



# Code of Behaviour



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Governors**

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## **Code of Behaviour Policy**

### **Mission Statement and Guiding Principals**

*“We nurture, inspire and empower our students to strive for excellence in all that they do as responsible global citizens.”*

#### **We are committed to:**

- Fostering a sense of identity and self-worth in each of our students.
- Developing life-long learners with skills, attitudes, sensibilities and personal initiative that will allow each to grow into a well-rounded, confident adult.
- Promoting the well-being of the whole person in a caring, inclusive, innovative, safe and secure multi-cultural environment.
- Striving for high academic standards and promoting rich co-curricular opportunities and in so doing we seek to support and challenge each of our students to recognise and maximise their full potential.
- Promoting respectful intercultural relations, increasing tolerance and acceptance of difference and fostering in our students the ability to perceive, welcome and respect diversity, while at the same time fostering an appreciation of Irish culture in which the school is rooted.
- Promoting awareness of and facilitating our students’ ability to participate in, and contribute to, contemporary issues at local, national and global levels as informed, engaged, responsible and responsive global citizens.
- Honouring our duty of care to and protective responsibility for all students in achieving the realisation of the rights of the child.

### **BEHAVIOUR IN SCHOOL**

We are a community of people whose joint responsibility is to protect the wellbeing of each member and to create a learning environment that encourages creativity, risk-taking and cooperation. We are committed to the following Code of Behaviour:

#### **GUIDING PRINCIPLES**

- I always respect myself and others.

- I will do nothing that would undermine the climate of mutual respect and trust upon which this community is based.
- I seek to be helpful and to always contribute.
- I endeavour to do my best in all that I do and encourage others to do the same.
- I will do nothing to impinge on the learning of others.

## **RIGHTS**

At Sutton Park School all are entitled to certain rights that include:

- the right to pursue an education and personal excellence in a non-threatening, encouraging, healthy environment;
- the right to be treated with dignity;
- the right to develop emotionally and socially;
- the right to earn the respect of others through my thoughts and deeds;
- those listed under the United Nations Charter on the Rights of the Child

## **HONOUR CODE**

As a student at Sutton Park School, I intend to let my life speak:

- by attending all my commitments and endeavouring to arrive on time;
- by doing all the work expected of me and taking credit only for work that is my own;
- by appropriately crediting and honouring the thoughts, ideas, and/or words of others;
- by refraining from the illegal use of substances and helping others to do the same;
- by treating all people and their possessions with respect;
- by doing my best in all that I do, and helping others to do the same;
- by taking responsibility for my own actions and belongings;
- by showing empathy and understanding the need to speak out;
- by recognising that my role as a bystander gives me a responsibility to intervene where appropriate.
- by representing the best of the school both inside and outside the school grounds.
- by respecting diversity and embracing the intercultural nature of the school.

## **Expectations of the School**

### **Application to Learning**

- The expectation is for students to uphold the promise they made when selecting to enrol and put forth their best effort. This includes being a good citizen.
- A general atmosphere of orderliness is expected in and near the school buildings.
- The requirements include submitting all assignments punctually and in an organised manner. This involves maintaining cleanliness and tidiness of both notebooks and digital folders. Additionally, the use of digital devices should adhere to the Acceptable Usage Policy and are to be used in a respectful manner.

### **Respect**

- Actions that hurt other people, or the property of other people, are not permitted.

- We recognize that as an International School we have responsibilities to our international community and students of many cultural backgrounds.
- We will have respect and empathy in all circumstances.
- At Sutton Park we agree to treat all members of the community with the same respect and dignity with which we would wish to be treated. We all recognise that certain behaviours, whether intended or unintended, undermine the climate of trust and respect that holds the community together.
- We will behave in a responsible fashion and understand that sometimes, the role of bystander is the most important one.
- We will show respect towards those groups protected under equality legislation and understand that it is unacceptable to be disrespectful about someone's gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, race, membership of the Traveller community, family status or civil status.

### **The School Day**

- Punctuality is always expected.
- During school hours a student may only leave the school premises when accompanied by their parents, or supervised by a teacher at the school, or with the permission of the Head of Year, Deputy Principal, or Head of School. The school cannot take responsibility for a student who leaves the school without permission.
- Students who avail of the school buses are not permitted to leave the school site between the end of their classes and bus time.
- The School App is the primary source of communication and granting of permissions to do with the school day.
- Students who have achieved their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday are still part of the school community and are still subject to the Code of Behaviour.
- Where deemed appropriate, the School's Code of Behaviour may be referenced in dealing with events outside School and school time and in social media or any online platform.

