

Abbey C.B.S.

Code of Behaviour for Students

Mission Statement

The Abbey School, in the tradition of Edmund Rice, cares for all its students. We strive to help each reach his full potential academically, socially, in sport and in extra-curricular activities. By our own example we lead our students to put Christian values into practice in their dealings with others. We encourage them to be concerned and participative citizens in their local community, nationally and in Europe and to be aware of their responsibilities to the poor and marginalised of the Third World.

Preamble

A compassionate, caring and Christian approach must be the hallmark of any school aspiring to bear witness to the vision of Blessed Edmund Rice. Such an aspiration must be reflected by the school in its curriculum provision and in its creation of a favourable learning environment. We in the Abbey aim to develop confidence, self esteem and critical thinking while respecting the rights of all members of the school community to an environment free from disruptive behaviour.

One of the most significant factors influencing behaviour in schools is the quality of relationships between teachers and between teacher and pupils. Mutual respect, cooperation and natural justice are highly valued here. Visitors regularly comment on the wonderful atmosphere and on the excellent rapport between students and teachers in our school.

The Management and staff make every effort to become familiar with the relevant factors influencing their pupils – home environment, family breakdown, unemployment, substance abuse, social mores, educational expectations, youth culture, the points system, personal, emotional or physical problems, learning difficulties etc.

The teaching staff of the school has been fully involved in the drafting of this Code of Behaviour and each teacher will do his/her best to implement it fully and fairly.

The Code has been discussed with our Parent Advisory Council. Parents/Guardians and a supportive home environment play a crucial role in forming students, leading to good behaviour in schools. We need the support of parents/guardians to effectively implement this policy on behaviour and discipline. When admitting a student we require his parents/guardians to confirm in writing that the Code of Behaviour is acceptable to them and that they will make all reasonable efforts to ensure compliance with this code by the student. Parents will be asked to renew this confirmation at the beginning of each school year.

The Student Council has also been consulted in the drafting of this Code as have individual class groups. Positive attitudes among students in general to the school are essential for effective learning and discipline. The whole ethos of our school is geared towards developing and maintaining those attitudes.

In drafting this Code the Board of Management has taken cognisance of the views of teachers, parents and students and also of the principles outlined in the Edmund Rice Schools Trust Charter.

Aims of the Code of Behaviour

All students and teachers have the right to be treated fairly and with dignity in an environment free from disruption, intimidation, harassment and discrimination.

The Code of Behaviour aims to promote the development of self-discipline in pupils based on consideration and respect for self, for others and for property.

While in the school aims at ensuring that the individuality of each pupil is fostered, it must at the same time acknowledge the rights of all teachers and pupils to an environment where

- teaching and learning can take place
- pupils are educated to take responsibility for themselves
- a caring community is nurtured

Standards of Behaviour

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.

These standards of behaviour express the kinds of behaviour and relationships that will create a positive environment for teaching and learning. These standards expect all members of the school community to behave in ways that show respect for others. They reflect values such as:

- kindness and willingness to help others
- courtesy and good manners
- fairness
- readiness to use respectful ways of resolving difficulties and conflict
- forgiveness

Acceptable Behaviour Standards

Students are expected to:

- attend school regularly and punctually
- do one's best in class
- take responsibility for one's work
- keep the school rules
- help create a safe, positive environment
- respect all members of staff
- respect other students and their right to learn
- participate to the best of your ability in school activities

Unacceptable Behaviour Standards

- Behaviour that is hurtful (including bullying, defiance, harassment, discrimination and victimisation)
- Behaviour that interferes with teaching and learning
- Threats or physical hurt to another person
- Bad language

- ❑ Damage to property
- ❑ Theft
- ❑ Substance abuse
- ❑ Leaving school without permission during school hours and without signing out
- ❑ Use of mobile phones or lasers in class
- ❑ Consuming alcohol while on school outings or during school-related activities
- ❑ Sourcing pornographic material on the Internet

Strategies to promote good behaviour include:

- ❑ 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
- ❑ recognising and giving positive feedback about behaviour
- ❑ exploring with students how people should treat each other
- ❑ involving students in the preparation of the school and classroom rules

Staff Responsibilities

The quality of relationships between teachers and students is one of the most powerful influences on students behaviour. For many students, their teachers are a major source of support, adult empathy and pastoral care, and are hugely significant figures in their lives.

As adults and professionals, teachers have a strong capacity to develop good relationships with students, and a greater responsibility for the relationship.

Mutually respectful relationships balance warmth and empathy with objectivity, professional detachment, fairness and consistency.

Behaviour outside School

The standards and rules in this Code of Behaviour also apply in any situation where the student, although outside the school, is still the responsibility of the school.

