



Code of Conduct

Dunshaughlin Community College

2010

Version 4.0

Introduction

‘The code of behaviour (conduct) is the set of programmes, practices and procedures that altogether form the schools plan for helping students in the school to behave well and learn well’

(Page 2, NEWB Guidelines)

This policy is the revised Code of Conduct for Dunshaughlin Community College. The previous policy was audited by all staff and reviewed in consultation with other partners e.g. Student Council, Parents Association and the Board of Management and the local Educational Welfare Officer.

Scope

This policy applies to students¹ of Dunshaughlin Community College and relates to all school activities both during and outside of normal school hours. This policy provides that if a student is recognisable as a student of DCC (i.e.; wearing the school uniform, at a school event, during lunch hours....etc), then the school reserves the right to safeguard its good name.

The code requires that all interactions between school staff and parents/guardians will respect the normal protocols that should apply to such interactions.

School Mission Statement

‘We are committed to the provision of a complete education maximising student potential to the highest possible standards through a highly committed staff in a modern well equipped college. We strive to create an atmosphere of mutual respect in a happy, caring, supportive but challenging and well structured environment.

A demanding environment can also be a caring environment.’

¹ The Teaching Council ‘Codes of Professional Conduct for Teachers’ applies to all teaching staff.

Relationship of Policy to DCC's Mission Statement

This policy has been developed in line with the mission statement of DCC, whose ethos and philosophy have at its core, the care and welfare of all students. The school strives to provide a safe and secure learning environment for the development of our students. The school code of conduct is based on respect for oneself, for others and for our environment, so that a positive and cooperative school atmosphere prevails.

Rationale

Many people work together in our school each day and therefore a high level of courtesy and consideration for others is necessary. Behaviour/conduct which is ill mannered, annoying, dangerous or disruptive cannot be allowed. This code is one that is based on the recognition of the student as an individual while creating an environment in which the welfare of all is protected.

Goals of Code of Conduct

There are some basic principles that underpin our Code of Conduct. These include:

- Providing clarity about expectations and responses for students
- Recognising that everyone's behaviour matters
- Focusing on promoting good behaviour
- Balancing needs
- Recognising the importance of relationships
- Focusing on personal responsibility
- Ensuring fairness and equity
- Promoting equality
- Recognising educational vulnerability
- Attending to the welfare of students
- Promoting safety and freedom from threat

When the code takes account of and is in keeping with these principles it is likely to be successful in achieving its goals.

The goals of our Code of Conduct are to:

- Encourage students to take personal responsibility for their learning and their behaviour
- Help young people to mature into responsible participating citizens

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- Build positive relationships of mutual respect and mutual support among students, staff and parents
- Create a safe, secure learning environment for all students and staff by promoting a sense of mutual respect among all members of the school community
- Implement effective procedures which allow for the day to day running of the school and which meet the demands of current legislation
- Promote good behaviour and self discipline
- Facilitate the appropriate involvement of all school personnel
- Ensure understanding by the parents/guardians, students, staff and management of the code of conduct and the reasons for it
- Emphasise the promotion and acknowledgement of good behaviour
- Outline the structure of fair, consistent and agreed sanctions that will be used in response to negative behaviour
- Outline how positive behaviour is encouraged
- Outline the interventions to be used when a students repeatedly misbehaves.

Policy Content

The content of our code of conduct includes the following subsections:

- Understanding Behaviour
- Rules/Expectations/Standards of Behaviour
- Promoting good behaviour
- Responding to inappropriate behaviour
- Preventative Measures
- Rewards
- Sanctions
- Interventions
- Procedures and Record Keeping

Understanding Behaviour

An understanding of the factors that influence behaviour is fundamental to developing and implementing the schools code of behaviour. Learning, relationships and behaviour are inextricably linked. The two categories of factors that influence behaviour are:

