



Meánscoil Mhuire na Trócaire, Port Láirge

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CODE OF BEHAVIOUR

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The Code of Behaviour of Our Lady of Mercy Secondary School has been drawn up in accordance with all the appropriate Education Acts and in consultation with all the relevant stakeholders.

As Catholic educators, we in Meánscoil Mhuire Na Trócaire strive to bring about the full development of each student, with special awareness of the uniqueness and dignity of the individual. Mutual respect, pastoral care, concern, co-operation and natural justice are integral features of our school community. This community - management, staff, students and parents - forms a network of relationships affecting the spirit and climate of the school. It is therefore necessary to establish and maintain high standards of behaviour and discipline. By so doing we strive to ensure that an atmosphere of peace, fulfilment and good order prevails in our school to the benefit of all concerned.

THE GENERAL PRINCIPLES OF THE CODE OF BEHAVIOUR

The Code of Behaviour of Our Lady of Mercy Secondary School seeks to:

- Create a school environment conducive to teaching and learning.
- Encourage a sense of responsibility and respect in all students.
- Assist a student's right to attend this school without fear of her person or property.

In the disciplining of offending students, the Code of Behaviour is informed by:

- The principles of due and fair process.
- The principles of natural justice.
- The right of the student to be heard in her own defence.

4. It is expected that parents will play an active role in the

- The non-involvement of the offended party in the disciplining of a student responsible for a serious breach of the Code of Behaviour.
- The obligation to vindicate the right of other students who may have been victimised, personally or educationally, by the conduct of offending students.
- The obligation to consider the general good of the school.
- The requirement to be aware of the student in difficult social, economic and personal circumstances, and that provision be made for an appropriate pastoral response in conjunction with disciplinary sanctions.

Recognition and Acknowledgement Of Positive Behaviour

The Staff of Our Lady of Mercy Secondary School recognises and acknowledges the essential goodness and excellent behaviour of the vast majority of our students.

GENERAL SCHOOL RULES

The following rules are to be observed by all students, as the good behaviour of each individual contributes to an atmosphere in which all members of the school community are respected and valued.

Punctuality and Attendance

1. Punctuality is to be observed at all times, particularly at 8.55a.m. and 1.10p.m. and at the commencement of classes. In the event of coming late to school a student must sign in.
2. In cases of absence from school, a written note of explanation is required from parents to the Class Tutor.
3. A request for leave of absence from school, for any part of the day, must be made beforehand by parents/guardians. In the event of a student leaving school during the school day she must sign out.
4. Students may not, without permission, leave the school grounds during morning break, or during free class periods up to 3.50p.m.

5. Where the aggregate of school days on which a student is absent from school is more than twenty (20), the Principal is obliged to inform the Education Welfare Officer, in accordance with the Education Welfare Act, 2000. Parents will be notified once a student has been recorded absent for 8 full days.

General Behaviour and Classroom Regulations

6. Obedience to teachers and respect for teachers and pupils, courtesy and politeness to everyone are essential at all times.
7. Students are expected to have the necessary books, equipment and requirements for each subject.
8. On changing to other areas within the school; students must leave classrooms in good order.
 - Avoid loitering throughout the school buildings and grounds
 - Students must not lean over the balcony at any time.
 - Keep to the left, whenever possible, on corridors and stairs, walk not run and stand back for people in authority.
 - Queue quietly outside classrooms until the teacher arrives.
9. Students are allowed to go to lockers at the following times:
 - Before 8.55am
 - At little break (10.55-11.10)
 - At lunchtime (12.30-1.10)
 - After last class in the afternoon
 - Before and after P.E., Art, Home Economics and Technical Graphics classes.
10. Inappropriate behaviour which is likely to bring the school into disrepute is forbidden within, outside or in the immediate vicinity of the school.
11. Students are required to respect school property and the property of others. The parent(s)/guardian(s) of a student who maliciously damages the property of another will be obliged to rectify such damage or to make appropriate restitution.
12. Any student whose behaviour represents a threat to the health and safety of any member of the school community may be returned to the care of her parent(s) /guardian(s).

Homework

All homework will be completed by all students in accordance with the Homework Policy of Our Lady of Mercy Secondary School.

