



Suspension Policy Ratified by the BOM 23-5-18

Our Mission Statement:

Our college is a vibrant learning community where, students, parents and teachers are encouraged supported and challenged in pursuit of the highest standards of achievement and academic excellence.

We foster equality respect and integrity in our college. We embrace diversity and recognise that everyone is unique and has a positive contribution to make.

Policy Aim

This policy has been prepared for approval by the Board of Management following consultation and discussion with the representatives of parents, teachers and students while complying with the provisions of Section of the Education Welfare Act 2000. This Policy is in line with the Educational Welfare Guidelines.

The aim of this policy is to put in place clearly understood set of procedures for dealing with serious incidents of misbehaviour and have the effect of undermining good order and discipline in the school.

A student is expelled from school when the Board of Management makes a decision to permanently exclude him/her from the school.

Implementation and Review

Following the implementation of this policy by the Board of Management, copies will be made available to parents. Thereafter the policy will be included in the School Hand Book which is made available to every teacher at the start of each year. The College will hold a number of assemblies at the beginning of each school year to remind students of their obligations under the terms of each policy. Students who for any reason are not present at any or all of these assemblies are nonetheless bound by all College policies. Attendance the College is an implied acceptance of all of the rules and policies of the College.

Policies and procedures for Suspension and Expulsion:

General Principles drawn from Recent Legislation

- Students have a statutory obligation to attend school up to age 16. Accordingly students have a right to attend school up to that age.
- Having been admitted to a school, all students have the right to learn in an orderly and caring environment. All schools need to establish and maintain high expectations of student behaviour. All members of the school community should be aware of these expectations, and have agreed to support and uphold them.
- All students and staff have the right to be treated fairly and with dignity, in an environment free from disruption, intimidation, harassment and discrimination.
- There will be cases of unacceptable behaviour where it will be in the best interests of the school community and/or the student involved, for the student to be removed from the school for a period of time or completely. Suspension and exclusion are the options available to the Principal



Coláiste Pobail Setanta

Misneach (Courage) ~ Bród (Pride) ~ Meitheal (Support)

and for the Board of Management in these situations. [Examples of "unacceptable behaviour" are contained in the Learning Code).

- Collaboration between The Board of Management, school staff, students, parents is an important feature of Behaviour Management in schools. All the partners should be fully aware of the suspension and exclusion procedures and their place in the context of the school's Learning Code
- Suspension is only one strategy within a school's Learning Code. It is most effective when it highlights the parents'/guardians' responsibility for taking an active role, in partnership with the school, in working with their child to enable the child's behaviour to change. The school will work with parents/ guardians with a view to assisting a suspended student to re-join the school community and begin participating fully in the educational programmes provided.
- Suspension may be appropriate when it allows students time to reflect on their behaviour, to acknowledge and accept responsibility for the behaviour, which led to the suspension, and to accept responsibility for changing their behaviour to meet the school's expectations in the future. It also allows time for school personnel to plan appropriate support for the student to assist with successful re-entry.
- The BOM has delegated authority to the Principal to suspend any student for a limited period and shall report any such suspension to the Board of Management at its next meeting. The principal shall also inform the NEWB of any absences due to suspension.
- If, in the judgement of the Principal, a student should be excluded, the Principal shall refer the matter to the Board of Management/DDLETB for approval.
- The Board of Management and the Principal will exercise this authority having regard to their responsibilities to the whole school community and to the Principles of Natural Justice. with successful re-entry.

In implementing these procedures, the Principal and Board will ensure that no student is discriminated against on any of the following grounds:

- gender
- marital status
- family status
- sexual orientation
- religion
- age
- disability
- race
- membership of the Travelling Community

The Board of Management will also ensure that the implementation of these procedures will take into account such factors as:

- The age and state of health of the student;
- The student's previous record at the school;
- Any particular circumstances unique to the student which might sensibly be taken into account in connection with the behaviour, e.g. strained or traumatic domestic situations;
- The extent to which parental, peer or other pressure may have contributed to the behaviour;
- The degree of severity of the behaviour, frequency of its occurrence and the likelihood of its recurring;



Colaiste Pobail Setanta

Misneach (Courage) ~ Bród (Pride) ~ Meitheal (Support)

- Whether or not the behaviour occurred on school premises or when the pupil was otherwise in the charge of the school staff or when the pupil was on the way to or from school. An important consideration in cases of doubt is the extent to which behaviour away from the school had a serious impact on the life of the school;
- The degree to which behaviour was a violation of one or more rules contained in the School's Code of Learning
- Whether the incident was perpetrated by the student on his or her own or as a part of a group.
- Depending on the nature and extent of the misbehaviour the Board of Management may also seek the support of other agencies such as the National Education Welfare Board (NEWB) , The DDLETB Psychological Support Services (PSS) , Social Services, Garda Juvenile Liaison Officer(JLO).
- The principles of Natural Justice are fundamental to the implementation of these procedures.