<i>Within-person Factors</i>	<i>External & Interpersonal Factors</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Age & stage of development• Personality & temperament• Personal history & experience• Physical, sensory or medical characteristics• Skills, ability to learn• Beliefs about self & others• Resilience & self-efficacy	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Parental & family patterns & relationships• Social networks, including friends & peer groups• Neighbourhood & community factors• The status & standing of different groups in society• School factors• Time, opportunity & support for personal /social development

In addition, the social nature of schools is an important factor. Knowledge of the influence of groups and the relationships within and between the many groups and subgroups in the school environment is an important part of the understanding of behaviour. School life is fundamentally social and individual students and teachers are part of the many groups and subgroups in the course of a single day. The dynamics that operate within and between these groups are very powerful and are themselves significant influences on individual and group behaviour.

Standards of Behaviour

The school expects all members of the school community to behave in ways that show respect for others. Students are more likely to benefit from their education and to be happy in a structured, caring environment where high standards of behaviour are expected and adhered to. The term standards can also mean rules or expectations.

The schools standards of behaviour reflect values such as:

- ✓ Respect for self and others
- ✓ Kindness and willingness to help others
- ✓ Courtesy and good manners
- ✓ Fairness
- ✓ Readiness to use respectful ways of resolving difficulties and conflict
- ✓ Attending school regularly and punctually
- ✓ Doing ones best in class
- ✓ Taking responsibility for ones work
- ✓ Keeping the rules
- ✓ Helping to create a safe positive environment
- ✓ Respecting staff

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- ✓ Respecting other students and their learning
- ✓ Participating in school activities

Our standards of behaviour also signal to members of the school community the kinds of behaviour that are not acceptable in the school, for example:

- ✓ Behaviour that is hurtful (including bullying, harassment, discrimination and victimisation)
- ✓ Behaviour that interferes with teaching and learning
- ✓ Threats or physical hurt to another person
- ✓ Damage to property
- ✓ Theft

The school expectations/rules are as follows:

1. Students will treat themselves, school staff, fellow students and visitors to the school with respect and have consideration for the rights and feelings of others.

This is a rule of our school because having respect for oneself and for others promotes a respectful, caring atmosphere where the rights of all are upheld. Having consideration for the rights and feelings of others creates a better, more pleasant learning environment.

2. Students will co-operate and follow the instructions of all staff members. Students will co-operate with each other.

This is a rule of our school to maintain good order, avoid disruption and create a better learning/working environment for all. Instructions given to assist the smooth day to day running of the school are carried out in the interests of all.

3. Students will attend school regularly; remain for the full school day and if absent, the school will be notified of the reason for the absence.

This is a rule of our school because missing class adversely affects progress and can impede the progress of the students present. The school is legally obliged to report the reason for all absences. Students and parents/guardians must follow the correct sign out procedures.

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4. Students will bring their journal, books, copies and all equipment that they need to all relevant classes.

This is a rule of our school to ensure that students can benefit fully from classes and minimise time wasting.

5. Students will do their homework/class work and participate fully in class. They will listen to each other and their teachers and not disrupt any classes.

This is a rule of our school because homework reinforces learning and helps students to reach their full potential. Disruption of classes is unfair on fellow students and prevents the teacher from teaching effectively.

6. Students will get their parents/guardians to sign their school journals every weekend.

This is a rule of our school because it facilitates communication between teachers and parents/guardians. In addition, it allows teachers/guardians to monitor student progress.

7. Students will agree to keep their mobile phones and other electronic devices switched OFF during class times and not use them to record or photograph any person/thing related to school without prior permission.

This means that mobile phones and other electronic devices must not be visible during class times. Such devices that are visible are considered to be in use. This is a rule of our school for the following reasons:

- Mobile phones cause too many disruptions in school
- Camera phones impinge on the privacy of others
- Inappropriate use of mobile phones or electronic recording/listening devices causes disruption, prevents students from hearing instructions and impinges on the privacy of others.

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8. Students will be on time for school/class and not loiter or go to their lockers between classes.

This is a rule of our school because not being on time causes disruption for the teacher and the class. In addition, DCC is concerned about the development of the whole child/person and encourages students to develop good punctuality which will be expected of them in the workplace.

