

Portmarnock Community School

Code of Behaviour

Mission Statement

*To instil a spirit of **Intellectual Enquiry** and academic endeavour*

*To foster the desire for **Participation** and challenge*

*To build individual and **Compassionate people** of character*

Scope

This policy applies to students of Portmarnock Community School and relates to all school activities both during and outside of normal school hours. The Board of Management, in collaboration with Staff, Parents/Guardians and students and in the context of the school's aims and values, has drawn up the Code of Behaviour Policy of Portmarnock Community School.

Relationship to school's mission, vision, aims

This policy has been developed in line with our mission statement which has at its core, care of the student. The school believes that respect for the individual is essential to the smooth running of a school where effective teaching and learning can take place.

Rationale

Portmarnock Community School is a place where many people work together and therefore pupils are expected to show co-operation, good manners and respect to all members of staff, visitors as well as to each other. Pupils are expected to address each other in a respectful manner. In applying the Code of Behaviour it is necessary to reach a balance between the interests of the individual student and the general welfare of the wider school community.

Aims

The Code of Behaviour as set out in this document aims to: -

- Promote understanding of the rationale behind the rules governing acceptable behaviour
- Create a safe, respectful and caring environment conducive to effective teaching and learning
- To encourage students to make positive and empowering choices
- Assist in the maintenance of a clean and orderly environment

- Enlist the co-operation and involvement of Parents/Guardians and students in supporting the Code of Behaviour and its sanctions

Roles and Responsibilities:

Portmarnock Community 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 and minimizing negative behaviour;

Parents

- The co-operation of Parents/Guardians is fundamental to the implementation of the school's Code of Behaviour. By enrolling their children in the school Parents/Guardians indicate agreement with and support for the aims and ethos of the school.

Students

- Students are responsible for adhering to the Code of Behaviour. Their roles include: to be discussed they are expected to be ready, respectful and safe?

Teachers

- Portmarnock Community School acknowledges the role of teachers in the development and Implementation of the Code of Behaviour. The school recognises that a teacher's main focus is in the area of teaching and learning. They also have a pivotal role to play in behaviour management; that pivotal role forms a core element of this code. Teachers are assigned to each class and year group with special responsibilities for operating the code: Tutors/Year Heads, Guidance Counsellors, Learning Support, Psychological Services, the Chaplain, Deputy Principals and the Principal have roles to play in upholding the code.

Other Staff

- The school also acknowledges the contribution of administration and maintenance staff in the day to day running of the school. In particular they have a responsibility to report incidents of misbehaviour and examples of positive behaviour which they witness.

Board of Management

- The Board of Management is the ultimate decision making body of the school. The school acknowledges its role in the development and operation of our Code of Behaviour. All policies are developed with the authority of the Board of Management and must be approved by its members before becoming official school policy.

School Regulations

The school regulations are drawn up in accordance with the stated aims of the Code of Behaviour and are included in this document. They are regularly evaluated and revised as deemed appropriate. To further facilitate both students and their Parents/Guardians, the regulations are printed each year at the front of the school journal and on the school website.

Students, with their Parents/Guardians, are required annually to read, discuss and sign the school's Code of Behaviour. Parents/Guardians are invited to liaise with the Tutor and/or Year Head on all aspects of their son's/daughter's progress. In this way it is hoped, by early intervention, to avoid problems escalating. Parents /Guardians are welcome to consult with staff members and should do so by appointment.

Related Policies

The Code of Behaviour is an integral policy in Portmarnock Community School. It is one of the most important policies with regards to how the school community maintains an optimal learning environment, a positive atmosphere and respectful relationships. It is also the system through which the innate ethos of the school is expressed in a series of expectations for behaviour and relationships. Therefore it is a pivotal policy determining the culture and climate of the community of Scoil Dara. As such it influences and informs all other school policies but especially;

- Child Protection Policy
- Child Safeguarding Statement
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Admission Policy
- Dignity in the Workplace Policy
- Acceptable Use Policy
- CCTV Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Suspension and Exclusion Policy
- (Please note this list is indicative only and non-exhaustive)

Respect

Students are required to actively engage with the teaching and learning process. To this end each student is expected to:

- Attend school in accordance with the Education (Welfare) Act 2000 between 8.45 and 3.55 each day (Wednesday 8.45 –12.55). The school authorities are obliged to report absences aggregating 20 days to TUSLA.
- Students are expected to be punctual for class and to arrive fully equipped with books and materials appropriate to the particular subject.
- Class work and homework assignments should be completed to the best of the student's ability.
- At no time should interruptions or time wasting by one student interfere with the learning opportunities of the class.

Outside the classroom students will also be expected to show respect for others and themselves. When students are interacting with each other and members of their community outside school they should act respectfully. On the way to and from school students will follow school regulations and be aware that they are representing their school. As they visit lockers and move through the school at break and lunchtime they should respect their environment and all other members of the school community. When they engage in sports and cultural experiences they must be aware of how their behaviour reflects on their school and themselves. As they communicate online they should show respect and bear in mind that their digital footprint is a lasting representation of themselves.