### **Behaviour in Class**

The expected norm in each classroom is attentiveness and respectful behaviour towards teachers and fellow students.

- Students must arrive at class with all necessary books and equipment.
- Students will follow all the rules laid down by the school and respect the individual teachers' rules. Students must understand that rules may vary depending on teachers and circumstances.
- Students must behave in a manner that does not impact negatively on the teaching and learning in a classroom.

### **School Uniform**

- Students are required to wear the defined school uniform. Dress and appearance should always be clean and tidy. Sixth Year students, who are not required to wear the school uniform, should be dressed in a respectful manner that is not distracting to others and recognises that they are also role models for younger students. All students should come

to school dressed in a manner appropriate to a working atmosphere. The decision of the school Management will be final in all instances pertaining to the school uniform.

### **Possession/Use of Substances**

Sutton Park School has an obligation to educate, protect and, where necessary, discipline students in its care regarding substances and illegal drug use. Sutton Park School promotes a drug-free and alcohol-free environment **for all students**. The school will have due regard to the law in all incidents involving use of substances.

It is our belief that values are formed primarily in the home and that parents have primary responsibility for the behaviour and attitudes of their children regarding substances.

Vaping and smoking are not permitted in school or on the way to and from school either on school buses, public buses, or any other route to school.

Incidents of possession/use of substances dealt with by the school include:

- Within school
- To and from school
- School trips
- In the environs of the school to a distance as seen fit by School Management
- Co-curricular activities
- Incidents of substance abuse outside of school hours will be dealt with by the school in certain circumstances.
- Certain circumstances may require the involvement of the Gardai
- The school reserves the right to contact the Gardai, should it see fit.

### **MANAGING ISSUES RELATING TO SUBSTANCES**

#### ***Alcohol***

As in all disciplinary issues, the school reserves the right to discuss an incident with the student without a parent present. Parents will be informed when considered appropriate by the school.

Support in the form of counselling (either in school or externally) will be recommended and may be mandatory.

#### ***Illegal Substances***

Being in possession of, or in the presence of, illegal substances is prohibited during school hours, on school grounds, while in school uniform, on school trips or activities, outings, or duties, including but not limited to sports trips, school trips, school social events and to and from school.

All breaches of the illegal substances rule will be notified to parents. Each incident involving drugs will be dealt with on its merits. Differing sanctions will apply in different situations. The school Management, in conjunction with other support networks, will meet to decide which sanction is most appropriate. In certain circumstances, this may be a suspension and referral to the Board of Management.

It will always be imperative to establish who is influencing and who is supplying the substances within the school. If this information is established or if a student is caught with substances with intent to supply, the situation and the student will be immediately referred to the Gardai.

Students who have been sanctioned for use of/or supply of substances may be placed on a contract of behaviour drawn up between the Head of School, Deputy Principal, Year Head and signed by Head of school, parent/guardian, and student. It may be deemed appropriate to preclude a student from certain school activities, because of a student's involvement. In a situation involving substances, drug testing may be seen as an important part of this contract to ensure the student is abiding by the school rules and that they are keeping a good health record. Parents will be notified if the school feels a student on contract would benefit from testing. The parents are responsible for the organisation and payment of such drugs test.

Sutton Park School retains to right to search students' possessions.

### **Attendance and Lateness**

Our school policy is that every student attends every lesson in a punctual fashion unless there are clear and valid reasons for being absent.

Students with twenty or more unexcused absences in one school year may be reported to the Child and Family Agency (TUSLA).

It is a student's responsibility to ensure that their attendance, absence, or lateness is accounted for each day.

Attendance is recorded at 8.35 each morning in the allocated room. Students are obliged to be on time for the taking of attendance. If a student is late, they must sign in at the library immediately upon arrival at school. Failure to do so will result in the student being marked absent (unexcused) for the day.