9. Students will move quietly around the school in an orderly manner.

This is a rule of our school for the health and safety of students and staff and so that the business of teaching and learning can take place without unnecessary disturbances.

10. Students will wear their full school uniform everyday to and from school and comply fully with the correct DCC code of dress.

This is a rule of our school because uniforms promote/project an atmosphere of uniformity, pride and equality among the student population. The uniform is the public image of the school and it is the responsibility of each member of the school community to promote that image. The code of dress is clearly communicated to students and parents/guardians through the school journal, presentations at information nights and letters/information sheets sent to homes.

11. Students will show respect for all property and equipment in the school and on the school grounds.

This is a rule of our school because defacing/damaging school property is destructive and shows a lack of respect and consideration for the school community of which the student is a member. Damage to property costs money in repairs, which could be better spent on other school items and could also cause a hazard to health and safety. Everyone deserves to come to school/work in a pleasant environment and the students themselves have identified the effect of graffiti and defacing school property e.g. tables, chairs....etc.

12. Students will agree not to chew gum, smoke or bring any prohibited substances into the school. Students will fully comply with the Substance Use Policy.

This is a rule of our school for the following reasons:

- Chewing gum damages property
- Smoking on the school grounds is illegal and smoking seriously damages health
- Banned/prohibited substances pose a risk to the safety of all

Promoting Good Behaviour

Promoting good behaviour is one of the main goals of the schools code of conduct. This requires consistency across the teaching team. Strategies to promote good behaviour include:

- ✓ Affirming good behaviour
- ✓ Setting high, clear, consistent and widely-understood standards
- ✓ Good relationships between all partners
- ✓ Use of rewards (merits in journals, merit cards.....etc)
- ✓ Adults model the behaviour that is expected from the students
- ✓ Positive everyday interactions between teachers and students
- ✓ Good school and class routines
- ✓ Clear boundaries and rules for students
- ✓ Helping students themselves to recognise and affirm good learning behaviour
- ✓ Exploring with students how people should treat each other
- ✓ Involving students in the preparation of the school and classroom rules

Responding to Inappropriate Behaviour

It is the responsibility of all school staff to maintain a classroom and school environment which is supportive of the learning of every student in the school and which ensures continuity of instruction for them. The procedures for dealing with inappropriate behaviour are outlined in the section 'Procedures and Record Keeping'.

Preventative Measures

Students will be encouraged in their endeavours to uphold the code of conduct by use of the following measures:

1. The code of Conduct is circulated to the parents/guardians of all new entrants into the school and they are asked to read it and to sign their agreement with the content and their support and co-operation with it.

This is done to ensure that parents/guardians and students understand what our rules are, why they must be adhered to and what procedures will be followed if the rules are not upheld.

2. At the start of each new academic year/induction process, each class is brought through the code of conduct and any amendments to it are highlighted.

This is done so as to remind students of the content and to take account of the fact that they have been out of the school environment for 3 months.

3. School rules and the reason for them are discussed as part of the schools pastoral care programme. A synopsis of the rules and a student contract is included in the school journal and must be signed on an annual basis by the student and their parents/guardians.

4. The notion of tolerance for others, self-control, a sense of fairness and the principles of natural justice are discussed as part of the religious education and SPHE programmes in the school.

5. Issues such as bullying, racism, sexism, harassment, violence, substance misuse...etc are discussed with the students during their time in our school using SPHE, CSPE, current affairs and/or outside speakers.

This is done to help our students to better understand these issues so that they can base their thinking, understanding and action on factual information and in the light of the values espoused in our school.