In situations, for example, where students:

- (a) are wearing the school uniform (e.g going to and from school, trips)
- (b) are involved in school-related activities (e.g. tours, debates, games)
- (c) meet staff in passing

they are expected to be conscious of the fact that they will be seen as representatives of the school. As a consequence, they should behave at all times in a manner that reflects well on themselves, their parents and their school.

Bullying and Harassment

All forms of bullying are unacceptable in the Abbey School.

The Boards Policy to prevent or address bullying and all forms of harassment is included as an appendix to the Code of Behaviour

Interventions in response to inappropriate behaviour

(a) Support for all

Most students behave appropriately, with the help of consistent and clear rules and routines in class and in the general school environment. Occasional, minor misbehaviour should be attended to routinely and effectively through the skill of the classroom teacher.

(b) Additional support for some students

Some students need more active intervention to help them to manage their behaviour. Without additional help, they may be at risk of failing, behaviourally, socially and educationally. Such additional interventions might include:

- Referral to Year Head
The Year Head is in charge of discipline for a particular year group. He/She will investigate complaints made by teachers about the behaviour of individual students and will use any or all of the strategies and sanctions outlined in this Code. The Year Head will monitor the number of Complaint Sheets and White Cards issued to individual students and check on a daily basis students on Report Cards.
- Referral to the Guidance Counsellor
- Setting targets for behaviour and monitoring them with the student in a supportive way
- Behaviour contracts

(c) Specialised support for a small minority of students

A small minority of students may show particularly challenging behaviour. They may have great difficulty in learning new behaviour and may not respond to low-level interventions. These students will need a sustained and systematic response involving the important adults in their lives, in school and at home.

We have established links with the following support services to assist us in responding to the needs of students with behavioural difficulties:

- National Educational Psychological Services
- National Education Welfare Board
- HSE Community Psychology Services
- Knockanrawley Resource Centre
- Garda Juvenile Liaison Service

Parental Support

Parents will be expected, in the interest of their son's educational development, to support the school authorities in the ongoing implementation of this Code of Behaviour. One of the main factors in a child's success or otherwise in the school are the attitudes transmitted to them by parents – particularly in such areas as the importance of attending school regularly, punctuality, completion of homework, respect for teachers and fellow-pupils etc.

The Use of Sanctions

The purpose of a sanction is to bring about a change in behaviour by:

- helping students to learn that their behaviour is unacceptable
- helping them to recognise the effect of their actions and behaviour in others
- helping students (in ways appropriate to their age and development) to understand that they have choices about their own behaviour and that all choices have consequences
- helping them to take responsibility for their behaviour

A sanction may serve as a signal to other students and staff that their wellbeing is being protected.

Sanctions may be needed when there are serious breaches of school standards and in order to prevent serious disruption of teaching and learning.

Examples of Sanctions

The school authorities and teachers will use the following strategies to show disapproval of unacceptable behaviour and to bring about a change in the student's attitude and conduct:

- (a) Speaking quietly with the offending pupil after the classroom disruption, advising him on how to improve
- (b) The teacher may complete a Complaint Sheet or Report on the incident and send it to the relevant Year Head.
- (c) The student may be given extra written work to be completed within a specified time. This should be read and signed by his parents/guardians and should take the form of relevant course work rather than repetitive lines.
- (d) The pupil may be given a task of repairing damage caused i.e removing graffiti.
- (e) The pupil may in exceptional circumstances be sent immediately out of class to his Year Head, or in the absence of the Year Head to the Deputy Principal.
- (f) The teacher may, after class, refer the matter to the relevant Year Head or Deputy Principal.
- (g) The parents of an offending student may be asked to call to the school and be given a verbal report on their son's misbehaviour and suggestions for improving that behaviour.
- (h) The students may be given lunchtime supervised detention between 1.20 and 1.50 for a specified number of days. Parents will be given a minimum of one day's notice by phone or letter or by means of a note in his Homework Journal. Where possible the student will be detained and supervised in the teacher's own classroom.
- (i) The student may be given in-house detention. This involves spending the school day in another classroom (i.e. that of his Year Head in most cases). In-house detention will be for a maximum of two school days and parents will be given prior notice.

