



St Paul's Secondary School

Care - Inclusion -  
Respect

# Code of Behaviour and Learning Code

Ratified: 9 June 2021

To be reviewed: June

## Introduction

St. Paul's Secondary School is a Catholic voluntary secondary school, under the trusteeship of Le Chéile Schools Trust. The school values the role of parents in the education of their children and seeks to work in partnership with parents. By enrolling their daughters in St. Paul's, parents indicate their support of the ethos of the school and acceptance of the Code of Behaviour and Learning Code.

St Paul's is a caring, inclusive and respectful learning community which nurtures the wellbeing and the academic, spiritual and creative growth of every student. We embrace diversity and recognise that everyone is unique and has a positive contribution to make.

Our core values – **Care, Inclusion, Respect** – guide our policies, our procedures and how we work with our staff, students and parents.

**Care** – We nurture a sense of belonging. We create a safe, friendly, supportive and vibrant school community where everyone can achieve their full potential.

**Inclusion** – We welcome diversity and value the individuality of each student. We recognise that every member of our school community has a positive contribution to make.

**Respect** – We build our school on the values of mutual respect, hope and personal responsibility, We do this by making the right choices and committing to teaching and learning.

## Scope of this Policy

This Code of Behaviour applies to all students in St Paul's Secondary School while in school, while travelling to or from school and while attending or participating in any school activities, trips, sporting or cultural events. The code applies to the use of St Paul's Secondary School website and encompasses the school's *Acceptable Use Policy*.

In this Policy 'Parent' will mean Parent or Guardian.

A shortened, more student-friendly version of the Code of Behaviour is included as an addendum to this policy and is outlined in the school journal, a copy of which is given to each student at the beginning of the school year.

## Aims and Objectives of St Paul's Secondary School Code of Behaviour

- to promote an atmosphere of mutual respect throughout the school community
- to foster a positive and motivational learning environment
- to encourage good behaviour and protect the right of all students to learn
- to preserve a safe and orderly environment in and around the school
- to encourage students to value and respect school property and the general environment
- to maintain a consistent approach to classroom management and strategies for promoting good behaviour

## Expectations of our Students

*At St. Paul's Secondary School, we expect that students will*

- attend school regularly
- arrive on time to school and to class
- follow correct procedures if arriving late or leaving before the end of the school day
- bring all necessary materials / textbooks and Student Journal to class
- work to the best of their ability
- complete all homework on time and to the best of their ability
- produce school journal on request
- wear the correct school uniform at all times. The wearing of inappropriate emblems/badges is not permitted.
- show respect for members of staff, for themselves and for their peers
- address and greet staff appropriately
- show acceptance of differing personalities and respect for the needs, rights, opinions and cultural backgrounds of others
- participate in religious services in a reverent manner
- respect all school property and the property of others
- ensure the safe keeping of their own property by clearly labelling it and using the school lockers
- adhere to the school's mobile phone and digital device policy
- keep the school tidy and litter free
- as a school promoting healthy eating, energy drinks are not permitted
- avoid using improper or offensive language, fighting and name-calling
- move quietly around the school and avoid causing disturbance
- participate in school activities

## Positive Behaviour

*In St Paul's Secondary School, we aim to promote positive behaviour which encourages respect for each individual, the school environment and equipment, co-operation with each other and opportunities for learning. The reward systems which are in place for excellent behaviour are as follows;*

- Praise by teacher, form tutor, Year Head, Deputy Principal, Principal
- A merit is recorded in VShare and is visible on the student's profile for parents to view
- Phone call to / Meeting with parent/guardian
- Student of the Month
- Class of the Month
- Most Improved Student Award
- Recognition at Monthly Assemblies
- Showcase on school social media - Website, Facebook, Twitter
- An annual prize giving ceremony is held at the end of the school year. The talents, achievements and efforts of students, across all aspects of school life, including attendance are acknowledged and rewarded.