Rewards

In our school teachers use the following methods to reward students for upholding the code of conduct:

- Verbal praise to student in class or privately
- Recording a positive note in school journal or sending home a letter to parents
- Positive comment to class tutor or year head
- Sending home a Positive Behaviour Certificate
- Display of students work
- Leadership role given to students e.g. class representative on Student Council
- Other rewards e.g. cinema trips, Pantry vouchers

The Use of Sanctions

The objective of a sanction is to help a student to learn that their behaviour is unacceptable. Good practice in the use of sanctions ensures that:

- Sanctions are part of a plan to change behaviour
- Used consistently
- Students & parents know what sanctions are used in the school
- Proportionate and appropriate

As stated in the paragraph on the scope of this policy, the school may apply sanctions in response to behaviour that takes place outside the school day/grounds where:

- The written code of conduct makes clear to students and parents when and where the provisions of the code of conduct apply
- There is clear connection with the school and an impact on its work.

Sanctions

The following sanctions are used so that our students experience the consequences of their misbehaviour. They are scaled so as to take account of the nature of the incident, the situation leading up to the incident and are imposed by the staff of our school in accordance with our ladder of referral. Such sanctions include:

- A firm reprimand from a member of staff is expected to be sufficient to correct inappropriate behaviour

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- Time-out (removal of the student from the scene of the incident e.g. the student is put working in an different place/location such as another part of the classroom or in another classroom by arrangement with a colleague)
- A note home to parents/guardians in the school journal. Notes to parents/guardians should be signed to indicate receipt of information.
- The assignment of punishment exercises
- A referral to the Class Tutor

Sanctions for more serious misdemeanours or for consistent breaches of our code of conduct include:

- Referral to the Year Head/Assistant Year Head in line with our ladder of intervention/referral
- Detention in school for an accumulation of notes/minor issues or for a more serious offence (12 hours notice should be given to the students and to the parents/guardians by means of a note in the journal)
- A school community task such as picking up litter, removal of graffiti or assisting a teacher with a task
- A verbal reprimand from Deputy Principal/Principal
- A telephone call to parents by Year Head, Deputy Principal or Principal
- A meeting with parents/guardians and/or the student
- Putting a student on report
- Exclusion from a favoured activity
- Withdrawal of school privileges e.g. ban from computers, not being allowed up town at lunch....etc
- Other suitable interventions designed to modify specific behaviours
- Suspension from school (in accordance with the schools policy on Suspension & Exclusion)
- Exclusion from school (in accordance with the schools policy on Suspension & Exclusion)

Procedures and Record Keeping

The procedures for dealing with incidents of unacceptable behaviour/breach of the school rules are referred to as our 'ladder of referral'. The basic principle is that the more serious the incident, the higher up the ladder it is dealt with.

Ladder of Referral

- A. Each subject teacher has responsibility for implementing discipline in his/her own classroom. With the help of consistent rules and routines in class/school, occasional minor misbehaviour should be attended to routinely and effectively through the skill of the classroom teacher. Subject teachers may use some of the schools agreed sanctions. Subject teachers should record all incidents of misconduct in their own records and in the student journal where necessary.
- B. Each class group is assigned a Class Tutor with special responsibility for them. The Class Tutor monitors the students diaries and imposes sanctions e.g. detention for accumulation of notes. Class Tutors should keep records of student misconduct and may enter them onto the school Facility ePortal system.
- C. Each year group is assigned a Year Head and an Assistant year Head. The Year Head has special responsibility for the year group and has a pastoral and disciplinary role to play for the students in their year group. Year Heads usually deal with more serious offences or an accumulation of minor offences. Year Heads can impose school sanctions up to and including suspension (sanctioned by Senior Management). Year Heads should keep detailed records of student conduct and may enter them onto the school Facility ePortal system.
- D. Students whose behaviour has not modified despite the schools best efforts will be referred by the Year Head to the Principal or Deputy Principal. The Principal and Deputy Principal meet with the Year Heads on a weekly basis and consult with them about students and agree strategies/interventions/sanctions.
- E. The Principal informs the Board of Management of all suspensions and recommendations of exclusion (see section on Suspension and Exclusion).

Interventions

The subject teacher will deal with the majority of routine incidents of misbehaviour through classroom management strategies, thus minimising the need for interventions. The school has both formal and informal structures in place for when intervention is necessary.