- (j) The student may be detained after school hours, with the prior agreement of his parents, on a day when Evening Study is taking place- such detention will begin at 4.00 p.m. and conclude at 6.00 p.m. He might also be requested to attend school on a day, such as a Staff Inservice Day, or during Parent Teacher meetings.
- (k) The pupil may lose privileges-he may be barred from school tours or day-trips or he may be banned from representing the school in sporting fixtures.
- (l) A White Card may be sent to the parents indicating a particular misdemeanour or repeated incidents of misbehaviour. All such cards must be signed and returned to the school the following day.
- (m) The pupil may be put on Report for a number of days – his parents will be expected to sign the Report Card every evening.
- (n) The students may be referred to the Guidance Counsellor, or to the National Educational Psychological Service for diagnostic assessment.
- (o) The student may be moved to another class group.
- (p) A written apology may be required from the student.
- (q) Parents may be given a formal written warning about their son's misbehaviour and the possible consequences if there is no improvement.
- (r) The students may be asked to sign a Contract of Good Behaviour, which will be witnessed by one of his parents/guardians and by the Principal or Deputy-Principal.
- (s) A formal report may be sent to the Board of Management.
- (t) The school may require that a student sit in-house examinations at home rather than in school.
- (u) Serious misbehaviour may be dealt with by means of **suspension or expulsion.** These are dealt with in separate policies attached to this Code.
- (v)The student may be given a reduced timetable with the agreement of his Parents/Guardians.
- (w)Extra teaching hours may be sought from the Department of Education so that the student may be helped on a one to one basis in school.
- (x)Home-Tuition hours may be sought from the Department of Education so that the student will still receive an education even though the school system cannot cope with his continuing misbehaviour and disruption.
- (y)A particularly troublesome student may be put on a reduced timetable following consultations with the National Educational Welfare Board.

Specific Sanctions

- (a) The issue of mobile phones and their misuse is dealt with in a separate Policy on Mobile Phone use.
- (b) Any student bringing the school into disrepute by fighting, by entering licensed premises, by shoplifting or causing problems outside or in any local business premises while on the way to school, during lunchtime or on the way from school is liable to be suspended.
- (c) Students with blatantly unacceptable hairstyles may be asked to remain at home for a number of days.
- (d) Offensive material or banned items such as cigarettes, tippex, lasers and jewellery may be confiscated and returned to parents at a later date, if requested.
- (e) Fines not exceeding €7 may be levied for offences such as smoking or chewing gum..
- (f) Students in breach of the school uniform code may be dealt with initially by means of a warning. Contact with parents, detention at lunchtime, in house detention or written punishment may follow. Repeated breaches may lead to suspension.
- (g) In extreme cases, where the school authorities feel that there are reasonable grounds for believing that a student may behave in a threatening or disruptive manner during the Leaving, Leaving Cert. Applied or Junior Cert. Examinations, the school may open negotiations with the State Examination Commissions to have the said student sit some or all of his exams elsewhere.
- (h) Students who leave the School grounds without a note from their parents and without signing the Day Book and getting permission from the Principal, Deputy-Principal, or Year Head are liable to be detained at lunchtime for a period not exceeding five school days. Repeated offences may lead to a suspension for a maximum of three school days or being asked to come to school on a day when the rest of the students are free.

Fair Procedure

- (a) In dealing with potential disciplinary cases the Principal and Board will ensure that no student is discriminated against on any of the following grounds:
 - marital status
 - family status
 - sexual orientation
 - religion
 - age
 - disability
 - race
 - membership of the Travelling Community
 - victimisation
- (b) The Board of Management will also ensure that the implementation of these procedures will take into account such factors as:
 - (a) The age and state of health of the pupil
 - (b) The pupil's previous record at the school

- (c) Any particular circumstances unique to the pupil which might sensibly be taken into account in connection with the behaviour, e.g; strained or traumatic domestic situations.
- (d) The extent to which parental, peer or other pressure may have contributed to the behaviour
- (e) The degree of severity of the behaviour, the frequency of its occurrence and the likelihood of its recurring;
- (f) Whether or not the behaviour impaired or will impair the normal functioning of the pupil or other pupils in the school;

Right of Appeal

Parents are advised of their right to appeal a decision of:

- (i) a Teacher to the Principal
- (ii) a Year Head to the Principal
- (iii) the Deputy Principal/Principal to the Board of Management
- (iv) the Board of Management to the Minister for Education or to an authority delegated for such appeal by the Minister under Section 29 of the Education Act 1998.

Dealing with concerns and complaints

Teachers, parents and students may raise any concerns they may have about behaviour or about any aspect of the Code of Behaviour at Staff Meetings, Parent Council or Student Council meetings respectively.

They may also request a meeting with the Principal or Deputy – Principal to discuss their concerns. Such complaints will be dealt with in good faith and with an open mind.

Parents and students will be made aware of the appeal procedures available under section 29 of the Education Act 1998.

