St. Tiernan's College

Code of Behaviour

Reviewed 2024

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1.0 Introduction

This policy document has been prepared in consultation with the staff, students, parents, and the Board of Management of St. Tiernan's College and in line with best practice as laid out in the document, *Developing a Code of Behaviour: Guidelines for Schools* (NEWB 2008).
This document will be reviewed annually in consultation with all relevant partners.

2.0 St. Tiernan's College Ethos

The Ethos of St. Tiernan's is based on respect and care for others. Through this lens, we hope to deliver effective education while helping students to become confident adults and positive members of their society.
Through good models of adult behaviour, students are constantly encouraged to develop self-esteem, self-discipline, and high standards.

3.0 Rationale

St. Tiernan's College promotes a positive approach to behaviour in the classroom and in the school generally. This positive approach emphasises encouragement and praise as well as sanctions when required.

In such a climate, it is expected that the relationships between students and staff are based on mutual respect, trust, caring, and consideration for others, resulting in a highly motivated teaching and learning environment and a caring and respectful school experience.

The Code of Behaviour ensures that positive behaviour and respectful relationships are fostered.

4.0 Aims

It is the aim of St. Tiernan's College that all students and staff have a right to work and learn in a happy and safe environment. We as a staff endeavour to always model positive behaviour and act in a professional manner.

We, the relevant partners, believe that to do so there must be a suitable Code of Behaviour in place that promotes positive behaviour but also sanctions those who do not adhere to it.

The Education (Welfare) Act 2000 sets out certain matters that must be included in a Code of Behaviour. Section 23(2) of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000 says: A Code of Behaviour shall specify—

- The standards of behaviour that shall be observed by each student attending the school.
- The measures that may be taken when a student fails or refuses to observe those standards.
- The procedures to be followed before a student may be suspended or expelled from the school concerned.
- The grounds for removing a suspension imposed in relation to a student; and
- The procedures to be followed relating to notification of a child's absence from school.

In order to comply with these requirements, and in order to have the best chance of achieving its objectives, the Code of Behaviour should address:

- The standards of behaviour expected in the school.
- The plan for promoting good behaviour.
- The ways in which the school responds to unacceptable behaviour.
- The plan for implementing the Code of Behaviour.
- School procedures for the use of suspension and expulsion. Guidance on each of these aspects of the code of behaviour is provided in these Guidelines.

Good practice in the use of sanctions

Sanctions should be used in a way that ensures that:

Sanctions are part of a plan to change behaviour

A sanction is a form of positive intervention. However, sanctions are unlikely on their own to change behaviour. They should be used as part of a wider plan to help the student to learn. A sanction should be used in a respectful way that helps students to understand the consequences of their behaviour and to take responsibility for changing that behaviour.

A sanction should:

• defuse and not escalate a situation

• preserve the dignity of all the parties

• be applied in a fair and consistent way

• be timely.

Sanctions are used consistently:

It is the responsibility of school management to ensure that all members of staff use agreed sanctions in a consistent way. This removes subjectivity and helps to ensure fairness. Teachers should know the level of sanction they are authorised to apply.

(Túsla, Developing a code of Behaviour for Schools pg 59)

5.0 Objectives

- The creation of a safe and orderly environment where teaching and learning and school related activities can be effectively delivered.
- Clearly defined
- boundaries will help promote positive behaviour and respect for others.

- High standards of behaviour are developed and maintained through effective and consistent Behavioural procedures.
- Students are encouraged to reflect on and learn from negative behaviour and to become better school members.
- Students should take ownership of their own discipline in relation to this. It is envisaged that a student team be established for each year to assist with the Discipline programme.

6.0 Whole School Approach to Responsibility

The Code of Behaviour is designed to clearly outline the boundaries to which all students are expected to adhere. The code recognises that some situations are unique and will require discretion in some cases and escalation of the Code of Behaviour at times to effectively deal with all behavioural issues.

6.1 Managerial Responsibility

The Management of St. Tiernan's College have a responsibility to ensure that a fair, coherent and consistent Code of Behaviour is implemented. This includes promoting, rewarding and highlighting positive behaviour and ensuring fair and appropriate sanctions are administered when required.

6.2 Staff Responsibility

School personnel are responsible for promoting positive behaviour throughout the school and should respond promptly and firmly to any instances of unacceptable behaviour in class or on school grounds. This should constantly be carried out in accordance with the Code of Behaviour.

6.3 Parent/Guardians Responsibility

Parents/guardians play a crucial role in developing positive attitudes in relation to school, education and the positive impact it has on their lives.

We ask parents to be aware of and support the Code of Behaviour and its procedures and to support these. Parents are expected to support and aid staff and management when sanctions are implemented.

While parents are asked and encouraged to be part of the Code of Behaviour, it must be noted that when parents are unsupportive of the process or fail to respond to communication from the school, the Code of Behaviour will be implemented in their absence if deemed in the greater good of the school and its stakeholders.

We encourage parents to share information about anything that might affect a student's wellbeing and behaviour in school. This will help school management understand individual issues and help deal with such issues in a caring and effective manner.

6.4 Student Responsibility

Students are expected to always be punctual and dressed in full uniform.
Students will be prepared for class with the correct materials and relevant homework completed. All students are expected to follow class rules and treat all students and staff with respect.

Students must respect school property. They will report any accidental damage they cause and avoid damaging school or student's property through misbehaviour. Students are required to obey school rules when inside and outside the school grounds, on approved class trips and/or school tours.