The Learning Code

While good standards of conduct are the expected norm at Colaiste Pobail Setanta, excellent standards are recognised and rewarded within the College. Equally, unacceptable standards have to be recognised and assistance provided by College-based support structures. Where this support breaks down or is rejected, appropriate action may have to be taken in order to bring about a change in behaviour.

The effective operation of **The Learning Code** is only possible by setting out clearly the school rules and regulations for the benefit of each family. Such rules provide guidance for the student and facilitate the daily operation of school life. Underpinning all aspects of the schools **The Learning Code** and the policy on suspension and expulsion is the protection of these rights:

- All students have the right to work in a secure environment that is conducive to learning.
- All students and staff members have the right to be treated with courtesy & respect
- All students and staff members have the right to be treated in an honest, courteous, respectful and co-operative manner.

In protection of these rights:

- Staff members *expect students to follow their instructions* when implementing school and class rules and policy.
- Staff members *expect students to follow their instructions* when issuing instructions relating to health and safety.

Rewards

The College will at all times seek to raise standards of behaviour by adopting a positive approach to behaviour. The work of students and their adherence to the school's Learning Code will be acknowledged, encouraged and rewarded in the following ways:

We monitor the behaviour and progress of all students regularly and acknowledge improvement/excellence through:

- Weekly review of the journal by tutors
- Positive notes in the student journal by tutors and subject teachers
- Merits (Positive Behaviour)



Coláiste Pobail Setanta

Misneach (Courage) ~ Bród (Pride) ~ Meitheal (Support)

- Merit Notes in the Journal
- Merit Record sheet in journal
- Weekly Tutor meetings for all tutor groups
- Detailed feedback at formal Parent Teacher meetings
- Assessment reports at Semester 1, 2 &3
- Achievement Awards ceremonies
- College Cards used by tutors and subject teachers
- Reward schemes eg; Smile File Programme
- An emphasis on acknowledging good work done in all assessment of student work
- Student of the month
- Class of the month
- Most improved student

Actions

Actions available to the College when any student breaks the **Learning Code** of the College. These actions are detailed in the Learning Code.

- **Referral**
- **Parental Involvement**
- **Report Notes**
- **Confiscations**
- **Suspension**
- **Expulsion**
- **Detention**
- **Reminder Notes**
- **Suspension Notes**
- **Contracts**

In general the College will seek to modify unsatisfactory behaviour using positive supports and less serious sanctions whenever possible. The services of, Guidance Counsellor and other relevant outside agencies may be utilised to the greatest extent possible in seeking to improve behaviour. The College will work with parents to assist with any difficulties the students may be experiencing in College. However, should it not prove possible to achieve realistic and sustainable improvements in behaviour within a reasonable period of time, suspension and if necessary expulsion will be used in accordance with this policy.

Report

In situations where other measures have proven ineffective and expulsion from the College is being considered for serious or consistent misbehaviour the College will, in certain situations, place the student(s) concerned on Report. The principle aim of the Report will be to signal to the student and his or her parents/guardians that the situation is very serious and that it will not be allowed to continue. The Report, which will involve a defined number of stages, will allow for a set number of meetings to take place involving students, parents/guardians and teachers with the intention of improving behaviour. Where the action of a student is such as to warrant immediate removal from the school a Report will not be used.



Colaiste Pobail Setanta

Misneach (Courage) ~ Bród (Pride) ~ Meitheal (Support)

Suspension

Authority to Suspend

The Board of Management of the Colaiste Pobail Setanta has the authority to suspend a student. The Board delegates the authority to suspend, up to and including 3 days, to the Principal and this shall be done formally and in writing at the first meeting of the BOM each academic year.

The authority delegated to the Principal in respect of suspension shall state limits on that authority, and specify how the Principal is accountable to the Board of Management for his or her use of that authority. The Principal usually reports all suspensions to the Board at its monthly meeting in accordance with the EWB Guidelines. The delegation of authority shall reflect the provisions of the Educational Welfare Guidelines, any relevant legal requirements and Articles of Management, where appropriate.

The Grounds for Suspension

Suspension shall be a proportionate response to the behaviour that is causing concern. Normally the College will have tried other interventions before suspension, and College staff will have reviewed the reasons why these have not worked.

The decision to suspend a student requires serious grounds such as that:

- The student's behaviour has had a serious detrimental effect on the education of other students.
- The student has engaged in a serious breach of the Learning Code
- The student poses a Health and Safety concern
- The student's continued presence in the school at this time constitutes a threat to safety.
- The student is responsible for serious damage to property.
- A single incident of serious misconduct may be grounds for suspension.
- Repeated breaches of the Learning Code in spite of warnings and counselling by staff.
- Failure to recognise and adhere to the legitimate authority of the College.
- Behaviour which is considered to interfere with the right to learn of other students.
- Particularly serious incidents which endanger the welfare of others or themselves
- The student has engaged in activity contrary to the lunchtime arrangements.