## Supports for Learners

*St. Paul's Secondary School believes strongly in providing every possible support to allow students to succeed and excel. Here are some of the supports available to our students;*

- Class Teacher
- Form Tutor
- Year Head
- Care Team
- Special Educational Needs Department
- Guidance Counsellor
- Home School Liaison Teacher
- Friendship/Resilience Programmes
- Oratory
- Individual Behaviour/Organisation Plans
- Support Books
- Merit Competitions/Student of the Month
- Supervised Study

## Additional Student Supports

*Students are supported and affirmed in the following ways:*

- Guidance Counselling support
- a strong pastoral care system
- a wide range of extra-curricular activities
- an active Student Council
- delegation of duties and responsibilities to students elected as prefects, class captains and vice captains, sports representatives, and members of the Student Council
- delegation of duties and responsibilities to students involved in various extra-curricular school groups / committees
- an annual awards ceremony

*This list is not exhaustive*

## Addressing Unacceptable Behaviour

- All members of staff have a responsibility to promote good order and positive student behaviour on school premises and on school-related activities
- The subject teacher is responsible for the management of behaviour in his / her classroom and is expected to address minor infringements of the Code as they arise
- Serious misbehaviour within the classroom or repetitive minor infringements of the Code may be referred by the subject teacher to the Form Teacher or Year Head, as appropriate
- Form Teachers have an agreed pastoral role and when dealing with disciplinary issues may consult the Year Head
- Year Heads have a specific role in managing the behaviour of students in a particular year group. They usually deal (though not exclusively) with more serious misbehaviour or persistent minor infringements
- If a Year Head is concerned about the persistent misbehaviour of a student, that student may be referred directly to the Deputy Principal / Principal

- In the case of a very serious incident a student may be sent directly to the Principal or Deputy Principal
- Where there are repeated instances of more serious misbehaviour, parents will be requested to attend at the school to meet the Principal / Deputy Principal

The School Code of Behaviour is based on an initial pastoral approach to resolving problems. Instances of misbehaviour should be addressed as soon as possible. Sanctions may be required where expectations regarding student behaviour are not met.

The purpose of a sanction is:

- to prevent the disruption of teaching and learning
- to help the student understand why her behaviour is unacceptable
- to help her recognise the effect of her action and behaviour on others
- to help her to take responsibility
- to ensure the safety of the student and others in the school community
- to involve the student in planning a positive way forward

Sanctions should be fair and proportionate, and should take account of the individual circumstances of the student.

**Minor misbehaviour** may be regarded as a situation where a student who generally observes the required standards of behaviour has breached a minor school rule. The breach is usually dealt with immediately by the member of staff involved. Students are expected to respond appropriately. Any breach of a minor rule may be aggravated and become more serious when a student responds inappropriately.

**More serious misbehaviour** usually involves referral of the student concerned to the Year Head, Deputy Principal or Principal. More serious misbehaviour is recorded and the issue is generally discussed with parents and their cooperation in addressing the problem is requested. More serious misbehaviour may be aggravated and deemed unacceptable when a student refuses to cooperate.

**Gross Misbehaviour** is regarded as misbehaviour which is totally unacceptable and / or dangerous, and / or anti-social.

It includes:

- drugs or alcohol related incidents, including supply, possession or use of either (see *Substance Use Policy*)
- physical violence or threat of physical violence to another person
- aggressive, threatening or violent behaviour towards a teacher or any member of the school community
- bullying, including on-line bullying (see *Anti-Bullying Policy and Procedures, ICT Policy and Acceptable Use Policy*)
- downloading, reproducing or publishing online or offline, any material published on the school website without the written permission of the Principal and/or the owner of the material
- accessing, possession or dissemination of pornographic material
- theft
- serious damage to school property
- an unacceptable level of repeated serious misbehaviour