If a student will be absent from school or will be late, a parent or guardian must communicate to Year Heads via the School App before 8.35 a.m. Year Heads determine if an absence or late arrival is 'excused' or not. If a student is still marked as 'absent' on the database without a valid excuse or notification from a parent/guardian (after the register has closed) a text message will be sent to their parent(s) notifying them of their child's absence and requesting that the parent contacts the school.

Parents should keep the Year Head updated regularly for any prolonged period of absence from school. Students are responsible for making up class work and assignments missed because of absences due to illnesses, school trips, activities, or sports. Students should contact their teachers for any work or assignments missed.

Absenting oneself from a class, activity or scheduled appointment is a serious breach of the school's Code of Behaviour and will result in disciplinary action. Spot checks will be conducted from time to time, and parents will be informed by the Year Head if a student has absented themselves from a class or activity. This also applies to school trips

It is the school's expectation that parents and students observe the dates specified on the school calendar regarding taking holidays.

#### Use of Mobile Phones

- The use of mobile phones is strictly forbidden unless permission is granted by a member of staff.
- Phones should be powered off and stowed away and kept out of sight. They should not be a feature of school life.
- Permission may be given to students to use their phone in reception where their need is urgent and valid.
- In certain instances of suspected misuse of social media, it may be necessary as part of an investigation process for a student to be requested to provide access to applications on their phone.

Please refer to the School's AUP policy for any further clarity regarding mobile phones.

## THE DISCIPLINE SYSTEM

### *Introduction*

The primary goal of the Discipline System is to promote positive behaviour, seeking to help students develop the values that will assist them in being happy, healthy, successful, and responsible citizens of Sutton Park School and adult members of the world community. The Acceptable Usage, Anti Bullying and the Anti-Racism Policy are important policies to reference with the Code of Conduct.

### *Principle of Restorative Practice*

An important part of the school's approach to behaviour is the concept of 'Restorative Practice', a philosophy which stems from the concept of 'Restorative Justice'. Our Code of Behaviour is focused on the positive aspects of behaviour rather than on punishments or sanctions, **although these are included in the appropriate section herewith.**

Restorative Practice is a process to involve, to the fullest extent possible, those who are involved in or affected by a specific offence and to collectively identify and address harms, needs and obligations. To help students understand the impact of their decisions. Students are invited to reflect on their behaviour and are empowered to produce solutions, to learn and take responsibility for their actions.

In all disciplinary issues the school reserves the right to discuss an incident with the student without a parent present. This allows for expediting and allowing a truthful picture to appear. Parents will be informed when considered appropriate by the school.

In restorative practice the following questions might be asked of the person showing challenging behaviour:

- What happened?
- What were you thinking at the time?
- What have your thoughts been since?
- Who has been affected by what you did?
- In what way have they been affected?
- What do you think needs to happen next?

The harmed person may be posed the following questions:

- What happened?
- What were your thoughts at the time?
- What have your thoughts been since?
- How has this affected you and others?
- What has been the hardest thing for you?
- What do you think needs to happen next?

**While the school places significant value in a restorative approach, there may be times when the school may have to combine this strategy with the application of specific sanctions.**

### ***Managing Discipline – Ladder Approach***

In the first instance, responsibility for discipline is with the classroom teacher, then the Year Head and then the Deputy Principal. The Year Head will monitor with the assistance of the classroom teacher the patterns of poor behaviour. Sanctions will be decided upon in a measured fashion depending on the level and persistence of the behaviour.

## **SUSPENSION**

In cases where students fail to observe the Code of Behaviour it is necessary, for the good of the school community, to impose sanctions on such students, including suspension or exclusion [expulsion].

This policy outlines the school's approach to suspension and exclusion and has been formulated taking due consideration of the rights and responsibilities inherent in the Education Act 1998, Education Welfare Act 2000, Equal Status Act 2000 and the principles of



fairness and natural justice. A student can be suspended for up to 2 days without report to the Board of Management (BOM). After 2 days, the suspension will be reported to the BOM.

### ***External Suspension Principles***

In certain cases of breaches of the Code of Behaviour it will be in the best interests of the school community, and / or the student involved, to remove the student from the school for a period of time. Under the Articles of Management for Secondary Schools, the Head of School has the authority to suspend a student from attending school for a period of up to and including 3 days. Suspensions beyond 3 days are the responsibility of the BOM.

The Head of School / BOM will exercise this authority in a fair and non-discriminatory manner having regard to their responsibility to the whole school and to the principles of natural justice.

