

ST. CATHERINE'S VOCATIONAL SCHOOL



SCHOOL CODE OF BEHAVIOUR

1 POLICY

1.1 *A Learning Community*

It will be the function of **St. Catherine's Vocational School** to establish behavioural procedures so that the right to learn is realised and the need to ensure that the values of mutual respect, self-discipline and social responsibility permeate the life of the school community. The school recognises the need to protect the rights of students and to ensure the creation and maintenance of an atmosphere where effective teaching and learning can take place.

1.2 *Safe School for Students*

Every student attending **St. Catherine's Vocational School** has the right to enjoy school life free of bullying. The school promotes positive habits of self-respect, self-discipline and responsibility among all the school community. The school must be safe and secure for everyone. Therefore verbal abuse, physical abuse and other anti-social activities are forbidden.

1.3 *Health Promoting School*

Parents, students and staff of **St. Catherine's Vocational School** are entitled to have a school free of all forms of substance abuse. Consequently, smoking, consumption of alcohol and substance misuse are prohibited.

1.4 *Discipline and Sanctions*

Self-discipline is required of all members of the school community. If and when required, sanctions will be applied by the school in a fair and consistent manner.

In the application of sanctions, the school will make a clear distinction between minor and major misconduct (see Section 3 – Misbehaviour and Appropriate Sanctions).

1.5 *Attendance*

Students who fail to have a satisfactory attendance record will be reported to the relevant state authorities and may be excluded by the State Examination Commission from sitting Public Certificate examinations, in accordance with the Education (Welfare) Act 2000.

2 SCHOOL CODE OF DISCIPLINE

Students will be required to comply with the following code:

2.1 *Respect and Order*

- ❖ Respect for all fellow students.
- ❖ Respectful behaviour towards all staff members.
- ❖ Good behaviour when travelling to and from school.
- ❖ Respect for property of staff and fellow students.
- ❖ Respectful language at all times.
- ❖ Cigarette smoking, alcohol, illicit drugs and substances are prohibited.

- ❖ The possession of catapults, knives, stink bombs, bangers, laser pens and other weapons is forbidden.
- ❖ Use of mobile phones in school building or during periods of instruction is prohibited.
- ❖ Use of personal music players is prohibited in classrooms during periods of instruction.
- ❖ Chewing gum is prohibited in school and school grounds.

2.2 Attendance and Punctuality

Regular attendance at school is expected (i.e. all day, every day). A student absent from school for a day or days must bring a letter of explanation signed by a Parent/Guardian on his/her return to school.

Students are not allowed to leave school during the course of the school day without written permission from a Parent/Guardian. Parents/Guardians must present at the school office when collecting a student. If they are unable to do so, then the written permission must be verified by telephoning the school.

Any student leaving the school early must sign the absence book.
Students must be punctual for all classes.

Visits to toilets, lockers, etc., must be confined to specified breaks. In exceptional circumstances the subject teacher may give permission to make such visits outside of specified breaks.

Mitching or scheming from school or class is regarded as a serious breach of school discipline.

Students are not allowed outside the school grounds during the morning or lunchtime break without permission.

(A student who leaves the school without permission may be suspended from school.)

2.3 Application to Studies

Students must have prescribed textbooks and equipment. All books and other materials required for class must be brought to class. The purchase of the school journal is compulsory and it must be available in class to all teachers at all times. Communications from Parents/Guardians regarding absences should be written into the area in the diary designed for this purpose.

Good behaviour is expected both in class and in all school-related activities. Students who become involved in serious misconduct while wearing the school uniform, whether inside or outside the school grounds, may be liable to sanction.

All homework must be attempted and a genuine effort made to complete it.

2.4 Uniform and Appearance

The complete school uniform must be worn at all times and shall be:

Boys

Navy Jumper
Navy Trousers
Blue Shirt & Tie
Navy/Black Socks
Black Leather Shoes

Girls

Navy Jumper
Navy Trousers/Navy Skirt
Blue Shirt & Tie
Navy/Black Socks/Opaque Tights
Black Leather Shoes

PE: Runners, shorts and sports top

Students are expected to wear complete school uniform during Public Certificate examinations. The school reserves the right to specify what jewellery, accessories, fashion trends are acceptable.

In the interest of safety, facial piercings are not permitted, students may wear stud earrings on the ear lobe.

2.5 Rewards

The school is committed to a policy of recognition, encouragement and reward of positive behaviour. Pupils will be given recognition for:

- ❖ Outstanding achievements;
- ❖ Sporting accomplishments;
- ❖ Extra-curricular success;
- ❖ Good manners and demeanour.

Acknowledgement may take the form of:

- ❖ Praise from staff members, privately and/or publicly;
- ❖ An affirmative note in student's journal;
- ❖ A positive letter home;
- ❖ Announcements made on the intercom;
- ❖ Class rewards such as outings;
- ❖ School prize giving.

Our school aims to encourage each student to fulfil his/her educational potential, academically and in every other respect.

2.6 School Property

The School and Grounds to be kept free from litter.

Damage to school property, equipment or buildings are forbidden. Repair or replacement of property damaged by student(s) must be paid for by them.