- a situation where the student's continued presence in the school constitutes a threat to her own safety or that of others
- behaviour contrary to the *Equal Status Acts 2000-2004*. This legislation strictly prohibits any form of discrimination pertaining to an individual's gender, marital status, family status, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, race and membership of the traveller community
- harassment or sexual harassment

The following strategies may be used in cases of unacceptable behaviour:

- reasoning with the student
- verbal reprimand including advice on appropriate behaviour & how to improve
- a note in the school journal
- change of seating arrangement within the class
- temporary withdrawal from a particular lesson or activity to a supervised location;
- monitoring / *on report*
- record on student's file
- confiscation
- repair, replacement or compensation for damage to property
- Year Head detention (with adequate prior notice)
- suspension from participating in school trips / extra-curricular activities/TY activity
- student review
- moving the student to a different Form Class
- referral to Deputy Principal or Principal
- formal report to the Board of Management
- suspension
- expulsion

*The list is not exhaustive and any one or combination of responses may be appropriate.*

## Suspension & Expulsion

The principles of natural justice will apply where a student is suspended or there is a proposal to expel. The procedures laid down in the NEWB Guidelines for Schools (2008) and Procedures for hearing and determining appeals under Sections 29(1)(a) and 29(1)(b) of the Education Act, 1998 (2020) will be followed.

There may be cases of unacceptable behaviour, where it will be necessary to remove a student from school for a period of time or for the Board of Management to expel a student permanently from the school.

Only the school Principal may suspend a student from school. The Principal has authority, under the "*Articles of Management for Secondary Schools*" to suspend "any pupil for a limited period and shall report any such suspension to the Board of Management at its next meeting." [Article 19(b)] The Principal may suspend a student for a period of three days without recourse to the Board. When the Principal deems a longer suspension necessary, the matter will be referred to the Board of Management for approval. Where it is impracticable to convene a meeting of the Board within that timeframe, the Principal may impose a suspension of up to five consecutive days with the sole approval of the Chairperson.

A student may be suspended, pending investigation and discussion with parent(s) /guardian(s), for gross misbehaviour or any single incident of serious misconduct.

In exceptional circumstances, the principal may consider an immediate suspension to be necessary where the continued presence of a student in the school at the time would present a threat to safety

The school will endeavour to work with parents, with a view to assisting a student who has been suspended to improve her behaviour so that she may re-join the school community as soon as possible.

### Procedure (Suspension)

In all instances where suspension is applied, parents will be contacted and notified. In most instances parents will be asked to meet with the Principal, Deputy Principal or person acting on the authority of the Principal, to discuss the matter.

In the case of an immediate suspension, parents will be notified and arrangements will be made with them for their daughter to be collected from school.

In all cases, a formal letter of notification will be sent to parents.

All suspensions are recorded in the student's file and are reported to the Board of Management.

A parent may be requested to accompany the student to school on her return and meet with the Year Head, Deputy Principal or Principal, before attending class.

Parents may be requested to agree to certain interventions to assist the student e.g. referral of the student for educational psychological assessment, counselling or other pastoral support services.

### Appeals

*A parent or a student over 18 years of age may appeal, in writing, a suspension by the Principal to the Board of Management*

That letter of appeal addressed to the Secretary of the Board of Management, must set out the grounds for the appeal

The appeals process will at all times follow the principles of natural justice:

- Appellants have the right to be made aware of all details relating to all allegations against the student
- The parents and the Principal will present their arguments to the Board after which they will leave the meeting while the decision is being made
- Parents and the Principal may be asked to remain available to the Board who may seek further clarification
- The decision of the Board will be communicated in writing to the parents
- If dissatisfied the appellants have the right to appeal in accordance with Section 29 of the Education Act (1998) to the Educational Welfare Services of the Child and Family Agency (TUSLA)

It is possible that the suspension may be served before the appeal hearing by the Board of Management. In this case, if the appeal is successful, the record of suspension will be removed from the student's file.