### ***Internal Suspension Principles***

If a student commits a violation of school's Code of Behaviour

they may be internally suspended. In this case they will be removed from class and placed under supervision to complete work allocated to them.

The primary purpose of suspension is one of corrective support rather than punishing students for misbehaviour. It is the intention of the school that suspension allows students the time, under the supervision of their parents / guardians to reflect on their unacceptable behaviour; to accept responsibility for the behaviour that led to the suspension and to change their future behaviour to meet the expectations of the school.

Students may be precluded from attending school trips because of negative behaviour(s). This may result in a monetary loss for the family of the student concerned.

In general, there are two sets of circumstances under which suspension will be imposed:

- a. Serious breaches of the Code of Behaviour that indicate that the student should be removed from the school environment. In some cases where health and safety could be a risk it may be necessary to suspend a student with immediate effect pending an investigation and following due procedures.
- b. Repeated less serious breaches of the Code of Behaviour that have not been rectified by disciplinary measures short of suspension. In such cases a formal written warning detailing the unacceptable behaviour will have been submitted to parents / guardians along with an explanation of what is required of the student.

### **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 or harassment or intimidation of a member of staff or bullying of another member of the school community.
- Possession, use or supply of prohibited substances [including alcohol, drugs, or associated paraphernalia] in the school, on school trips, or during any school related activity. Exceptions will be made for legitimate medicinal use with the proper notification of such medicinal requirements to school management.
- Deliberate vandalism, including the writing of graffiti, of school property or the property of a member of the school community.
- Interference with and 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.
- Inappropriate use of electronic devices.
- Use of social media or any other online applications to infringe on the rights or wellbeing of any member of the school community.
- Fighting or the possession of offensive weapons. In addition to being serious breaches that incur suspension, these are criminal offences that will be reported to the appropriate authorities.
- Repeated truancy.
- Swearing/using foul language at or in the general direction of a member of staff is an immediate suspension.
- Theft or “borrowing” without consent.

### ***Suspension Procedure***

Any suspension procedure will be preceded by an investigation, to establish the full facts involved in any disciplinary situation.

A student may be asked to remain at home or to be sent home while a situation is being looked in to. As deemed appropriate by the school in the best interest of the students’ wellbeing.

If the Head of School/Deputy Principal exercises their authority to suspend a student for a fixed duration the following procedure will be used:

1. The parents/guardians of the student will be informed.
2. The student will be informed of the precise grounds that gave rise to a potential suspension.
3. In cases where the suspension is to take effect immediately, parents/guardians will be initially informed by telephone, and subsequently in writing.
4. Students will not be sent home during a school day unless collected by a parent / guardian. Students may also make their own way home, once written consent is provided to the school by a parent/guardian.
5. Information regarding appeal rights and procedures will be provided where a suspension has been notified to the Board of Management.
6. Requirements to be met for the student’s return to school may be stated.

### ***Suspension Removal***

As the principles of natural justice demand that there should be available a right of appeal to a higher authority, a student or his/her parents may appeal the Head of School's decision to suspend to the Board of Management. Such an appeal must be made in writing to the Chairperson of the BOM stating the grounds on which the appeal is being made. However, the school may insist that the student remain at home while the appeal proceeds. If an appeal is successful, the suspension will be lifted and if the suspension has already been served, it will be expunged from the student's record.

#### ***Note:***

An appeal of a suspension decision may also be made under Section 29 of the Education Act where a student has been suspended for 20 days or more. Information regarding this right of appeal will be provided with formal written notification of the suspension, if applicable.

### ***Suspension Completion***

Upon completion of a suspension, the following procedures may apply for the formal re-introduction of the student into the school:

- Parents/Guardians may be requested to attend with the students.
- The student may be required to enter a contract of good behaviour or other conditions that may be specified before returning to school. The terms of the contract may state that a student will have to reapply to the school at a given time.

### **EXPULSION PRINCIPLES**

Exclusion is the ultimate sanction imposed by the school on a student and as such, will only be exercised by the Board of Management in relation to cases of extreme indiscipline. In cases where the Head of School judges that a student's actions are such that exclusion should be considered, the Head of School will refer the matter to the Board of Management. Given the severity of the potential sanction, the school, in accordance with the principles of natural justice, will investigate extreme indiscipline cases thoroughly in advance of any hearing that could result in exclusion.

