** – The Board of Management reserves its right to suspend a student as part of the school's policy on sanctions.
- **Immediate Suspension** – The Principal may consider an immediate suspension to be necessary where the continued presence of the student in the school at the time would represent a serious threat to the safety of students or staff of the school or any other person.
- **Suspension during State Examinations** – The Board of Management reserves its right to suspend a student where there exists a threat to good order in the conduct of the examination, a threat to the safety of other students and personnel or a threat to the right of other students to do their examination in a calm atmosphere.

Suspension is imposed to give the student time to consider his/her behaviour and to decide to make the necessary adjustments. It is available as a sanction in cases where either persistent or cumulative misdemeanours are involved, or for a single offence of sufficient gravity. Students may be suspended by the Principal for breaches of school regulations. Behaviours, such as those outlined below, and any other behaviour which constitute a danger to the security, safety or wellbeing of the school community may merit suspension.

1. Cases where either persistent or cumulative misdemeanours are involved, e.g. repetitive Friday afterschool detentions or for a single offence of sufficient gravity.
2. Any act which endangers the health, safety and welfare of others in the school.

3. Fighting or encouraging others to fight on the school premises, at the bus stop or at any school sponsored activity.
4. The use of obscene, offensive or abusive language in word or writing in the school or towards any person.
5. Theft or wilful damage, abuse of, or destruction of school property, furniture or equipment, or the property of any person associated with the school. In such cases parents / guardians will be held liable for costs of repair/replacement.
6. Possession, use, or being under the influence of alcohol, drugs or related substances or bringing into school, having in one's possession or using any form of chemical substance other than medically prescribed or over the counter medicines.
7. Smoking or being in the possession of cigarettes or tobacco in any form on one's person on school grounds or at school sponsored activities. Students in the company of other student's found smoking will also incur sanctions.
8. Physical or verbal abuse (including name-calling) of a teacher, or other members of the school staff/visitors.
9. Wilful disobedience to the clear instruction of a teacher.
10. Forging of notes for any reason.
11. Ridiculing or causing a person to be ridiculed or deliberate harassment of by way of personal or sexual harassment or personal or sexual slurs or otherwise, or violence, whether physical or verbal towards any other member(s) of the school community. This includes abuse via internet social networking technology.
12. Bringing into school, distributing or using substances or items such as "stink" bombs, "bangers" or tampering with services with the intention of causing disruption.
13. Tampering or interfering with school security systems/fire safety equipment, alarms etc. Following such interference, the costs associated with the resetting of the equipment will be borne by the parents/guardians.
14. Bringing into school or having in one's possession or using any form of weapon.
15. Truancy- unexcused absence from school without the knowledge or consent of the school authorities and/or parents.
16. Uniform/Dress Code and Presentation Code- persistently infringing the uniform or dress code regulations.
17. Engaging in any form of unlawful/illegal behaviour such as taking a photograph secretly or recording of a teacher in class.
18. Other misbehaviours of a similar nature to above.

PROCEDURES IN RESPECT OF SUSPENSION

Period of Suspension

The normal period of suspension may be up to three school days. In exceptional circumstances a longer period may be imposed. Periods of suspension longer than three days will be approved by the BOM, where possible, or authorised by the Chairperson of the Board of Management.

Implementation of Suspension

Parents will be notified in writing of all suspensions. The letter will include:

- The period of suspension and the dates on which the suspension will begin and end.
- The reasons for the suspension.
- The study programme to be followed.
- The arrangements for returning to school including any commitments to be entered into by the students and the parents.
- The provision of an appeal to the Board of Management.
- The right to appeal to the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Skills where a student is suspended for 20 days or more in a single academic year.

Where possible a meeting may be held with students and parents either before or after the period of suspension to explain the significance of suspension and seek to set out the need for a change in behaviour upon return to school.

Suspension Appeal Format

1. In the event of a suspension being appealed, an appeal letter must be lodged with the Chairperson of the Board of Management within 3 working days from the date of issue of the letter of suspension.
2. Parents/Guardians have a right to be present at the "appeal hearing" if they so wish. If attending, they must give two days' notice in writing to the Secretary of the Board.
3. The Principal will present his report to the B.O.M. on the incident and the sanctions which are the subject of the appeal. The members of the B.O.M. may ask questions and seek clarification. The Principal then leaves the meeting.
4. The appellant(s) then joins the meeting accompanied by a witness (non-legal in accordance with established practice). He/she is invited to make a full presentation of the basis for the appeal. This will be done without any interruption. At its conclusion members of the B.O.M. may ask questions and seek clarification. The appellant(s) then leave the meeting.
5. In the absence of the Principal and the appellant the B.O.M. will consider all aspects of both presentations and make a decision. This decision will be conveyed in writing to the appellant(s) and the Principal.
6. Should the BOM uphold an appeal, the record of the suspension will be removed from the student's file.
7. The B.O.M. may also make recommendations aimed at resolution of issues.
8. A member of the B.O.M. will act as recording secretary at the appeal hearing.

Please note that if in the opinion of the Principal the behaviour giving rise to the suspension is of a serious nature the student may stand suspended during the appeal period.

Re-integration following suspension.