Notification of a child's absence from school

Parents are obliged to let the school know of their child's absence for any reason. The school provides a booklet of Absence Notes for this purpose. Such notes should be placed in the relevant box outside the Deputy-Principal's office when the student returns to school. In order to comply with NEWB Reporting Procedures the exact reason for the absence must be indicated.

The school operates an electronic registration system and students are expected, when requested, to swipe in every morning. If students have not registered a text message may be sent to parents. Parents need only respond if they believe their son is in school.

If no notification is provided by parents for a student's absence the parents will be written to and if that fails to produce results the parents will be sent for and reminded of their obligation to support the schools Code of Behaviour and Procedures and of their undertaking to do so at the beginning of the school year.

The Trustees of the Edmund Rice Schools Trust have reviewed this policy and agreed to its publication in accordance with Section 15 of the Education Act 1998. Their agreement was given on October 1st 2010.

This policy was revised by the Board of Management of the Abbey School at its meeting on May 23rd 2013 and comes into effect from that date.

Appendix 1

School Rules

1. While in School each student is subject to the authority of the Principal, Deputy-Principal and each member of the teaching staff. Pupils are required to show respect to all staff members at all times. They are also required to treat their fellow students and their property with care and consideration.
2. Students are to cooperate fully in the work of the class, to present homework on time and to make every effort to achieve their full potential in all school activities.
3. (a) Students are expected to be regular in their attendance and to be on time morning and afternoon and to use the electronic registration system when requested.
(b) Students may not leave the school at anytime, without written permission from their parents/guardians and after meeting the Principal, Deputy-Principal or Year Head. They must sign a Day Book if leaving the school during class time and when they return.
(c) Reasons for absence or lateness must be in writing and must be placed in a designated box opposite the Deputy-Principal's Office before the student goes to class on the next day that he is in school.
4. Due care must be taken of school property and facilities. Any damage must be reported to the Principal, Deputy - Principal or Year Head and the student may be asked to pay for all or part of the damage caused. Litter should be placed in the bins provided. Only bottles of water may be carried by hand when moving from class to class. Other bottles will be confiscated.
5. Students are to walk about the building in an orderly fashion and on the left – hand side of corridors. Students are obliged to rent a locker in order to store their property.
6. The school uniform, including **Black** Footwear is obligatory and should be worn neatly. White Runners are not allowed in class. Coloured Tee Shirts should not be visible around the neck. Coats, Jackets etc. must be left in lockers. **No jewellery of any sort is allowed.** Studs, bars or rings in nose, ear, eyebrow, tongue etc. are strictly forbidden. It does not suffice to cover them. Hair is to be kept neat and tidy and students should shave regularly. Extravagant hair styles such as fully or partially shaved heads, dyed hair and number one cuts or less are unacceptable.
7. The possession or consumption of alcohol, tobacco or any prohibited substance is not permitted within the school environs, on school trips or during school related activities. **Chewing Gum** is banned within the buildings.

8. Students may not cycle or drive on the school premises and students should enter and leave by the designated gates.
9. The use of mobile phones by students is not allowed during class or at any stage in the school building. Please note that a student phone is located outside the Secretary's Office. Tippex and lasers are banned in school.
10. Any behaviour by a student which brings the school into disrepute while he is in school uniform or taking part in a school related activity outside school is liable to be dealt with severely.
11. The use of camera phones to make video or sound recordings of students or staff members and the circulation of these recordings by any means, including the publishing of them on internet sites such as You Tube, is strictly forbidden. Abuses in this area will be taken very seriously and will be dealt with under the Code of Behaviour and the Anti-Bullying Policy.

Bullying which takes the form of making abusive or derogatory comments about individuals through the medium of text messaging or by phone is strictly forbidden.

Appendix 2

Policy on Suspension of a student

Suspension is defined as requiring the student to absent himself from the school for a specified limited period of school days. During the period of suspension the student retains their place in the school.

Normally, other interventions will have been tried before suspension and the school authorities 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 seriously detrimental effect on the education of other students
- ❑ 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 i.e aggressively challenging a teacher's authority, violence, threats of violence, presence of weapons, illegal drugs, gross indecency, theft etc. or where the student has, by his actions, seriously brought the school into disrepute.

Students will not usually be suspended for poor academic performance or poor attendance. However, any behaviour that is persistently disruptive or potentially dangerous may lead to suspension being considered. In such cases relevant interventions and sanctions outlined in the Code of Behaviour will have already been tried and parents will have been given details of the relevant unacceptable behaviour.

Suspension allows students time to reflect on their unacceptable behaviour, to accept responsibility for the behaviour which led to the suspension and furthermore to accept responsibility for changing their behaviour to meet the school's expectations in the future.