- Formal structures include: tutor systems, year heads, pastoral care teams, guidance counsellors...etc
- Informal structures include: peer support, mediation or providing informal support to colleagues e.g. removing a student to a colleague's room for time-out.

Interventions refer to the strategies used to help prevent students from re-offending and give specific help to those students who find it particularly difficult to live by the code of conduct. Such strategies usually involve gathering information and consultation with school personnel, parents/guardians and others as appropriate. Specific intervention packages may need to be designed to suit individual needs. Examples of specific interventions include:

1. Additional support may be necessary for some students for example: being put on report, being confined to an area....etc
2. Specialised support may be necessary for a small minority of students for example: having an SNA² appointed, going home at lunchtime, involvement of external agencies....etc

Implementing the Code of Conduct

The implementation of the Code of Conduct for Dunshaughlin Community College will include the following:

- All school partners are involved in the development and review of the code
- Amendments to the Code of Conduct will be communicated to the stakeholders
- A major review will involve consultation with and ratification by all partners
- The code will be made accessible to all through its publication on our school website and hard copies will be available on request
- All incoming students will receive a copy of the Code of Conduct and parents/guardians will be required to sign an acknowledgement of receipt of it
- A synopsis of the code will be published in the student journal for students to refer to. The code will also be referred to in class by teachers on a regular basis. Students and their parents/guardians must sign a student contract in the student journal each year

² SNA = Special Needs Assistant

- Students must carry their student journals to all classes
- Parents/guardians are requested to sign the student journal on a weekly basis and to acknowledge any notes from teachers
- At the start of each academic year/induction process, each class is brought through the standards of behaviour/expectations/sanctions in the code of conduct and any amendments to it are highlighted
- School rules/expectations and the reason for them are discussed as part of the schools pastoral care programme
- The SPHE programme and Extracurricular opportunities (music, sport, drama, after school study, Homework club.....etc) are used as vehicles for teaching skills for responsible behaviour and relationships
- Parents/guardians are encouraged to share information with the relevant school personnel in order to assist the school in understanding a students behaviour and to plan interventions where necessary
- Behaviour in the school will be monitored carefully at all times by Senior Management
- Behaviour will be discussed as part of Whole School Development Planning and training will be provided as necessary.

Whole School Approach

The code of behaviour, on its own, cannot create the environment that makes if possible for students to learn and behave well. All members of the school community have responsibility to ensure that our students behave well. The main elements of a whole school approach to behaviour include:

- ✓ An ethos, policies and practices³ that are in harmony to create a positive school environment. Related policies include the schools Anti bullying, Pastoral Care, Attendance and Substance Use Policies.
- ✓ A teamwork and consistent approach to behaviour
- ✓ Effective classroom management and good curricular planning
- ✓ An inclusive and involved school community

Classroom management and teaching methods have a strong influence on students' behaviour. The classroom environment, like the wider school community, gives students clear messages about teachers' expectations and creates boundaries. The skills of the teacher in managing a routine engagement with students are critical in preventing problems. In addition, the supervision of students at break times also helps to ensure the

³ Practices include the ability groupings in the school and Timetabling.

school creates and maintains a positive school environment for all members of the school community.

Clearly Defined Roles and Responsibilities

Our school acknowledges the contribution of all members of the school community. Each member has responsibility for the promotion of good behaviour and a role in dealing with (minimising) negative behaviour. Clearly defined roles and responsibilities allow for consistency among staff as well as ensuring that there is a planned approach to helping students to change their own behaviour.

Students

The school expects that students will at all times uphold the code of behaviour.

Parents/Guardians

The school acknowledges the role of parents/guardians in the development and operation of the code of conduct and expects them to support the code and encourage their sons/daughters to uphold it.

Teachers

The school acknowledges the role of teachers in the development and operation of the code of conduct. The school recognises that a teacher's main focus is in the area of teaching and learning, but that they also have a pivotal role to play in behaviour management. That pivotal role forms a core element of this code. Teachers in DCC are assigned to each class and year group who have special responsibilities for operating the code: Tutors, Year heads, Guidance Counsellors, learning support teachers, psychological services, other agencies, Deputy Principal and Principal.