Supports will be provided to students following a period of suspension in order to help the student re integrate into the school community. Such supports may include:

- Meetings with Year Head/Class Tutor
- Meetings with Guidance Counsellor/Chaplain
- Meetings with Principal/Deputy Principal
- Meetings with the Education Welfare Officer

Following a period of suspension or suspensions and if the student continues to breach the school's Code of Behaviour the student will be required to meet with the schools Discipline Committee.

Such a meeting will be convened in order to impress upon the student and parents the seriousness of the situation and to support the student in his/her attempt to comply with the Code of Behaviour. The Principal will report all suspensions to the Board of Management and the Education Welfare Board where required.

The Board of Management undertakes to review all suspensions periodically with a view to identifying factors that may be influencing behaviour in the school and to ensure that the use of suspension is appropriate and effective.

EXPULSION

A student can be permanently excluded from the school by the Board of Management following provisions as laid down by Section 24 of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000.

Expulsion of a student is a very serious step for a Board of Management to consider. Expulsion of a student will be considered by the Board of Management where:

- A 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 health and safety.
- Where a student persistently and repeatedly refuses to comply with the schools Code of Behaviour.
- The student is responsible for serious damage to property.

Expulsion of a student will be considered where a series of other interventions have failed and where other possibilities of changing the student's behaviour have been exhausted.

The automatic expulsion of a student may be considered as a consequence of particular named behaviours as outlined in the school's Code of Behaviour. The Board of Management may also consider the expulsion of a student for a particular offence.

Included are:

- A serious threat of violence against another student or a member of staff.
- Actual violence or physical assault.
- Possession or use of illegal drugs in the school or supplying illegal drugs to other students in the school.
- Sexual assault.

In considering the expulsion of a student the Board of Management will give consideration to:

- The nature and seriousness of the behaviour
- The context of the behaviour
- The impact of the behaviour
- The interventions tried to date
- Whether expulsion is a proportionate response
- The possible impact of expulsion.

PROCEDURES IN RESPECT OF EXPULSION

The Board of Management is the decision-making body in relation to expulsions. The Board will consider matters relating to expulsion in accordance with the following procedures.

Step 1 - Investigation

A detailed investigation will be carried out under the direction of the Principal.

Students and Parents will be informed in writing about the details of the alleged misbehaviour, how it is to be investigated and that it could result in expulsion.

The Principal will offer to meet with the student and parents to allow student and parents put their side of the story. Parents and the student will be provided with an opportunity to respond to the complaint before a decision is made and before a sanction is imposed.

Step 2 - Recommendation

Where the Principal forms a view, following an investigation, that the behaviour warrants consideration of expulsion the Principal will:

- Inform the parents and the student in writing that the Board of Management is being asked to consider expulsion.
- Ensure the parents, students and Board of Management have copies of the written documentation, outlining the misbehaviour that the Board will use in considering expulsion.
- Notify the parents in writing and by registered post of the date of the BOM meeting where the expulsion will be considered and invite them to attend. Parents may be accompanied at the hearing by a witness (non-legal in accordance with established practice). Reasonable notice will be given.
- Advise the parents that should they so wish they may make both a written and oral presentation.

Step 3 – Consideration by Board of Management

The Board will review the investigation and satisfy itself that the investigation was properly carried out and in line with fair procedures.

Student aged 18 or over or parents/guardians and the Principal will have an opportunity to outline their case to the meeting. Each party will have an opportunity to seek clarification from the other.

Student, Parents / Guardians and the Principal will then leave the meeting.

Step 4 – Board of Management Deliberations

The Board then considers the facts of the case and forms an opinion whether or not expulsion is appropriate.

Should the Board form the opinion that expulsion is merited, the Board will inform the National Education Welfare Board of its decision. The Board will act in accordance with Education Welfare Act 2000 and Education Miscellaneous Provision Act 2007.

Student and parents will be informed in writing of the Board's decision.

Step 5 – Consultations with Education Welfare Officer

Within 20 days of receipt of a notification from the Board of its opinion that a student merits expulsion the Education Welfare Officer will hold individual consultations with the Principal, student and parents.

The Education Welfare Officer may also convene a meeting of those parties who agree to attend.

Step 6 – Confirmation of the decision to expel

When 20 days of receipt by the EWO of the Board's opinion has elapsed and where the Board remains of the same view the Board will formally confirm the decision to expel.

Student and parents will be informed of the decision in writing.

Student and parents will also be informed of the Education Act 1998 Section 29 appeals process to the Department of Education and Skills. The standard form on which to lodge an appeal will be included.

Please note that if in the opinion of the Board that the behaviour giving rise to the expulsion is of a serious nature and that the continued presence of the student during this time will seriously disrupt the learning of others or represent a threat to the safety of other students and staff the student may stand suspended during the appeal period.

Review

The Board of Management undertakes to review all expulsions periodically with a view to identifying factors that may be influencing behaviour in the school and to ensure that use of expulsion is appropriate and effective.

This Code of Behaviour Policy was adopted by the Board of Management on ___/___/_____.

Signed: _____

Chairperson of BOM

Date: ___/___/_____.

Signed: _____

Principal/Secretary to the BOM

Date: ___/___/_____.