Procedures in respect of suspension

Where a preliminary assessment of the facts confirms serious misbehaviour that could warrant suspension, the following procedures will be observed:

- ❑ The student and his parents will be informed about the complaint
- ❑ Parents and the student will be given an opportunity to respond

Parents may be informed by phone or in writing, depending on the seriousness of the matter.

If a student and his parents fail to attend a meeting the Principal will write advising of the gravity of the matter, the importance of attending a re-scheduled meeting and, failing that, the duty of the school authorities to make a decision to respond to the negative behaviour. In some cases the school may ask that the pupil remain at home until such time as the parents respond to a request to come to the school.

If suspension is to be immediate the student will be supervised until he is collected by his parent(s) or their representative or until the end of the particular school day. No student will be sent home during the school day unless collected by the parent/legal guardian/parent's representative.

Formal letter notifying Parents of Suspension

The formal letter of notification may include:

- ❑ Notice of the suspension
- ❑ Effective date of the suspension
- ❑ Duration of the suspension
- ❑ Reasons for the suspension
- ❑ Expectations of the student while on suspension (Study Programme may be attached)
- ❑ Importance of parental assistance in resolving the matter
- ❑ A statement that the student is under the care and responsibility of the parents/guardians while on suspension
- ❑ A statement that the Education Welfare Board has been informed if the suspension is longer than 6 days, or the student has been suspended for more than 20 days during school year to date
- ❑ Information on appeal rights (internal school appeal/Section 29 Appeal)
- ❑ Requirements which need to be in place when student returns (e.g. written apology, completed assignments etc.)
- ❑ If consideration is being given to proceeding to expulsion, then the letter will make this clear.

Period of Suspension

It should be clearly understood that the Principal or, in his absence, the Deputy-Principal has the authority, delegated by the Board of Management, to suspend a student for a period of up to three days.

If a suspension longer than three days is being proposed by the Principal the matter should be referred to the Board of Management for consideration and approval, giving the circumstances and the expected outcomes.

The Board has authorised the Principal, following consultation and with the approval of the Chairperson of the Board, to impose a suspension of up to five days in circumstances where a meeting of the Board cannot be convened in a timely fashion.

The Board will not normally suspend a student for more than ten days at a time.

The Board will formally review 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.

Right of Appeal

Parents are advised of their right to appeal a decision to suspend by the Principal or Deputy-Principal to the Board of Management within two calendar days of being informed of the suspension by the Principal or Deputy-Principal.

While suspension may be appealed to the Board or to a subcommittee of the Board, the school may insist that the student remain at home while the appeal process is ongoing and thus, particularly in the case of short suspensions, the suspension may already have been served before an appeal can be heard. If such an appeal is successful, the only remedy may be to have the suspension removed from the students file or record.

Suspensions over 20 days cumulative may be appealed by a parent or by a student (over 18 years) under section 29 of the Education Act 1998 as amended by the Education (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2007. Information about how to appeal will be given to parents and students.

Grounds for removing a suspension

A suspension may be removed if the Board of Management decided to remove the suspension for any reason or if 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.

Readmitting a students after a period of suspension

- (i) Parents will be requested to attend with the pupil on the day of his return to school.
- (ii) Both parents may be requested to give in writing an undertaking on behalf of the pupil of future good behaviour and a similar written undertaking may be requested from the pupil. In the event of non-cooperation from parents or pupil, further action will be at the discretion of the Principal.
- (iii) The pupil may be readmitted for a probationary period where the parents might be obliged to call regularly to the school to discuss the pupil's progress and conduct.

Records and Reports

Formal written records will be kept of:

- The investigation (including notes of all interviews held)
- The decision-making process
- The duration of the suspension and any conditions attached to the suspension

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

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

Review of use of suspension

The Board of Management will review the use of suspension in the school at regular intervals 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 that use of suspension is appropriate and effective.

Appendix 3

Policy on Expulsion

A student is deemed to be expelled from a school when the Board of Management makes a decision to permanently exclude him from the school, having complied with the provisions of section 24 of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000. Only the Board has the authority to expel a student.

Expulsion is the ultimate sanction available to the school and it can only be exercised by the Board of Management in extreme cases of indiscipline.

The Board of Management and the Principal in implementing these procedures will have regard to their responsibilities to the whole school community, to the Principles of Natural Justice and to the commitments given in the Code of Behaviour.

Reasons

Reasons for the expulsion of a pupil must be linked to the Code of Behaviour. Parents/Guardians will have signed a statement at the beginning of the school year that they have read, understood and accept the Code.

What circumstances would justify Expulsion?