Other staff

The school acknowledges the contribution of ancillary staff in the day to day running of the school. They too have a part to play in the successful delivery of our code of conduct. In particular, they have responsibility to report incidents of misbehaviour and examples of positive behaviour they witness.

Board of Management

The Board of Management is the decision making body of the school. The school acknowledges the role of the Board of Management in the development and operation of the code of conduct. All policies are developed with the authority of the Board and must be approved by it before becoming official school policy. While it is not involved in the day to

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day procedures, it is the body to which parents and students over the age of 18 years can appeal in cases of suspension and Exclusion.

Timeframe

This Code of Conduct was devised in consultation with the students, parents, staff, management and Board of Management of our school. The process was commenced in January 2009 and the resulting code was implemented in the period from August 2010 to June 2011. The Code of Conduct (Version 4) was ratified by our Board of Management and became an official school policy Tuesday 9th November 2010.

Success Criteria & Monitoring

This Code of Conduct will be reviewed one year after its implementation initially and then reviewed as part of the normal Whole School Development Planning review cycle. Any amendments which need to be made will be in keeping with the general philosophy of our Code of Conduct. Any suggested amendments/improvements will be communicated to the Principal or Deputy Principal who will consult with all partners.

Suspension & Exclusion

Suspension and Exclusion

DCC is required under Section 23 (2) of the Educational Welfare Act 2000, to include our procedures for Suspension and Exclusion in our Code of Conduct.

The schools policies and procedures for the use of Suspension and Exclusion are in line with the NEWB.

They are based on the principles of natural justice⁴ and are applied in a fair way⁵.

Where allegations of criminal behaviour are made about a student, these will be referred to the Gardaí who have responsibility for investigating criminal matters. The Juvenile Liaison Officer is a significant source of support and advice for the school and the student.

The key difference between Suspension and Exclusion is the degree of seriousness and persistence of the behaviour.

Authority to Suspend or Exclude

The VEC holds the authority to suspend or exclude a student. The VEC may devolve this authority to the Board of Management of a school under Section 31 of the Vocational Education (Amendment) Act 2001. The Board of Management of the school then has the authority to suspend or exclude. The VEC have devolved this authority to the Board of Management of DCC.

The Board of Management may then devolve the authority to suspend (not exclude) to the principal of the school. The Board of Management have devolved this authority to the Principal (or appointed person in charge). The Principal may suspend a student for up to and including three days without consulting the Board of Management. A suspension of up to 5 days may be given if sanctioned by the Chairperson of the Board of Management. Suspensions of longer than 5 days in duration must be sanctioned by the Board of Management. No individual suspension may be longer than 10 days. The Board of Management may extend the period of an individual suspension beyond 10 days in exceptional circumstances where the return of the student to the school presents a danger to the welfare, health and/or safety of the students/staff. An accumulation of over 20 day's suspension will be reported to the National Educational Welfare Board.

⁴ Right to be heard and the right to impartiality

⁵ Fair way = free from bias

Grounds for Suspension/Exclusion

Suspension/Exclusion should be a proportionate response to the behaviour that is causing concern. A decision to suspend or a proposal to exclude a student requires serious grounds such as that:

- The student's continued presence in the school at that time constitutes a threat to safety
- The student's behaviour has had a seriously detrimental effect on the education of other students
- The student is responsible for serious damage to property
- The student's behaviour has had a detrimental effect on the welfare of staff or other students.

Factors to consider before Suspension/Exclusion

1. Nature and seriousness of the behaviour
2. Context of the behaviour
3. Impact of the behaviour
4. Interventions tried to date
5. Whether the suspension/Exclusion is a proportionate response
6. Possible impact

The key difference between suspension and Exclusion is the degree of seriousness and persistence of behaviour.

