



Code of Behaviour Policy

Code of Behaviour of Coláiste Muire, Ballymote, Co. Sligo.

SCOPE

This policy applies to students of Coláiste Muire, Ballymote, Co. Sligo and relates to all school activities both during and outside of normal school hours. This policy was drawn up in consultation with all partners, including Board of Management, Staff, Parents/Guardians and Students.

RELATIONSHIP TO SCHOOLS MISSION, VISION, AIMS

This policy is based on the Mercy Philosophy of Education, the CEIST charter and the school mission statement, vision and aims. The school strives to provide a safe, secure teaching and learning environment for the development of all within our school community. Our school code of behaviour is based on respect for oneself, for others and for our environment, so that a positive and co-operative 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 which is ill-mannered, annoying, dangerous or disruptive cannot be allowed. Our code is one that is based on the recognition of the student as an individual and yet creates an environment in which the welfare of all is protected.

This code of behaviour takes cognizance of current relevant legislation, current thinking on behaviour management and good practice.

The Code of Behaviour is informed by the following legislation and documentation:

Articles 42 and 44 of the Constitution

Circular Letters M34/88 and M33/91

Article 19 of the Articles of Management of Catholic Secondary Schools

Sections 28 and 29 of the Education Act 1998

Section 23 of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000

The Equal Status Act 2000

The European Convention on Human Rights 1950

The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child 1989

The Ombudsman for Children Act 2002

The Education of Persons with Special Needs Act (EPSEN) 2004

The Disability Act 2005

The Non-Fatal Offences against the Person Act 1997

Health & Safety Legislation

The Data Protection Act 1988, 2003

The General Data Protection Regulation 2018

The Age of Majority Act 1985

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The aims of our Code of Behaviour are:

1. To create a safe, secure learning environment for all by promoting a sense of mutual respect among all members of the school community.
2. To have effective procedures in place which will allow for the day to day running of the school and which meet the demands of current legislation.
3. To promote good behaviour and self discipline.
4. To emphasise the promotion and acknowledgement of good behaviour.
5. To outline the strategies to be used to prevent poor behaviour and the ways in which positive behaviour is acknowledged.
6. To outline the structure of fair, consistent and agreed sanctions that will be used in response to negative behaviour.
7. To outline the interventions to be used when a student repeatedly misbehaves.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Our school acknowledges the contribution of all members of the school community. Each member has responsibility for the promotion of positive behaviour and a role in dealing with (minimising) negative behaviour.

Students

The school expects that students will at all times do their best to respect the code of behaviour of our school. The school acknowledges the role of the Student Council in the development of this policy.

Parents/Guardians

The school acknowledges the role of parents/guardians in the development of this policy. The school acknowledges all parents/guardians in the operation of the code of behaviour and expects them:

1. To familiarise themselves with school rules and policies; to support the code of behaviour and other policies; and to ensure pupil co-operation.
2. To monitor student progress and behaviour by regularly checking the student's school journal.
3. To visit the school when requested.
4. To ensure homework is completed.
5. To take advantage of all channels of communication made available to them by the school (school app, school website, school journal, school text and email, meetings with teachers, parent-teacher meetings, newsletters, school reports, etc.).
6. To provide all necessary information to the school.

Teachers

The school acknowledges the role of teachers in the development and operation of the code of behaviour. 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.

Each teacher has responsibility for the maintenance of discipline within his/her class while sharing a common responsibility for good order within the school.

Teachers will use the referral framework in the school to promote positive behaviour – Class Tutors, Year Heads, Guidance Counsellor, Special Educational Needs Team, Deputy Principal, Principal and other services.

Other Staff

The school acknowledges the contribution of the secretary, caretakers, cleaners, supervisors, coaches, catering staff and other ancillary staff in the day to day running of the school. They have a part to play in the successful operation of our code of behaviour by citing/reporting incidences of positive behaviour or misbehaviour they observe.

Deputy Principal/Principal

The Deputy Principal and Principal will ensure that the school's code of behaviour and discipline is administered in a manner which is consistent and fair to all.

Board of Management

The Board of Management is the ultimate decision making body of the school. The school acknowledges the role of the Board of Management 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 it before becoming official school policy. While it is not involved in the day to day procedures, it is the body to which parents/guardians and students over 18 can appeal in cases of suspension or expulsion.