Promotion of Positive Behaviour

In Portmarnock Community School, students will be encouraged in their endeavours to uphold the Code of Behaviour by use of the following measures:

- a) The Code of Behaviour is circulated to the Parents/Guardians of all new entrants to the school and they are asked to read, discuss and acknowledge in writing that they agree with it. By doing so they acknowledge their support and co-operation. This is to ensure that Parents 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.
- b) At the start of the academic year, as part of our induction process, each class is brought through the code of behaviour and any amendments to it are highlighted. This is done to remind students of the content and to take account of the fact that they have been out of school for the summer break.
- c) Early intervention is seen as an important and preventative measure. Students will be made aware that they are in breach of regulations. If a student is in breach of a rule, he/she is spoken to by a member of staff where he/she is told what rule has been breached. Appropriate action will be taken by the member of staff in each case.
- d) Recognising the pivotal role played by all staff in the development and implementation of the school's Code of Behaviour, it is reinforced by each teacher, in all subject areas. In addition the school rules and the rationale for them are discussed as part of the school's Pastoral Care Programme and as part of the RSE/SPHE and Wellbeing programmes. The notion of tolerance for others, self-control, and a sense of fairness, good moral decision-making and the principles of natural justice are discussed as part of the various subject programmes.
- e) Issues such as Bullying, Racism, Sexism, Harassment, Violence, and Substance Misuse are discussed with the students during their time in our school, using the Pastoral Care, CSPE, RSE, RE and SPHE programmes. This is to help students understand these issues so that they can base their thinking, understanding and behaviour on factual information.

Awards and Affirmations

In Portmarnock Community School teachers use the following methods to reward students for upholding the Code of Behaviour:

- Verbal praise to student either in class or individually
- Positive comment to class Tutor/Year Head
- Positive note home to Parents/Guardians in homework journal
- Display of student's work in school and online
- Positive comments from teachers on VSWare or in journal

Each student receives an individual report on his/her progress three times a year.

An annual prize-giving ceremony for each year group is held at the end of the school year. The talents, achievements and efforts of our students across all aspects of school life including attendance are acknowledged and rewarded.

Sanctions

Sanctions may be imposed on any student who breaks the rules of the school, the uniform code or is involved in the misuse of substances on school property or during school related activities. Such substances include tobacco, alcohol, illegal drugs and other substances deemed to be potentially dangerous. In cases of substance misuse, the relevant policies will apply.

The following sanctions are used so that our students understand the consequences of their behaviour. They are graded so as to take account of the nature of the incident and the circumstances preceding the incident. They are imposed by the staff of Portmarnock Community School in accordance with our ladder of referral.

Examples of these sanctions include;

- A verbal reprimand from a member of staff is expected to be sufficient to correct inappropriate behaviour.
- Penalty sheets/subject related material from a Subject teacher
- Time out –removal of the student from the scene of the incident, e.g. the student is seated to work in a different place within the classroom. The student is relocated to work in another classroom by arrangement with the Teachers. The student is sent to the Year Head's or Deputy Principal's office.
- A note/phone call home to Parents/Guardians in the homework journal/on VSWare
- A Class by Class Report
- A referral of the incident to the Class Tutor/Year Head.

Sanctions for more serious misdemeanours or for consistent breaches of our Code of Behaviour include:

- Referral to Year Head in line with our 'ladder of referral'
- Detention in school with overnight notice
- A community task
- A verbal reprimand at a meeting with senior management
- Students put 'on report'
- Suspension from school (in accordance with the school's policy on Suspension and Exclusion)

- Exclusion from school (in accordance with the school's policy on Suspensions and Exclusion)

Where there has been a case of serious indiscipline or where an accumulated pattern of offences has emerged, additional penalties may be imposed.

Minor Breaches of discipline

Minor breaches of school discipline can include the following;

- a) Failure to do homework
- b) Copying homework
- c) Failure to have correct books for class
- d) Late to school or class
- e) Failure to wear school uniform
- f) Failure to provide relevant notes
- g) Failure to have a journal signed

Please Note:

- **Persistent repetition of a minor offence will lead to it being considered a major offence.**
- **These lists do not purport to be comprehensive. They are illustrative of breaches of discipline that may occur.**

Serious Breaches of Discipline

Serious breaches of school discipline which also have Legal and Health & Safety implications may include the following;

- Bullying behaviours
- Any form of harassment
- Theft
- Smoking/misuse of substances
- Defacing school property
- Misuse of online content
- 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.
- 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.

Serious breaches of school discipline can include the following;

- Being disrespectful to staff and/or visitors
- Refusal to follow the instructions of staff
- Verbal/Physical aggression
- Forging Parent's/Guardian's signatures
- Missing school/class without appropriate authorisation
- Copying at exams
- Repeated disruption of teaching and learning
- Failure to attend detention
- Refusal to produce a journal

Procedures and Record Keeping

The procedures for dealing with incidents of unacceptable behaviour/breach of school rules are referred to as our 'ladder of referral' (see index?)