Forms of Suspension

1. Part of a behaviour management plan
2. Immediate suspension (only in exceptional circumstances e.g. threat)
3. Suspension during a state examination (threat to the good order of the conduct of the state exams, should normally be approved by the Board of Management)
4. Automatic suspension (for particular named behaviours)

Suspension Procedures and Implementation

- Investigate the alleged misconduct
- Apply fair procedures based on principles of natural justice
- Inform student and parents of this complaint (by phone or in writing)
- Give parents and students an opportunity to respond
- Make an objective decision based on the findings of the investigation

- Impose the sanction (inform the parents in writing)
- Formal written records will be kept at all stages of the process and any conditions attached to the suspension
- The Principal will report all suspensions to the Board of Management
- The student will be reintegrated after suspension with a clean slate
- The teachers will help the student to take responsibility for catching up on work missed

Appeals against Suspension

Where the total number of days for which a student has been suspended in the current school year reaches 20 days, the parents/guardians or a student aged over 18 years, may appeal the suspension to the VEC. If unsuccessful in their appeal, they can then appeal under Section 29 of the Education Act 1998, as amended by the Education (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2007 to the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Science. The relevant appeal forms are included in the appendices of this policy and are available on request from the VEC and the DES.

Exclusion Procedures and Implementation

The procedure for Exclusion is in line with the NEWB Guidelines. A summary of the procedural steps is as follows:

- A detailed investigation is carried out under the direction of the Principal. The investigation will follow the principles of natural justice
- Parents/guardians and the student are informed of the procedure and kept up to date with the investigation
- A decision is made (free from bias)
- The Principal makes a recommendation to the Board of Management
- The Board of Management hold a hearing and considers the Principals recommendation. The student and their parents/guardians are invited to attend the hearing
- The Board of Management deliberates and makes a decision following the hearing
- The Principal and parents/guardians are notified in writing of the decision
- Consultations are arranged by the Educational Welfare Officer to ensure that arrangements are made for the student to continue in education
- Confirmation of the decision to exclude will be communicated to the parents/guardians after 20 days

Exclusion for a first offence

DCC views Exclusion as a very serious step and will only take cases for Exclusion to the Board of Management in extreme cases of misbehaviour. The school will normally have tried a series of other interventions and believe that we have exhausted all possibilities for changing the students behaviour. However, exclusion is an appropriate sanction in exceptional circumstances for a first offence, for example:

- Serious threat of violence against another student or member of staff
- Actual violence or physical assault
- Supplying illegal drugs to other students in the school
- Sexual assault

Appeals against Exclusion

In the case of exclusion, the parents/guardians or a student aged over 18 years, may appeal the Exclusion to the VEC. If unsuccessful in their appeal, they can then appeal under Section 29 of the Education Act 1998, as amended by the Education (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2007 to the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Science. The relevant appeal forms are included in the appendices of this policy and are available on request from the VEC and the DES. A mediator will be nominated by the Appeals committee. The Educational Welfare Officer will be consulted.

Procedural Fairness

Procedural fairness is a basic right of all individuals dealing with authorities. All communities have a legitimate expectation that schools (Boards, Principals and teaching staff) will follow these principles in all circumstances, particularly when dealing with suspensions and Exclusions.

Procedural fairness is generally recognised as having two essential elements.

1. The right to be heard which includes:

- The right to know why the action is happening
- The right to know the way in which the issues will be determined
- The right to know the allegations in the matter and any other information which will be taken into account
- The right of the person against whom the allegations have been made to respond to the allegations and
- The right to appeal.

2. The right of a person to an impartial decision which includes:

- The right to impartiality in the investigation and decision making phases
- The right to an absence of bias in the decision maker.

To ensure the elements of procedural fairness are met, it is appropriate to provide student and their parents/guardians with details of all allegations relating to the incident. This usually will involve providing copies of any relevant statements. Should the principal be of the view that it is not appropriate to provide copies of the statement, for example, because of a fear that witnesses may be intimidated, full details of the allegations outlined in the statements should be provided instead.