Forms of Suspension

Immediate Suspension

In exceptional circumstances, the Principal may consider an immediate suspension to be necessary where the continued presence of the student in the College at the time would represent a serious threat to the safety of students or staff of the College, or any other person.



Coláiste Pobail Setanta

Misneach (Courage) ~ Bród (Pride) ~ Meitheal (Support)

The sanction shall be a proportionate response to the behaviour. The sanction will be treated like any other suspension, and the principles and fair procedures governing suspensions should be applied. Circumstances in which immediate suspension include:

- **Verbally abusing a member of staff or a student**
- **Physical threats or violence towards a member of staff or a student**
- **Harassment of a member of staff or a student**
- **Physical abuse to other students**
- **Refer to Learning Code, suspension notes while on report.**
- **Truant from the school grounds/building**
- **Truant from class**
- **This list is not exhaustive**

Procedures in relation to immediate suspension

Where an immediate suspension is considered by the Principal to be warranted for reasons of the safety of the student, other students, staff or others, a preliminary investigation shall be conducted to establish the case for the imposition of the suspension. The formal investigation shall immediately follow the imposition of the suspension. All of the conditions for suspension apply to immediate suspension. No suspension, including an immediate suspension, shall be open-ended.

In the case of an immediate suspension, parents shall be notified, and arrangements made with them for the student to be collected. The College shall have regard to its duty of care for the student. In no circumstances shall a student be sent home from College without first notifying parents.

The period of suspension

The maximum period of suspension which may be imposed by the Principal without referring the case to the Board of Management is three days and in exceptional circumstances where the Principal considers that a period longer than three days is required, he/she may suspend a student for five with the approval of the Chairperson of the Board of Management, where the Board of Management cannot convene in a timely fashion.

The Board of Management shall periodically review all suspensions and, especially, shall itself decide on any proposal to suspend a student where the suspension would bring the number of days for which the student has been suspended in the current school year to twenty days or more. Any such suspension is subject to appeal under section 29 of the Education Act, 1998.

Suspension during a state examination

This sanction may be delegated to the Principal and should only be used where there is:

- A threat to good order in the conduct of the examination
- A threat to the safety of other students and personnel
- A threat to the right of other students to do their examination in a calm atmosphere.



Coláiste Pobail Setanta

Misneach (Courage) ~ Bród (Pride) ~ Meitheal (Support)

Appeals

Local appeal

The Board of Management shall offer an opportunity to appeal a Principal's decision to suspend a student.

Section 29 appeal

Where the total number of days for which the student has been suspended in the current school year reaches twenty days, the parents, or a student aged over eighteen years, may appeal the suspension under section 29 of the Education Act 1998, as amended by the Education (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2007.

At the time when parents are being formally notified of such a suspension, they and the student shall be told about their right to appeal to the DDLETB and shall be given information about how to appeal.

Implementing the suspension

Written notification

The Principal shall notify the parents and the student in writing of the decision to suspend. The letter should confirm:

- The period of the suspension and the dates on which the suspension will begin and end
- The reason for the suspension
- The provision for an appeal to the Board of Management and the procedures for that appeal
- The right to appeal to the DDLETB under section 29 of the Education Act 1998.

Grounds for removing a suspension

A suspension may be removed if the Board of Management decides to remove the suspension for any reason or if the DDLETB or the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Science directs that it be removed following an appeal under section 29 of the Education Act 1998.

After the suspension ends

A period of suspension shall end on the date given in the letter of notification to the parents about the suspension.

Re-integrating the students

The College shall do all it can to help the students to take responsibility for catching up on work missed. When any sanction, including suspension, is completed, a student shall be given the opportunity and support for a fresh start. Although a record is kept of the behaviour and any sanction imposed, once the sanction has been completed, the College shall expect the same behaviour of this student as of all other students.

Records and Reports

Formal written records shall be kept of:

- The investigation (including notes of all interviews held)



Coláiste Pobail Setanta

Misneach (Courage) ~ Bród (Pride) ~ Meitheal (Support)

- The decision making process
- The decision and the rationale for the decision
- The duration of the suspension and any conditions attached to the suspension

Report to the Board of Management

The Principal shall report all suspensions to the Board of Management, with the reason for and the duration of each suspension.

Report to National Education Welfare Board

The Principal is required to report suspension in accordance with the NEWB reporting guidelines (Education Welfare) Act, 2000, section 21 (4) (a).

Review of use of suspension

The Board of Management shall periodically review the use of suspension in the school to ensure that its use is consistent with school policies, that patterns of use are examined to identify factors that may be influencing behaviour in the school and to ensure legal compliance and the maintenance of best practices.