CONTENT

Expectations/Rules

- 1. Students are expected to attend school regularly and remain for the full day. Students may not leave school without permission. Permission to visit a doctor; dentist etc will be granted where a note is received from a parent via the school App. Students who need to leave school during the day owing to illness must follow the procedures for dealing with sick students set out in the Health and Safety Policy. Students will not be permitted to contact parents/guardians during the school day using their mobile phone, but must report to the school office if ill. In this instance a phone call will be made home by management/office staff requesting a parent to collect the child. Students, when leaving school early, must sign out digitally using the tablet at the office. Students who sign out from school with permission are the responsibility of their parents/guardians. The school will not accept responsibility for any student who absents themselves from school for any purpose without prior permission from school authorities. Parents of students who sign out without permission will receive a phone call in the first instance and the student will be issued with a verbal warning. For repeat offenders, harsher sanctions will apply, up to and including suspension.**

This is a rule of our school because missing class adversely affects progress. Parents/Guardians must supply the school secretary with home telephone numbers, parents/guardians' mobile numbers and work phone numbers in case they have to be contacted in the case of emergency. Parents must collect their child, when leaving early, in the interests of health and safety.

- 2. Any student who is absent for a portion of a day, a full day, or more must have a note of explanation from a parent/guardian submitted via the school App. Unexplained absences will be followed up by the Year Head, Deputy Principal or Principal. Parents will be notified via the school App on a daily basis when their child is absent from school. Parents will be notified by the Year Head when their child has reached 10 and 15 days absence, and by the Principal/Deputy Principal upon reaching 20 days absence.**

This is a legal requirement under the Education (Welfare) Act. The Education Welfare Officer must be informed of student's absence for 20 days or more during the school year.

- 3. Students are expected to be on time for every class. Classes start at 9:10am and conclude at 3:55pm. There is a 15 minute morning break and a 30 minute lunchbreak. Students who arrive late to school in the morning must sign in digitally using the tablet at the office. 3 concurrent lates in the morning or to class throughout the day, without acceptable reasons will result in lunchtime detention in the first instance, with heavier sanctions for repeat lateness, e.g. evening detention, suspension, etc.**

This is a rule of our school because not being on time causes disruption for the teacher and class. Also, as our school is concerned with the development of the whole child we see the importance of encouraging students to develop good punctuality which will be expected of them in the workplace.

- 4. Students are expected to do one's best in class and take responsibility for one's own work. Students are also expected to participate in relevant school activities.**

This fosters good learning and a sense of maturity and responsibility in each student. Participation in school activities develops communication and teamwork skills.

- 5. All students must remain on the school premises during the school day (unless permission is granted by school management under the conditions stated above).**

6. Students are advised to keep toileting to a minimum and as necessary only.

Access to toilets is permitted during class time, but only when necessary. Students who persist in asking to leave class without adequate reason will be considered to be disrupting the lesson and sanctions may apply. This is for health and safety reasons.

7. Show respect for yourself and others.

This is a rule of our school because having respect for oneself and others promotes a respectful, caring atmosphere where the rights of all are upheld. Politeness and courtesy are expected from all and rough or aggressive behaviour or foul language will not be tolerated. Any evidence of bullying will be fully investigated (as set out in the school's Anti-Bullying Policy) and where an incident of bullying is discovered, sanctions will apply.

8. Show respect for school property.

This is a rule of our school because defacing/damaging school property is destructive and shows lack of respect for the school community of which the student is a member. The use of tippex and chewing of gum are not permitted as they can damage school property. Students are responsible for their own property, i.e. books, money, clothing etc. The school does not accept responsibility for the loss or damage of any of these items. All items of personal property, particularly schoolbags and clothing, should be marked with owner's name.

9. Show respect for school books received via the school's book rental scheme.

This is a rule of our school because damaging school property is destructive and shows lack of respect for the school community of which the student is a member. While all textbooks remain the property of the school, students are required to handle them with care. Students must not write on or highlight books. Books must be returned in good condition to the Book Rental Co-ordinator as per the Book rental policy. Charges will apply for lost or damaged books.

10. Move quietly around the school in an orderly manner and utilise the one way system correctly.

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.

11. School bags should not be left on corridors at any time

This is for health and safety reasons. Students are responsible for their own property, which includes school bags.

12. Listen to messages/instructions given and do as required.

This is a rule of our school so that instructions given to assist the smooth running of our school are carried in the interests of all.

13. Smoking/vaping of any kind is forbidden in the school and on the grounds.

Students found smoking/vaping in school, on school grounds or on school trips/outings will be suspended from school. It is a legal requirement not to smoke in a public area and the school views the matter in a very serious manner.

14. Alcohol, illegal drugs or the misuse of any substance (including vaping of any kind) is strictly prohibited. Failure to comply will incur sanctions up to and including expulsion. Any student found under the influence at school or on school trips/outings will be sent home at the first opportunity and the incident will subsequently be investigated prior to sanction being applied.