Uniform

Full and proper school uniform must be worn by students at all times while in school and on school outings. The uniform consists of:

- School kilt, or School trousers or plain navy trousers
- School jumper
- White shirt
- Flat black or navy shoes
- Plain navy or black tights or socks

The PE uniform consists of

- Plain navy track suit ends
- White polo shirt
- Runners

Jewellery is to be kept to a minimum. In the interests of health and safety, long earrings and long nails are forbidden in school. Facial jewellery is also forbidden.

The wearing of tops and scarves over the school uniform is not allowed while students are in class.

Head scarves, if worn, must be blue, black, navy or white in colour.

Mobile Phones

The use of mobile phones on the school premises is forbidden between 8.40a.m and 3.55p.m (13.10 on a Friday). Any mobile phone which is used between these hours will be confiscated for TWO FULL school days and may not be collected by a parent or guardian. Mobile phones will be kept in a secured locker when confiscated. Phones can only be used in class at the discretion of the teacher. Phones may not be used during evening study. The use of recording devices is forbidden in school.

Smoking

Smoking is illegal in the school under provisions of the Public Health (Tobacco) Acts, 2000. The smoking of cigarettes or e-cigarettes on the school premises and grounds is banned. Any student found smoking will receive a long detention. Any subsequent breach may incur a suspension.

Alcohol, Drugs and Prescribed Substances

It is strictly forbidden for any student to use, possess or traffic in alcohol or drugs in the school building and on school grounds. It is forbidden for any student to give medication prescribed for her own use to another student. These prohibitions apply to any function or activity directly connected with the school or any such function or activity where the student is in the care of the school. A student in the possession of an illegal drug, substance or alcohol, for use or sale, may be suspended pending a full investigation. The Board of Management may expel a student if she is deemed to represent a threat to the health and safety of other students or employees of the school.

Bullying

Our Lady of Mercy Secondary School will not tolerate bullying of any nature. The Code of Behaviour, the Anti-Bullying Policy and the principles of the Anti-Bullying Charter will inform and guide the disciplinary and pastoral responses to this issue.

Anti-Bullying Charter

- Every student of Our Lady of Mercy Secondary School has the right to enjoy her learning and leisure, free from bullying or the threat of bullying, in a caring and respectful environment, both in the school and in the surrounding community.
- Instances of bullying are too serious not to report them.
- Pupils should support each other by reporting ALL instances of bullying.
- Bystanders who witness acts of bullying have a duty to report them to a responsible adult. There is no such thing as an innocent bystander.
- All allegations of bullying will be treated seriously and thoroughly investigated.
- Sanctions will be applied in line with the schools Anti-bullying policy.

Co-operation of Parents/Guardians

Co-operation of parents/guardians is an essential part of discipline in the school. Effective implementation of this Code of Behaviour requires that all parents/guardians:

- Accept and support the Code of Behaviour of Our Lady of Mercy Secondary School.
- Recognise the right of the school to impose sanctions for breaches of School Rules.
- Exercise their responsibility in the matter of their daughter's behaviour at school.
- Co-operate fully with the school in the enforcement of its discipline.

In the event of a breach of the Code of Behaviour parents/guardians may be invited to meet with the Principal/Deputy Principal. Persistent failure to keep such appointments may result in parents/guardians being requested to keep their daughter at home until such a meeting has taken place.

Promotion and Affirmation of Good Behaviour

The promotion of good behaviour is the main goal of this code. The management and staff of Our Lady of Mercy Secondary School will actively foster policies and practices that help to promote positive behaviour.

The affirmation of positive behaviour will be an essential feature of this code. This is achieved in a variety of ways such as: 1. Verbal praise 2. Written note in journal 3. Announcements on the school intercom and school TVs 4. Posts on the school website 5. School reports 6. School Newsletter 7. Assemblies 8. Term and Year Awards

Procedures relating to breaches of the Code of Behaviour

While the majority of students comply with the Code of Behaviour of Our Lady of Mercy Secondary School, it may be necessary to impose sanctions on those students who misbehave. The aim of these sanctions is to impress on offenders the importance of good behaviour at all times.

The following sanctions may be used:

- A verbal or written reprimand.
- Confiscation of excess jewellery or other items which breach the school's uniform code.
- Imposition of behaviour points - see appendix 2.
- Exclusion from the right to represent the school, or to participate in school tours or other school activities.
- Placing student on report.
- A parent /guardian being asked to take their daughter home during a school day.
- Detention.
- Suspension (including in-school suspension).
- Permanent exclusion (expulsion).