- (a) Where the in-discipline of a pupil is so pervasive that teaching and learning become extremely difficult. Some examples would include:
 - The pupil is so disruptive that he is seriously preventing other pupils from learning

- The pupil is uncontrollable and is not amenable to any form of school discipline or authority
 - The parents are unable, or refuse, to exercise their responsibility for the pupil
 - The pupils conduct is a source of serious bad example and is having an adverse influence on other pupils in the school
 - The pupil is a danger to himself or to others
 - When after continual suspensions, guarantees of reasonable behaviour are not forthcoming from parents.
- (b) First time offences of a very serious nature. Some examples would include:
- Serious assault
 - Trafficking in drugs
 - Arriving in school under the influence of alcohol or drugs
 - Burglary or theft
 - Causing major damage to school property
 - Gross insubordination to the Principal or members of staff.
 - Gross indecency

Procedures in respect of expulsion

Where a preliminary assessment of the facts confirms serious misbehaviour that could warrant expulsion the following procedures will apply:

Step 1

A detailed investigation will be carried out under the direction of the Principal.

The student and his parents will be informed in writing about the details of the of the alleged misbehaviour, the fact that expulsion might possibly arise and the procedures that will be followed.

Parents and students will be given every opportunity to put their side of the case and to respond to the allegation of serious misbehaviour at an initial meeting with the Principal. This is particularly important when there is a dispute about the facts. This meeting may also allow an opportunity for parents to make their case for a lesser sanction and for the school to explore how best to address the student's behaviour.

If the student and his parents fail to attend this meeting the Principal will write advising them of the gravity of the matter, the importance of attending a re-scheduled meeting and, failing that, the duty of the school authorities, to make a decision to respond to the inappropriate behaviour.

Step 2

If in the judgement of the Principal a pupil's actions are such that serious disciplinary measures might have to be considered, the Principal will refer the matter to the Board of Discipline. The Board of Discipline consists of three Year Heads, nominated by the Principal, who have had no previous involvement in the case.

The Board of Discipline will interview the student in the company of his parents/guardians and will review the case bearing in mind the students past

record and reports made on him by teachers, Year Head etc. The Principal and Deputy-Principal will also have an input at this meeting.

Following the withdrawal of the Principal, Deputy-Principal, Parents and student the Board of Discipline will either:

(a) refer the matter back to the Principal to be dealt with by him by means of a sanction or sanctions outlined in the Code. The Board of Discipline may issue a warning as to his future conduct to the student and his parents.

or

(b) recommend that the Principal refers the matter to the Board of Management.

Step 3

A recommendation to the Board of Management by the Principal

Where the Principal forms a view, based on the investigation of the alleged misbehaviour and the recommendation of the Board of Discipline that expulsion may be warranted, the Principal makes a recommendation to the Board of Management to consider expulsion. The Principal will:

- ❑ inform the parents and the student that the Board of Management is being asked to consider expulsion
- ❑ ensure that parents have records of : the allegations against the student; the investigation; and written notice of the grounds on which the Board of Management is being asked to consider expulsion
- ❑ provide the Board of Management with the same comprehensive records as are given to parents
- ❑ notify the parents of the date of the hearing by the Board of Management and invite them to that hearing
- ❑ advise the parents that they can make a written and oral submission to the Board of Management
- ❑ ensure that parents have enough notice to allow them to prepare for the hearing

Step 4

Consideration by the Board of Management of the Principal's recommendations and the holding of a hearing

The Board will review the initial investigation and satisfy itself that the investigation was properly conducted in line with fair procedures. The Board will undertake its own review of all documentation and the circumstances of the case. It will ensure that no party who has had any involvement with the circumstances of the case is part of the Board's deliberations (for example, a member of the Board who may have made an allegation about the student).

Where the Board of Management decides to consider expelling a student, it will hold a hearing. The Board meeting for the purpose of the hearing will be properly conducted in accordance with Board procedures. At the hearing, the Principal and the parents, or a student aged eighteen years or over, will put their case to the Board in each other's presence. Each party will be allowed to question the evidence of the other party directly. The meeting may also be an opportunity for parents to make their case for lessening the sanction. In the conduct of the hearing, the Board will take care to ensure that they are, and are seen to be, impartial as between the Principal and the

student. Parents may wish to be accompanied at hearings and the Board will facilitate this, in line with good practice and Board procedures.

After both sides have been heard, the Board will ensure that the Principal and parents are not present for the Board's deliberations.

Step 5

Board of Management deliberations and actions following the hearing

Having heard from all the parties, it is the responsibility of the Board to decide whether or not the allegation is substantiated and, if so, whether or not expulsion is the appropriate sanction.