The basic principle of this ladder of referral system is that the higher up the ladder an incident is dealt with, the more seriously it is viewed.

Procedures for Dealing with Misconduct:

1. Misconduct will be dealt with by the class teacher in the first instance
2. A note to Parents/Guardians may be written in the homework journal/VSWare. The Teacher may contact parents by phone. A 'report' of the incident may be given to the Tutor/Year Head and kept on file.
3. Repeated misbehaviour will result in referral to the Tutor.
4. Persistent misbehaviour will be reported to the Year Head.
5. A student may be put on report to closely monitor his/her attendance, behaviour and /or work.
6. Detention may be imposed at the discretion of a Teacher/Tutor/Year Head. If a student is to be detained, 24 hours' notice will be given to Parents via the homework journal/VSWare.
7. If misbehaviour continues the Year Head will inform the Principal or Deputy Principal. Parents will be informed by letter and may be invited to call to the school. Suspension may also occur at this stage at the discretion of the Principal. In the event of a serious breach of discipline the process of sanctions may start at stage seven
8. Suspension from class may occur when a pupil has been uncooperative, disrespectful or consistently disruptive.
9. Suspension from school can be imposed at the discretion of the Principal/Board of Management.

Record Keeping

The keeping of records will be in accordance with **Data Protection Guidelines**.

Interventions

In Portmarnock Community School we use interventions to assist students to avoid reoffending and to transition back into learning for those students who find it particularly difficult to uphold the Code of Behaviour. We do so in consultation with Parents/Guardians;

- An Interview between the student and a member of staff, usually the Class Tutor initially
- Referral to the Guidance Counsellor.
- Referral to the School Chaplain.
- Referral by the school to an out centre for assistance in behaviour modification.
- Referral to NEPS for testing and/or help in behaviour modification.

Suspension and Permanent Exclusion

Suspension from school is a sanction generally reserved for cases where unacceptable behaviour persists despite the application of other sanctions or in cases of a very serious breach of discipline. Students may be suspended only by decision of the Principal. All cases of suspension will be brought to the attention of the Board of Management.

Parents will be informed in writing of;

1. The reason for suspension
2. The period of suspension
3. The right of appeal

School management reserves the right to permanently exclude pupils in extreme circumstances in accordance with the Education (Welfare) Act, 2000, (24-(1))

Appeals Procedures

Section 29 of the Education Act 1998 gives Parents (and students who have reached the age of 18) the right to appeal certain decisions made by the school Board of Management, or a person acting on behalf of the board, to the Secretary General of the Department of Education & Skills.

The following decisions may be appealed:

- i. Permanent exclusion from a school
- ii. Suspension for a period of time which would bring the cumulative period of suspension to 20 school days in any one school year
- iii. Refusal to enrol

Appeals must generally be made within 42 calendar days from the date the decision of the school has been notified to the Parent/Guardians or student. Accordingly, Parents/Guardians are advised of this right of appeal and associated timeframe when informing them of any of the above categories or decisions.

There are basically three layers to these procedures:

- a) Both parties will be asked in the first instance if an accommodation can be reached at local level
- b) Should that fail, and where the Appeals Committee considers that it may be possible to facilitate agreement between the appellant and the school, a facilitator will be appointed to contact the parties at the earliest opportunity
- c) Finally, an appeal may be referred for hearing by an Appeals Committee established by the Minister for Education and Skills.

Internal Appeals

In the case of an internal appeal, a Parent/Guardian may write to the Board of Management indicating that he/she wishes to appeal a decision. This request should be addressed to the Secretary of the Board of Management. The Secretary shall inform the Parent/Guardian of the date of the next meeting, whether imposition of the sanction will be postponed and what procedures will be followed in the appeal process.

Implementation

As part of the enrolment process all applicants to the school will receive a copy of the Code of Behaviour and School Regulations. Parents/Guardians and all students will be required to provide written acknowledgement of the acceptance of the policy as specified on the application form. First Year Parents will be required to read and discuss the Code of Behaviour and Regulations with their son/daughter and sign it to say this has been done.

The Code of Behaviour is also available on the school website and from the school upon request.

Review

- Any amendments to the Code of Behaviour will be communicated to the stakeholders in writing.
- When a major review is carried out, the resulting amended Code of Behaviour will be circulated to all the stakeholders in written format.
- The Code of Behaviour which was drawn up in consultation with the Parents, Staff and Management of our school and was ratified by the Board of Management will be reviewed one year after its implementation.
- Any amendments which need to be made will be in keeping with the general philosophy of our Code of Behaviour and will be communicated to the members of the school community in writing.
- A major review was carried out five years after the date of implementation and involved consultation with the Parents, Students, Staff, Management and Board of Management of our school

Timeframe

The Code of Behaviour was devised in consultation with the Parents, Staff, Management and Board of Management of Portmarnock Community School.

- **The Code of Behaviour was ratified by the Board of Management on 25/5/2021**