The school cannot be held responsible for property lost or stolen. Money and valuables should not be left in school bags, lockers or unattended.

All students may be requested on occasion to participate in the school's "Combat Litter Programme" inside the school and within the school grounds.

3 MISBEHAVIOUR AND APPROPRIATE SANCTIONS

Unacceptable behaviour is defined as follows:

3.1 Misdemeanours

Misdemeanours include isolated minor breaches of school regulations and isolated infringements related to school work, homework, discipline, general order and litter. Standard sanctions in general use may be applied by subject teachers and class teachers, such as:

- ❖ Separation within the classroom.
- ❖ Additional homework such as essays, extra questions or work appropriate to the subject area.
- ❖ Removal from class for brief class under supervision.
- ❖ Report to the Class Tutor.
- ❖ Supervised detention by the teacher.
- ❖ Being assigned tasks within the school building and grounds, e.g. lifting litter, cleaning desks.

3.2 Isolated Breaches of Good Order

Isolated breaches of good order include the following:

- ❖ Use of abusive language;
- ❖ Misbehaviour in class of an isolated nature;

- ❖ A fight between students in the school.
- ❖ A temper tantrum in class.

Sanctions for such offences may include internal or external suspension.

3.3 Continuous Misconduct

Continuous misconduct includes repeated misdemeanours or repeated breaches of good order.

Examples of this type of behaviour include:

- ❖ Continuous disruption of classes;
- ❖ Failure to present homework on a continuous basis;
- ❖ Failure to bring necessary books, equipment and resources on a continuous basis;
- ❖ Bullying or harassment of other students;
- ❖ Offensive language to staff or fellow students;
- ❖ General behaviour inappropriate to the smooth operation of the school.

Sanctions for such offences include detention, school related tasks, the placing of the student on report or suspension. Repeated continuous misconduct can bring further sanctions including exclusion of the student from school.

It should be noted that a suspension may result in a student being excluded from school-related activities.

3.4 Serious Misbehaviour

As a guide for parents and pupils, the following is a list of some of the offences, which will be regarded as serious:

- ❖ Assault, threat or abuse of a member of staff by a student.
- ❖ Assault, threat or abuse of a fellow student.
- ❖ Damage of property of staff or students.
- ❖ Putting a teacher's or fellow student's health or safety at risk.
- ❖ Possession of drugs or alcohol. Sale, consumption or distribution of such alcohol or drugs.
- ❖ Possession of knife or offensive weapon.
- ❖ Malicious damage to property.
- ❖ Theft within the school.
- ❖ Serious misbehaviour on school-related activities.

Serious misbehaviour will warrant instant suspension or possible expulsion.

4 PROCEDURES RELATING TO SERIOUS MISBEHAVIOUR

Suspension or possible expulsion will be applied, following an enquiry by the Principal, a staff member or disciplinary committee delegated by him/her to do so.

4.1 Procedures in cases of immediate suspension

- ❖ The student will be suspended immediately.
- ❖ The parents/guardians will be notified in writing informing them of the reason for and duration of suspension.
- ❖ The parents/guardians may discuss the decision with the Principal by meeting him/her or his/her representative.
- ❖ At this meeting the case may be reviewed.
- ❖ Parents/guardians may appeal the decision of the Principal to the Board of Management where they may present a case to the Board.
- ❖ If the Board of Management upholds the decision of the Principal, the parents/guardians may appeal the case to a sub-committee of County Donegal Vocational Education

Committee within seven days of the Board of Management meeting at which the case had been heard.

- ❖ Parents/guardians, together with the suspended student must meet with the Principal or his/her representative before the student is re-admitted to the school.
- ❖ Students who have been suspended for behaviour related offences will not be permitted to represent the school in any capacity.
- ❖ Any work in preparation for state examinations missed through suspension is the responsibility of the student.

4.2 Procedures in cases of expulsion

- ❖ The student will be suspended immediately pending a decision on expulsion.
- ❖ Parents/guardians will be notified in writing, informing them of the reason for and advising them of the Principal's recommendation for expulsion.
- ❖ Parents/guardians may present a case to the Principal by meeting him/her. Following such a meeting the Principal will inform them of the decision/recommendation made.
- ❖ If an expulsion is recommended by the Principal, the Board of Management will meet to make a decision on the matter.
- ❖ Parents/guardians will be advised in writing of their rights to present a case to the Board of Management of the school before a decision is reached.
- ❖ Parents/guardians may appeal the decision of the Board of Management to a sub-committee of County Donegal Vocational Education Committee within seven days of the Board of Management meeting at which the case has been heard.

5. DECLARATION

Please confirm that the Code of Behaviour is acceptable to you and you shall make all reasonable efforts to ensure compliance by the Applicant if s/he secures a place in the school.

I _____ (Parent/Guardian) confirm that the Code of Behaviour for the school is acceptable to me and I shall make all reasonable efforts to ensure compliance by the Applicant if s/he secures a place in the school.

I _____ (Young Person) confirm that the Code of Behaviour is acceptable to me and I shall make all reasonable efforts to ensure I comply should I secure a place in the school.