Procedures Relating to Detention

1. Any incident of misbehaviour may result in behaviour points being imposed (see appendix 2).
2. After the accumulation of 6 behaviour points a student may be liable for a short detention usually on Friday, between 1.15p.m. and 1.45p.m. or any other appropriate half hour.
3. A student responsible for the accumulation of a further 10 behaviour points will be liable for a long detention usually on a Friday between 1.30p.m. and 3.30p.m. or any other appropriate 2 hour period.
4. A student who has completed a long detention, and who accumulates a further 10 points will be liable for a second long detention usually on a Friday between 1.30p.m. and 3.30p.m. or any other appropriate 2 hour period.
5. It is a Year Head who imposes a detention. The Year Head may, at her/his discretion, decide not to impose or to delay this sanction. The Principal or Deputy Principal may also impose a detention. **A single incident of misbehaviour may be grounds for a short or long detention.**

Procedures relating to Suspension

1. A suspension may be imposed for the following reasons:
 - When a student accumulates 30 or more points i.e. has completed two long detentions.
 - When a student persistently offends and has been warned of the possibility of suspension.
 - When a student engages in violent or aggressive behaviour towards staff or other students.
 - **A single incident of serious misconduct may be grounds for suspension.**
2. Only the Principal may impose a suspension.
3. Prior to the imposition of a suspension the parents will be invited to meet with the Principal/Deputy Principal. At this meeting the parents and student will be:
 - (i) Informed of the offences warranting this suspension,
 - (ii) Informed of the consequences of future failure to comply With the Code of Behaviour.

correction of a student's misbehaviour and will support and cooperate with the school in its efforts to address such misbehaviour.

5. On her return to school, a student who has been suspended may be on report for a specified period, during which time she will be required to have a report card signed by her teachers at the end of each class.
6. The school will offer every support available to it to assist a student in improving her behaviour.

Right of Appeal

Parents (and students who are 18 years or more) have the right to appeal a Suspension to the Board of Management.

Parents (and students who are 18 years or more) have a right to appeal a Suspension under the Education Act, 1998.

Retention of Records

Records relating to students who have completed long detentions or been suspended will be retained.

Disciplinary Record and Admission to Courses

A student's disciplinary record will be examined when considering any application made by her for admission to the Transition Year Option, LCA and or LCVP. A record of persistent misbehaviour may result in the student being refused admission to one of these named courses.

A poor disciplinary record may result in a pupil being denied permission to participate in a school outing, work experience, or other school organised activity.

Exclusion (Expulsion) of a Student

Expulsion of a student will be considered only after every reasonable effort at rehabilitation has failed.

It is only the BOARD OF MANAGEMENT who may authorise the expulsion of a student.

The following procedure will apply in relation to the exclusion of a student

- The parent(s)/guardian(s) will be informed in writing that the Board of Management is considering the exclusion of the student from the school.
- The letter to parent(s)/guardian(s) will outline
 - (i) The reason(s) for the possible exclusion
 - (ii) details relating to date, time and place of the Board of Management Meeting .
 - (iii) the right of parent(s)/guardian(s) to attend the meeting or to make a written submission to the meeting.
- The Principal will provide all relevant information and documentation to the Board.
- The decision of the Board will be communicated, in writing, to the parent(s)/guardian(s).
- The parent(s)/guardian(s) and the student (if aged 18 years or more) will be informed of their right of appeal to the Department of Education and Science under the Education Act, 1998.

A single act of serious misconduct might form the basis of a proposal to expel. Such misconduct could include:

- A serious threat of violence against another person.
- Actual violence or physical assault.
- Sexual assault.
- Possession or dealing in drugs or illegal substances.

Discretionary Authority of the Principal/Deputy Principal

The Principal/Deputy Principal may exercise her/his right to deal promptly with a matter in a manner that differs from the procedures and sanctions described above, if and when it is deemed necessary. In the exercise of this right the Principal/Deputy Principal shall act in accordance with the general principles of the Code of Behaviour.

Examples of minor incidents of misbehaviour are as follows

(This list is not presumed to be exhaustive)

- Being late at 8.55am, 1.10pm, or for any other class.
- Not having correct books, equipment and requirements for class.
- Rough play, misbehaviour in class.
- Being at other students' lockers/being at lockers at unauthorised times.
- Homework not completed.
- Not wearing full correct uniform.
- Wearing of facial jewellery.
- Chewing gum in school.
- Eating or drinking during class.