The school is obliged to inform the Educational Welfare Services of the Child and Family Agency (TUSLA) pursuant to section 21(4) (a) of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000:

- If the suspension is longer than 6 days **or**
- If the student has been suspended for a cumulative total of more than 20 days during the school year.

The Board will review formally 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 20 days or more. Where the total number of days for which a student is suspended in one school year reaches 20, parents will be informed in writing of their right of appeal pursuant to *section 29 of the Education Act 1998*.

## Expulsion

The Board of Management alone has the power to expel a student

While it is impossible to foresee every eventuality, the following represent situations where expulsion may be considered:

- the student's actions pose a real threat to the health, safety and welfare of others
- the student's actions constitute a continuous and serious disruption of the learning of others
- the student concerned can no longer benefit by remaining in this school
- when the student concerned has, through continued misconduct, displayed an unwillingness to accept the standards set out in the school Code of Behaviour
- Any other gross misbehaviour

## Procedure (Expulsion)

Where the possibility of the expulsion of a student becomes a consideration, the Principal must refer the concern to the Board of Management. The procedure will be as follows:

- The parents of the student will be informed in writing of the reasons for considering this course of action, and provided with copies of all documents and disciplinary records being made available to the Board of Management
- Pending the outcome of any proceedings, the Principal reserves the right to suspend the student in accordance with Section 24(5) of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000 if, in her opinion, such an action is appropriate to ensure that good order and discipline are maintained, and that the safety of students is secured
- Parents will be invited to attend and present their case to the Board meeting at which the issue will be discussed
- The Principal will present the case to the Board of Management in the presence of the parents
- The parents will present their response
- Both parties will leave the meeting while the Board of Management deliberates
- The Board may further request information from the Principal and parents / student
- In weighing the situation, the Board of Management will take into consideration:
  - the student's record of behaviour
  - the impact of the behaviour on the rights of others

- any mitigating factors affecting the individual's behaviour such as age, record of behaviour, particular personal circumstances

*This list is not exhaustive*

The decision of the Board will be formally communicated to the parents in writing. If the decision is to expel, parents will be informed of their right to appeal to the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Skills in accordance with Section 29 (Education Act 1998)

Under Section 24 of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000 the Board shall, before expelling the student, notify the Education Welfare Officer of its opinion and the reasons for the proposed expulsion

- In accordance with section 24 of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000 the decision to expel will not take effect for 20 school days following receipt of the notice of expulsion by the Educational Welfare Services of the Child and Family Agency (TUSLA)

### Appeals

- Documentation will be supplied in relation to an Appeal under Section 29 with the letter, giving notice of intention to expel
- Appeals must be made within 42 calendar days from the date on which the decision of the school was notified to the parent
- In the event of an appeal being lodged, the Board of Management will cooperate fully in all procedures initiated by the Educational Welfare Services of the Child and Family Agency (TUSLA)

## Monitoring and Review of the Code of Behaviour

*This Code of Behaviour will be monitored and reviewed as necessary.*

**This policy was ratified by the Board of Management on: 10<sup>th</sup> June 2009.**

*Revised by the Board of Management on: 20<sup>th</sup> September 2012*

*Revised by the Board of Management on: 21<sup>st</sup> November 2012*

*Revised by the Board of Management on: 1<sup>st</sup> April 2014*

*Revised by the Board of Management on: 8<sup>th</sup> February 2016*

*Revised by the Board of Management on: 5<sup>th</sup> December 2017*

*Revised by the Board of Management on: 11<sup>th</sup> June 2019*

*Revised by the Board of Management on: 9<sup>th</sup> June 2021*

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_  
Chairperson: Board of Management

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_  
Principal/Secretary: Board of Management

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Our Learning Code 2021-22

*The purpose of the Learning Code is to allow all students to learn and all teachers to teach without disruption. This code clearly lays out what behaviour is expected of all students in St. Paul's Secondary School.*

### **Expectations of our Students**

*At St. Paul's Secondary School, we expect that students will*

- attend school regularly
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### **Attendance**