This is for Health and Safety reasons. Please refer to Substance Misuse Policy.

15. Weapons of any kind must not be brought into the school. This includes fireworks. Failure to comply will incur sanctions up to and including expulsion.

This is for Health and Safety reasons.

16. Mobile phones of any kind, along with headphones/earphones are not permitted for use by students in school, unless directed for use by a member of staff. Students found using a mobile phone and/or

accessories without permission will have the phone/accessories taken up instantly. Refusal to surrender the phone and/or accessories constitutes a serious breach of the code of behaviour. The phone and/or accessories will be returned to a parent/guardian only.

The use of mobile phones, along with headphones/earphones in school is a health and safety issue and are therefore not permitted for use in school unless directed to do so by a member of staff. For messages of an urgent nature, students may use the school phone, or may be contacted via the school phone.

- 17. All students must carry and use at all times the official school journal which also monitors work and behaviour. Parents must inspect and sign the journal each night for 1st, 2nd and 3rd years and weekly for TY, 5th and 6th years.**

This helps parents monitor a student's progress and to promote good behaviour and self discipline. The school journal is also an effective communication tool between teacher and parent and vice-versa.

- 18. Full uniform must be worn at all times in school and when representing school. Parents/guardians are responsible for ensuring that their son/daughter is in full uniform each day at school. Pupils are expected to adhere to the full school uniform as outlined in the School Uniform Policy. Students should have enough items of clothing to allow regular changes for hygiene reasons. Students who have a genuine reason for being out of uniform should bring a letter signed by a parent/guardian to the Principal/Deputy Principal before 9.10am. ~~Students will not be admitted to class without uniform or when wearing jeans/tracksuit bottoms/hoodies/non-school jackets/runners/trainers. Students who present to school in non-school item(s) of clothing will have those items taken up. The item(s) will be returned to a parent/guardian only. Where students partake in fundraising activities, such as 'Shave or Dye', they will be required to restore their hair to its natural colour within 2 weeks of dying it.~~**

The rationale behind the school uniform is as follows:

- It makes all pupils equal.
- It reduces expense to parents having to buy fashion items regularly.
- It creates a clear school identity and represents the sense of belonging to the school community.
- It reinforces a pride among the pupils in their school, particularly when representing the school on sporting or extra-curricular activities.

- 19. The wearing of facial jewellery is prohibited as is the wearing of symbols or memorabilia which may be considered offensive or discriminatory to others. Stud earrings only may be worn.**

This is for health and safety reasons.

- 20. Students are not permitted to drive or park cars on the school grounds under any circumstances, be it their own car or that of a parent/guardian. The school will not take any responsibility for student cars parked on the school grounds or the contents therein.**

This is for health and safety reasons.

- 21. Students are expected to obey current health and safety guidelines in relation to COVID-19. Where applicable, students must heed up-to-date HSE guidelines. Sanctions will apply for failure to regard relevant safety measures.**

This is for health and safety reasons.

BREACHES OF THE CODE OF BEHAVIOUR

In general, there are two sets of circumstances where the code of behavior can be breached. These are categorized below as serious breaches and less serious breaches:

Serious breaches of the Code of Behaviour include, but are not limited to:

- Endangering the Safety or Health of any member of the school community.
- Disrespect or defiance towards a member of staff. This includes the refusal to surrender a mobile phone when the student is found to be using it without the permission of staff.
- Interference with or persistent disruption of teaching and learning.
- Refusal to obey clear and reasonable instructions of staff members on a repeated basis.
- The use of obscene, abusive or otherwise inappropriate language.
- Harassment, intimidation or bullying of a member of staff or of any member of the school community.
- Circulating or publishing (including on the internet) material recorded without consent with the purpose of humiliating, undermining the reputation of or causing damage to another person, whether considered a “joke” or not.
- Smoking or vaping anywhere inside the school grounds, in line with the requirements of the Public Health (Tobacco) Act 2002, or in the immediate vicinity of the school or while on school trips or in the course of any school-related activity.
- Possession, use, or supply of prohibited substances (including alcohol, drugs, or associated paraphernalia) in the school, on school trips, or in the course of any school-related activity. Exception will be made only for legitimate medicinal use with the prior notification of the school authorities.
- Deliberate vandalism, including the writing of graffiti, in relation to school property or the property of a member of the school community.
- Stealing, fighting or the possession of offensive weapons. In addition to being serious breaches that incur suspension, these are criminal offences that may also be reported to the appropriate authorities.
- Tarnishing the good name and reputation of the school.
- Bringing discredit to the school by inappropriate behaviour outside of school.
- Truancy.