Where the Board of Management, having considered all the facts of the case, is of the opinion that the student should be expelled, the Board will notify the Educational Welfare Officer in writing of its opinion, and the reasons for this opinion. (Education (Welfare) Act 2000, s24(1)). The student cannot be expelled before the passage of twenty school days from the date on which the EWO receives this written notification (Education (Welfare) Act 2000, s24(1)).

The Board will inform the parents in writing about its conclusions and the next steps in the process. Where expulsion is proposed, the parents will be told that the Board of Management will now inform the Educational Welfare Officer.

Step 6

Consultations arranged by the Educational Welfare Officer

Within twenty days of receipt of a notification from the Board of Management of its opinion that a student be expelled, the Educational Welfare Officer must:

- ❑ make all reasonable efforts to hold individual consultations with the Principal, the parents and the students and anyone else who may be of assistance
- ❑ convene a meeting of those parties who agree to attend (Education (Welfare) Act 2000, section 24).

The purpose of the consultations and the meeting is to ensure that arrangements are made for the student to continue in education. These consultations may result in an agreement about an alternative intervention that would avoid expulsion. However, where the possibility of continuing in the school is not an option, at least in the short term, the consultation should focus on alternative educational possibilities.

Pending these consultations about the student's continued education, the Board of Management may take steps to ensure that good order is maintained and that the safety of students is secured (Education (Welfare) Act 2000, s24(5)). The Board may consider it appropriate to suspend a student during this time. Suspension will only be considered where there is a likelihood that the continued presence of the student during this time will seriously disrupt the learning of others, or represent a threat to the safety of other students or staff.

Step 7

Confirmation of the decision to expel

Where the twenty-day period following notification to the Educational Welfare Officer has elapsed, and where the Board of Management remains of the view that the student should be expelled, the Board of Management will formally confirm the decision to expel (this task may be delegated to the Chairperson and the Principal by the Board of Management). Parents will be notified immediately that the expulsion will now proceed. Parents and the student will be told about the right to appeal and supplied with the standard form on which to lodge an appeal. A formal record will be made of the decision to expel the student.

Appeals

A parent, or a student aged over eighteen years, may appeal a decision to expel to the Secretary General of the Department of Education (Education Act 1998 section 29). An appeal may also be brought by the National Educational Welfare Board on behalf of a student.

Review of use of expulsion

The Board of Management will review the use of expulsion in the school at regular intervals 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 that expulsion is used appropriately.

Appendix 4

ANTI – BULLYING POLICY

Preamble

The School acknowledges the uniqueness of each individual student, his worth as a human being and his right to enjoy school in a secure environment. We aim to promote positive habits of self-respect, self – discipline and responsibility among all our students. We also promote qualities of social responsibility, tolerance and understanding among all both in school and out of school.

As we strive then to be a community in which mutual respect, co-operation and natural justice are integral features it is plainly obvious that bullying of any sort can have no place in the Abbey School.

Staff members share a collegiate responsibility, under the direction of the Principal, to act in preventing bullying/aggressive behaviour by any member of the school.

The purpose of this policy is to seek to protect all members of our school community from being bullied. In September 1993, the Department of Education issued Guidelines on countering bullying behaviour in Primary and Post Primary schools.

The guidelines say that:

“The role of the school is to provide the highest possible standard of education for all its pupils. A stable secure learning environment is an essential requirement to achieve this goal. Bullying behaviour, by its very nature, undermines and dilutes the quality of education and imposes psychological damage. As such, it is an issue, which must be positively and firmly addressed through a range of school-based measures and strategies through which all members of the school community are enabled to act effectively in dealing with this behaviour”

The Abbey C.B.S. strongly supports this view.

WHAT IS BULLYING?

Bullying is repeated aggression, verbal, psychological or physical, conducted by an individual or group against others.

Bullying generally takes the form of physical aggression, damage to property, extortion, intimidation, abusive telephone calls or text messages, isolation, name calling or slugging.

Pupils who are being bullied may develop feelings of insecurity and extreme anxiety and thus may become more vulnerable. Self-confidence may be damaged with a consequent lowering of their self-esteem and changes in mood and behaviour.

INDICATIONS OF BULLYING BEHAVIOUR

The following signs/symptoms may suggest that a pupil is being bullied:

- anxiety about travelling to and from school, requesting parents to drive or collect them, changing their route of travel, avoiding regular times for travelling to and from school;
- unwillingness to go to school, refusal to attend, mitching;
- deterioration in educational performance, loss of concentration and loss of enthusiasm and interest in school;
- pattern of physical illnesses, for example, headaches, stomach aches;
- unexplained changes either in mood or behaviour; it may be particularly noticeable before returning to school after weekends or more especially after longer school holidays;
- visible signs of anxiety or distress, stammering, withdrawing, nightmares, difficulty in sleeping, crying, not eating, vomiting, bedwetting;
- spontaneous out-of-character comments about either pupils or teachers;

- possessions missing or damaged;
- increased requests for money or stealing money;
- unexplained bruising or cuts or damaged clothing;
- reluctance and/or refusal to say what is troubling him or her.