Principles underlying what constitutes a serious incident of misbehaviour

- (a) Any behaviour which seriously impedes or disrupts the educational process for students, including the offender.
- (b) Any behaviour which constitutes a danger to the moral, physical and emotional life of any student, including the offender.

Examples of serious incidents of misbehaviour are as follows

(This list is not presumed to be exhaustive)

- Forging notes from parents
- Unauthorised absences from school or classes
- Smoking on the school premises
- Bullying (see Appendix 1)
- Insubordination and / or defiance to a teacher
- Involvement with alcohol and other drugs or dangerous solvents
- Constant major disruption of a class
- Deliberately damaging school property
- Stealing
- Copying at an examination
- Threat of assault or actual physical/ sexual assault
- Refusal to hand up a mobile phone or recording device

Application of the Code of Behaviour

The Code of Behaviour will apply:

- Within the school grounds during the school day and during any after-school activities.
- On the way to and from school.
- On all school based activities including school tours, outdoor pursuits, field trips, sporting activities, retreats, school visits and official school charity collections and events.

Appendix 1—Definition of Bullying

In accordance with the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools* bullying is defined as follows:

Bullying is unwanted negative behaviour, verbal, psychological or physical conducted, by an individual or group against another person (or persons) and which is repeated over time.

The following types of bullying behaviour are included in the definition of bullying:

- deliberate exclusion, malicious gossip, verbal abuse and other forms of relational bullying,
- cyber-bullying and
- identity-based bullying such as homophobic bullying, racist bullying, bullying based on a person's membership of the Traveller community and bullying of those with disabilities or special educational needs.
- unwanted physical contact or use of aggressive body language

Isolated or once-off incidents of intentional negative behaviour, including a once-off offensive or hurtful text message or other private messaging, do not fall within the definition of bullying and should be dealt with, as appropriate, in accordance with the school's code of behaviour.

However, in the context of this policy, placing a once-off offensive or hurtful public message, image or statement on a social network site or other public forum where that message, image or statement can be viewed and/or repeated by other people will be regarded as bullying behaviour.

Negative behaviour that does not meet this definition of bullying will be dealt with in accordance with the school's code of behaviour.

Additional information on different types of bullying is set out in Section 2 of the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*.

The Anti-Bullying Policy applies to all students while in school and while attending or participating in any activities organised by the school, such as open days, outings, trips or sporting events.

This list of activities is not exhaustive.

Appendix 2

Our Lady of Mercy Record of Behaviour

At Our Lady of Mercy Secondary School, we implement a points system as part of our Code of Behaviour. This allows students to clearly see what type of behaviour is constituted as unacceptable.

Students will receive points (as outlined below) due to inappropriate behaviour and or breaking of the school rules. These points will be distributed at the discretion of the Principal, Deputy Principal and Teachers.

If a student accumulates the following number of points, the subsequent sanctions may be imposed.

Points	Sanctions
6 points	Short detention
10 points	Long detention
30 points	Suspension

Appendix 2 Continued Offences by students can incur the following points.

Offence	Points
Late for school or class	2 points
Inappropriate or un-cooperative in class	2, 4, 6, 8, points
Disturbing teaching and learning	2, 4, 6, 8 points
Open defiance	10 points
Inappropriate behaviour in the corridor or at lockers	2, 4, 6, 8, points
No note for absences on a persistent basis, forging a note or failure to get a note signed	2, 4, 6 points
Non- attendance in class or leaving school without permission	10 points
Failure to bring books, equipment or P.E. gear to class	2, 4 points
Chewing gum or eating in class	2 points
Copied homework Copied exam	2 points 6 points
Unsatisfactory homework or homework not completed	2, 4, 6 points
Unsatisfactory uniform	2, 4 points
Wearing facial jewellery, i.e. Nose piercings, eyebrow piercing etc.	2, 4 points
Use of mobile phone without permission Refusal to hand up mobile phone if using without permission	6 points 10+ points
Any form of Bullying or Cyber-bullying	10+ points
Smoking	10 points
Drug taking	30 points
Stealing or damaging property	10+ points
Other	Up to 30 points may be given for offences that are not outlined above at the discretion of the management of Our Lady of Mercy Secondary School.