Less serious breaches of the Code of Behaviour include, but are not limited to:

- Eating or drinking in class or other areas not designated for food and beverage consumption.
- Failure to complete assigned homework.
- Such classroom disruption as inattention, talking without permission, passing notes and failure to have the school diary, books and equipment required for class.
- Running, shouting or horseplay of any description anywhere in the school.
- Tardiness for school or classes.
- Use of mobile phones or mobile phone accessories on the school premises, unless directed by a member of staff
- Congregating in the toilets.
- Not wearing the full school uniform.
- Wearing of facial jewellery.

PREVENTATIVE MEASURES

In our school, students will be encouraged in their endeavours to uphold the code of behaviour by use of the following measures:

- **The Code of Behaviour is circulated via the school website and school app to parents/guardians of all students. All students, ~~along with their parents/guardians~~ are asked to sign the relevant page in their school journal accepting the school’s code of behaviour and anti-bullying policies. Acceptance of a place in the school however automatically implies acceptance of the code of behaviour by both parents/guardians and the child. (See Admissions Policy).**

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

- **At the start of Term One each 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 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 three months.

- **School rules and the reason for them are discussed as part of the school's pastoral care programme or as part of SPHE and Wellbeing programmes. 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 programme in the school. Some of this work also takes place in the CSPE class since it is the foundation of good citizenship.**
- **Issues such as Bullying, Racism, Sexism, Harassment, Violence, Substance misuse, etc. are discussed with the students during their time in our school, using current legislation, current affairs and/or outside speakers.**

This is done to help the students better understand these issues so that they can base their thinking, understanding and action on factual information and in the light of the Christian values espoused in our school. Violations will be dealt with under the relevant policies.

REWARDS

Rewards are built in to our code of behaviour as a description of the way in which we acknowledge positive behaviour. In our school teachers may use the following reward methods to reward students for upholding the code of behaviour:

- **Verbal praise to student either in class or privately.**
- **Positive comment to class tutor and/or year head.**
- **Positive note home to parents/guardians in work journal and/or school reports.**
- **Lunch time reward, e.g. lunchtime activities, lunch vouchers.**
- **Display of students work.**
- **Leadership role given to student, e.g. prefect, class captain for a month/term or team leader for specific project.**
- **Class trip/outing.**
- **Prizes on awards day.**

INTERVENTIONS

Interventions refer to strategies used to help prevent students re-offending and give specific help to those students who find it particularly difficult to live by the code of behaviour. They usually involve consultations with school personnel, parents/guardians and others as appropriate. Specific intervention packages may need to be designed to suit individual cases. In our school the interventions we use to prevent students re-offending and to give specific help to those students who find it particularly difficult to uphold the code of behaviour are:

- **Restorative interview between the student and a member of staff, usually the Year Head initially.**
 1. The purpose of this interview is to establish an understanding in the student of the rule/rules he/she has broken.
 2. To bring the student to an understanding of the effects of the breach on him/herself as well as on other members of the school community.
 3. To bring the student to an understanding of how to act/react differently so as not to be in breach of the rule/rules.
 4. To provide the opportunity for the student to restore relationships with others (students/teachers) impacted by their behaviour.
 5. To administer a sanction, if one is required and to get the student to see the need for one.
- **Giving the student a restorative written piece of work to do in which they have to outline in writing the rule/rules they breached, the effects this breach had on themselves and on other members of the school community and how they can avoid a repeat of this behaviour.**
- **Referral to the Guidance Counsellor or Special Educational Needs Team.**

- Referral to the Youth Liaison Officer.
- Referral by the school to an out-centre for assistance in behaviour modification.
- Referral to the school's educational psychologist for testing and/or help in behaviour modification.
- Referral to the National Education Welfare Board (NEWB) and/or the National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS).

SANCTIONS

These sanctions are designed to minimise the disruption to teaching and learning and focus on the unwanted behaviour rather than on the offending student personally. A restorative approach will be used so that our students can experience the consequences of their misbehaviour. Sanctions are scaled so as to take account of the nature of the incident, the situation leading up to the incident and the sanction imposed by the staff of the school in accordance with the ladder of referral.

- A firm verbal reprimand from a member of staff is expected to be sufficient to correct inappropriate behaviour.
- A note home to parents/guardians in the school journal. (It is an essential requirement that all students have their school journal with them each day).
- A referral of the incident to the Year Head/Deputy Principal/Principal.
- Time out – removal of the student from the scene of the incident, e.g. the student is put working in a different place within the classroom, or the student is put working in another classroom by arrangement with the teacher, or the student is put working in the Year Head's, Deputy Principal's or Principal's office – by prior arrangement.