*Full attendance is expected from each student. School hours are from 8.28am to 3.13pm except on Wednesday when school finishes at 12.47pm.*

- Students are expected to be punctual for all classes
- Students go to their Form Room by 8.28am for registration.
- Students who have been absent from school or who have been allowed home for any reason must bring a written explanation (in Journal) on returning to school.
- Students who are late for school in the morning or afternoon must sign in at Reception or as instructed and have their Journal stamped before being admitted to class. Students who arrive late will not be allowed to interrupt class.
- Each late stamp requires a written explanation.
- Permission to leave school must be granted by the Form Teacher, Year Head or Deputy Principal.

- The School does not accept responsibility for students who absent themselves from school without permission.
- Parents are responsible for ensuring that students do not take holidays during State Examinations.
- Parents/guardians should inform the school if their daughter is absent and give a satisfactory explanation.
- Parents may receive a text message from the school regarding attendance / non-attendance and lateness.
- The Educational Welfare Services (TUSLA) will be notified by the school when a student's absences reach 20 days.

## **Uniform**

*Students are expected to be neat and tidy and full school uniform must be worn at all times.*

- Students may not come to school wearing a tracksuit or runners/canvas shoes.
- The rules regarding PE Uniform must be kept at all times.
- Students may not have hair styles involving unnatural colour or shaved design; any breach of this rule will be deemed to be very serious.
- Where a hijab is worn it must be navy, black or dark green in keeping with the uniform.
- Jewellery should be kept to a minimum and facial jewellery (e.g. nose/eyebrow studs etc.) is strictly against school rules.
- Students may not wear excessive make-up or nail polish.
- False eyelashes, false nails or coloured nail varnish of any type are not allowed.

It is in everyone's interest that standards with regard to uniform are upheld and the support of parents/guardians in ensuring this is very important.

## **Supports for Learners**

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- Form Tutor
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## **Positive Behaviour**

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- A merit is recorded in VShare and is visible on the student's profile for parents to view
- Phone call to / Meeting with parent/guardian
- Student of the Month
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- Recognition at Monthly Assemblies
- Showcase on school social media - Website, Facebook, Twitter
- An annual prize giving ceremony is held at the end of the school year. The talents, achievements and efforts of students, across all aspects of school life, including attendance are acknowledged and rewarded.

## **Disruption to Learning**

*Breaches of the Learning Code cause disruption. Sanctions for dealing with disruption to learning focus on the behaviour, not the person, as the problem. The sanctions are used to help all students appreciate and benefit from a positive learning environment. These behaviours include:*

- Talking, shouting, laughing, making noises, comments or gestures which insult any other person
- Ignoring instructions, asking unnecessary questions, deliberately delaying doing something
- Using inappropriate language
- Taking/damaging property without permission
- Refusal to hand the journal to a member of staff
- Refusing to go to another teacher's room when instructed
- Tampering with the school journal
- Coming late to class without a note
- Coming to class without books, copies, equipment, PE Gear
- Not doing homework including learning homework

*This list is not exhaustive*

## **Procedures for Dealing with Disruption to Learning**

*Outlined below are the procedures for dealing with misconduct. At any stage the Principal/Deputy Principal may be consulted and participate in the process.*

1. Misconduct will be dealt with by the class teacher in the first instance – reasoning with student, reprimand (including advice on how to improve)
2. Disruption to learning will be recorded in VShare and is visible on the student's profile for parents to view. A Demerit note may also be recorded in the journal. This note **must** be signed the evening after they are given by a parent/guardian and **must** be shown to the Class Teacher the next morning at the latest.
3. Repeated misbehaviour will result in referral to the Form Tutor
4. Persistent or serious misbehaviour will be reported to the Year Head
5. A student may be put on report. This report is used to monitor closely attendance, behaviour and/or work effort.



St Paul's Secondary School  
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# LADDER OF REFERRAL SUPPORTS AND SANCTIONS