Those signs do not necessarily mean that a pupil is being bullied. If repeated or occurring in combination those signs do warrant investigation in order to establish what is affecting the pupil.

IMPLEMENTATION OF POLICY

1. Students will be regularly reminded to disclose and discuss incidents of bullying behaviour with their parents and/or a teacher.
2. It will be made clear to all pupils that when they report incidents of bullying they are not telling tales but are behaving responsibly.
3. Students who may be nervous about reporting incidents of bullying will be encouraged to use the Suggestion Box located outside the Secretary's Office to make their initial complaint.
4. The School Authorities will endeavour to protect any student making a justifiable complaint against retaliation or intimidation and every effort will be made to protect them against the accusation of being tell-tales.
5. All interviews will be conducted with sensitivity and with due regard to the rights of all pupils involved. All students involved may be asked to provide a written report of the alleged incident in order to help with the investigation.
6. Parents will also be reminded that disclosure is the best counter – bullying strategy. Parents are strongly encouraged to contact the school as soon as they suspect their son is being subjected to bullying behaviour. A record will be kept of such incidents and the matter will be dealt with seriously.
7. Parents of each incoming student will be asked if their son has ever been a victim of bullying, either in school or outside school. A particular watch will be kept on students who have not related well to each other in the past and where one is reported as having bullied the other. Such students will not be put in the same class in First Year.
8. The Principal and teachers will provide supervision and monitoring measures through which all areas of school activity are kept under observation, as far as is reasonably possible.
9. Year Heads will investigate and deal with incidents of bullying behaviour.

10. Parents or Guardians of victims and bullies will be informed earlier rather than later of incidents so that they are given the opportunity of discussing the matter before a crisis occurs.
11. Offenders will be referred to the Guidance Counsellor and possibly to the National Educational Psychological Service for assessment.
12. Repeated bullying behaviour by a student can lead to the sanctions of suspension and/or expulsion being invoked.

SANCTIONS

A record will be kept of bullying incidents. Pupils are made aware that if they are involved in bullying the following will happen:

1. If you are involved you will be warned to stop.
2. If you do not stop your parents will be informed.
3. If the incident is particularly serious you may be suspended.

Other sanctions that might be used could include withdrawal of privileges, and the other sanctions listed in the Code of Behaviour.

GENERAL POINTS

- A child who has high self-esteem is most unlikely to be the victim of long-term bullying. Parents can help to build up self-esteem in their children, by encouraging them, by making them feel good about their appearance and getting them involved in activities inside and outside school. Any activities which leads to a sense of achievement will help build self-esteem.
- Sometimes a child may be over-sensitive. They need to learn to tell the difference between the kind of treatment almost everybody is subjected to from time to time (e.g. slagging in fun) and behaviour where there is a deliberate intention to hurt.
- Teachers will use aspects of the curriculum to raise awareness of the inappropriateness of bullying behaviour.
- The school will seek opportunities to enhance the self-worth of all pupils.
- The school will seek to provide a wide range of extra-curricular activities that are open to all pupils.

Evaluation

This policy will be reviewed in the light of experience and at least every two years. It has been drawn up in accordance with the Department of Education "Guidelines on Countering Bullying Behaviour in Primary and Post-Primary Schools" published in September 1993.

Appendix 5

Policy on Mobile Phone Use

1. No student is allowed to have a mobile phone, which is powered on, at any stage in the school building.
2. Any student found with a phone in class or between classes will have that phone confiscated (including the Sim Card) for three days for a first offence, one week for a second offence and three weeks for a third offence. In the case of a third or subsequent offence the phone will only be returned to the student's parent at the school.
All phones taken from students must first be turned off by that student.
3. Any student refusing to hand up a phone (including the Sim Card) will be treated as defiant under the Code of Behaviour.
4. Any student caught photographing or recording a teacher or student in school without their permission will be dealt with severely and in addition to having his phone confiscated (as outlined in (2) above), he may also be dealt with by means of a suspension of up to three days or in extreme cases the Principal may report the matter to the Board of Discipline.
5. Students will be allowed have their mobile phones in their school bags during Evening Study once they are turned off.
6. Students have the use of a phone outside the Secretary's office and the use of the Office phone in emergencies.
7. Students may use a mobile phone during morning break, during lunchtime and before evening study but not while they are in the school building.