SANCTIONS FOR MORE SERIOUS MISDEAMEANOURS OR FOR CONSISTENT BREACHES OF THE CODE OF BEHAVIOUR INCLUDE:

- Referral to the Year Head in line with our 'ladder of referral'.
- A discussion with a member of senior management e.g. Year Head, Deputy Principal or Principal.
- A telephone call to parents/guardians by Year Head, Deputy Principal or Principal.
- A meeting with parents/guardians.
- Detention in school during lunchtime.
- Detention in school in the evening.
- A community task such as picking up litter, removal of graffiti or tidying a classroom etc.
- Student put on a Behaviour and/or Academic report sheet.
- Exclusion from favoured activity or exclusion from outing etc. Representing the school is conditional upon a satisfactory record of behaviour.
- In-house suspension for a limited time following consultation with Year Head, Deputy Principal or Principal and after informing parents/guardians.
- Suspension from school (in accordance with the school's policy on Suspension and Expulsion).
- Exclusion from school (in accordance with school's policy on Suspension and Expulsion).

Notwithstanding the above, the internal school management reserve the right to moderate its application of any sanction as the individual situation demands.

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'.

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

Step 1 The Subject Teacher

Each teacher has responsibility for implementing discipline in his/her own classroom. Any preventative measure, intervention or sanction carried out by the teacher should be recorded by the class teacher and be available to the Year Head if the matter is being passed up the ladder of referral.

Subject teachers may use some of the schools agreed sanctions for minor offences. More serious matters should be dealt with under **Step 2** of the ladder of referral.

Step 2 The Year Head

Each year group is assigned a teacher with responsibility for them. He/she has a pastoral and disciplinary role to play with the class groups that make up this year group. A serious offence or a number of minor offences will warrant reporting to the Year Head (Step 2).

Step 3 The Principal/Deputy Principal

Students whose behaviour has not modified despite the school's best effort in working with the student will be referred by the Year Head to the Deputy Principal/Principal.

If the Principal/Deputy Principal decides that a suspension is warranted, the procedures of our policy on suspension and expulsion will be implemented. Parents/guardians will be notified orally and in writing of the reason for and the length of time of the suspension.

The Principal will inform the Board of Management of all suspensions and note will be made of it in the minutes of the Board of Management meeting.

The Principal recommends expulsion to the Board of Management if warranted.

The Board of Management considers the recommendation and having given an opportunity to the parents/guardians (or student if over 18 years), to make their case, makes its decision whether to expel or not.

SUCCESS CRITERIA/MONITORING

This Code of Behaviour was drawn up in consultation with staff, students and parents/guardians, was ratified by the Board of Management and will be reviewed every two years or as necessary.

Any amendments which need to be made will be in keeping with the general philosophy of our Code of Behaviour and ethos and will be communicated to the members of our school community in writing.

IMPLEMENTATION

This code of behaviour applies to all school outings/excursions and where students are representing the school in competitions, sporting events, seminars, etc.

This code of behaviour is available on the school website <https://www.cmbm.ie>. A copy may be requested from the school secretary. An extract of the code of behaviour has been inserted in the student diary/journal.

Each student and their parent/guardian is required to sign the relevant page in their student diary/journal accepting the school's code of behaviour.

Acceptance of a place in the school automatically implies acceptance of the Code of Behaviour, whether signed for in the school journal or not.

Transition Year students will enter a probationary period of one term from the first day of term in September and up to October mid-term break. Should this probationary period be breached (through consistent breaches of the code of behaviour, serious misdemeanour, failure to engage in work experience, failure to engage in self-directed learning) the student will be removed from the Transition Year class and enrolled to the 5th year programme. Offer of TY places will be dependent in part on the student's record of positive behaviour in Junior Cycle.

Students with special educational needs may require help to understand and observe the code. This will be ensured via the Special Educational Needs Team and policy in the school.

Where students experience difficulty with the transition from primary to secondary school, their difficulty may lead to unacceptable behaviour. Coláiste Muire has a programme to help students to make a successful transition so that behavioural difficulties can be diminished or avoided.

Amendments to the Code of Behaviour will be communicated to the stakeholders.

REVIEW AND RATIFICATION

This Policy was reviewed in June 2022 and ratified by the Board of Management on 14th June 2022.

Signed	<i>M. Molloy</i>	Date 14/06/2022
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Chairperson, Board of Management

Signed	<i>M. McDermott</i>	Date 14/06/2022
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Principal/Secretary to the Board of Management