In general, there are two sets of circumstances in which exclusion may be considered to be appropriate by the school:

Cases where the indiscipline of a student is so pervasive that teaching and learning become extremely difficult. Such cases include but are not limited to:

- The student being so disruptive that they are seriously preventing other students from learning.
- The student's behaviour is uncontrollable, and they are not responding to any form of school discipline or authority.

- Parents/Guardians being unable or refusing to exercise their responsibility for the student.
- The student posing a danger to themselves or to others.
- When guarantees of reasonable behaviour following repeated suspensions are not forthcoming or not being met.
- The student's conduct is acting as a source of serious bad example and having an adverse influence on other students in the school.
- The student is deemed to be involved in illegal activities.
- The student harms a member of staff.

First time offences of a serious nature. Such cases may include but are not limited to:

- Vandalism
  - Assault
  - Arriving in school under the influence of alcohol or drugs
  - Serious burglary or theft
  - Causing major damage to school property
  - Gross insubordination to the Head of School or other staff members
  - Brandishing of a weapon
1. In the interest of ensuring a fair and even-handed system for the imposition of an exclusion, the Board of Management will, among other things, take account of the following factors
  2. The age and state of health of the student.
  3. The student's previous record of behaviour at the school.
  4. Any mitigating circumstances unique to the student that might be considered in connection with the behaviour leading to the suspension.
  5. The degree to which parental, peer, or other pressure might have contributed to the behaviour.
  6. The severity of the behaviour, its frequency, and the likelihood of recurrence.
  7. The extent to which the behaviour impaired or will impair the normal functioning of the student and others in the school community.
  8. The degree to which the behaviour was a breach of the Code of Behaviour.
  9. Whether the incident leading to the suspension was a result of the student action alone or as part of a group.
  10. The degree to which the student recognises and accepts that their behaviour was unacceptable and is prepared to exhibit genuine contrition.

### ***Exclusion Procedure***

Except in exceptional circumstances, exclusion will only be resorted to after the Head of School has:

- Ensured that all discipline options under the Code of Behaviour have been applied and documented.

- Ensured that discussion has occurred with the student and parents/guardians regarding specific misbehaviour that the school considers unacceptable and that may lead to permanent exclusion.
- Provided formal verbal and written warnings at appropriate times dealing with such behaviours and provided clear expectations of what was required of the student in the future.
- Recorded all action taken and copied all correspondence.
- Informed the parents/guardians of their intention to recommend exclusion to the Board of Management.
- Invited the parents/guardians to the Board of Management hearing.
- Invited the parents/guardians to make a written submission in advance of the Board Meeting.
- Provided in advance of such a meeting the parents/guardians with a full, written description of the allegations against the student and the case being made at the Board, together with copies of all documentation, statements, and other materials relevant to the case.
- Made a formal recommendation to the Board with full relevant documentation following these actions by the Head of School, exclusion will still only occur after the Board of Management has:
  - Heard the Head of School's case against the student, which should be made in the presence of the parents/guardians
  - Heard the response of the parents/guardians, which should be made in the presence of the Head of School
  - Examined all the documentation
  - Considered the student's record in the school
  - Ensured that the Head of School is not present for the Board's decision of the matter.
  - Discussed the case in detail
  - Considered all the commitments made in the Code of Behaviour
  - Made a final decision to exclude
  - Communicated the decision to exclude to the parents/guardians formally by registered letter
  - Informed the Education Welfare Officer under Section 24(1) of the Education Welfare Act 2000

The formal letter of notification will include:

- Notice of the exclusion
- Effective date of the exclusion
- Reasons for the exclusion
- A statement that the Education Welfare Board has been informed of the exclusion
- A statement that the student is under the care and responsibility of the parents/guardians for the period of 20 days required by the Education Welfare Officer to examine alternative provisions for the education of the student
- Information and documentation on appeal rights

### ***Exclusion Appeals***

Parents/guardians have the right to appeal a decision of the Board of Management to exclude a student to the Minister for Education or to an authority delegated for such appeals by the Minister under Section 29 of the Education Act 1998.

<b>Author</b>	<b>BOM Approved:</b>	<b>BOG Approved:</b>	<b>Next Review Date</b>
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