7.0 Travel and Conduct Expectations

Students are expected to demonstrate respectful and responsible behaviour during all school-related travel and activities. These guidelines ensure the safety and well-being of all participants and uphold the school's values and reputation.

7.1 Travel on School Buses

Students are required to always behave in an orderly and respectful manner. The School Code of Behaviour applies to both bus boarding and travel.

7.2 Organised Excursions

When participating in school-related activities, students represent the school and are expected to uphold its values, acting as ambassadors for the school community.

7.3 Impact on the School's Reputation

Where a student is alleged to have engaged in serious misbehaviour outside school, when not under the care or responsibility of the school, a judgement would have to be made that there is a clear connection with the school and a demonstrable impact on its work, before the code of behaviour applies. The school authorities may need to get legal advice where the situation is complex.

(Túsla 8.7, Developing a code of Behaviour for Schools, pg 61)

8.0 School uniform

As preparation for a career after leaving school, students maintain high standards of personal appearance when attending school and on all school related activities unless otherwise instructed.

Students are expected to wear full school uniform. The school jumper must always be visible inside the school building. Jackets and hoodies should be placed in lockers or on hangers provided in hallways and not worn in classrooms unless the teacher deems the temperature low enough to allow it.

Where a student presents for school without full uniform, the student must report to the main office on arrival at school and provide a note to the Principal/Deputy Principal explaining the circumstances. The Principal/Deputy Principal will provide the student with a "uniform slip" for the day. A lunchtime detention will be given if a student presents without a note for not being in uniform.

It is understood that some students may have short-term issues with the uniform such as damage, loss of items or family circumstances. These incidents will be dealt with on a case-by-case basis and adequate time will be allocated to allow for a replacement to be purchased or their correct uniform to be restored.

8.1 Jewellery, Tattoos and Piercings

Self-expression is fostered and encouraged as a key component of well-being in St. Tiernan's College.
Jewellery and piercings are permitted, but if deemed a health and safety risk, students may be required to cover up or remove some jewellery or piercings for the safety of the student and those around them. This is particularly relevant in the case of practical classes, PE classes, games and matches etc.
Tattoos are permitted, but if deemed inappropriate, there may be a requirement to cover visible tattoos during the day or while on class trips.

8.2 Appearance

Hairstyles and/or excessive make-up deemed inappropriate by school management may be subject to disciplinary action. Excessively long nails may be deemed inappropriate at times for practical classes for health and safety purposes and the student may be asked to shorten them or remove them.

9.0 Property

Students must respect school property such as furniture, books, devices, materials and classroom equipment. Damage to any part of the school or its furnishings is not only vandalism but can, in many cases, create health and safety risks for staff and students.

In case of intentional damage to school or personal property of others, parents or those over eighteen years of age may be deemed liable for repair or replacement of the damage.

Theft of school or student property will be dealt with by school management on a case-by-case basis. Serious cases of theft may be referred to the board of management or to An Garda Síochána.

Public property must be respected at all times and school management has the right to deal with a student's behaviour when the student is in school uniform.

9.1 Lockers

Lockers will be assigned to all students at the beginning of the school year. Lockers should be used for storing school materials and personal items. It is the student's responsibility to maintain a clean, well-organised locker that is always locked.
Any damage caused to lockers by others should be reported to school management immediately.

Students storing money or valuable items in the lockers do so at their own risk and St. Tiernan's College are not responsible for lost or stolen items.

9.2 School Diary

A school diary serves as a vital link between school and home and any defacing of or damage to the school diary is seen as a breach of our Code of Behaviour.
When a diary is defaced and/or damaged the student will incur a fee of €10 to have their diary replaced. Only official school diaries are permitted as school diaries.

10.0 Behaviour in Common Areas

When circulating throughout the common areas between classes and at break time, students should do so in an orderly manner with care for the safety of others. Running, horseplay and dangerous behaviour is unacceptable, and sanctions may be given if deemed appropriate.

Play areas are assigned by daily rota and students are expected to use all play areas in a safe manner with regard for others. Students must follow the direction of staff while using such areas and students behaving in an inappropriate manner will be removed immediately for the safety of others.

11.0 Prohibited Items

Any object that can cause physical or emotional harm is absolutely prohibited.

- The use of mobile devices is at all times prohibited inside the school grounds. Examples of such devices are, but not limited to, mobile phones, smart watches and any device capable of recording or connecting with others. Students observed using such devices will have them confiscated and stored in the school safe. They may be returned only to a parent or guardian when deemed appropriate. Where a student refuses to hand over a prohibited device, they will be sent to the Principal's office immediately**,** and sanctions will be implemented.
- No unauthorised recording, in any form, of staff and peers when in school or school-related activities is permitted.
- Chewing gum is forbidden
- Smoking/Vaping, Alcohol and Drug Use: Students are prohibited from smoking, (including E-cigarettes), consuming alcoholic drinks, and using substances prohibited by law – students will be suspended.
- Weapons: Sharp objects, knives and other weapons, which can be used to threaten, bully or harm others, are absolutely prohibited from the school premises, during travel to and from school, and during school excursions.
- Valuable items: Students are responsible for their own property and should not bring valuables or excessive amounts of cash to school.

12.0 Disciplinary Procedure, Stages and Points

The disciplinary stages are outlined below, ranging from Stage 0 to Stage 11. To progress from one stage to another, a student must accumulate 3 points.

One Misdemeanour equates to one point and one Referral equates to 3 points.

A record of each Misdemeanour and Referral will be reported and recorded on VSWare.

Examples of Misdemeanours:

- Lack of preparedness for class i.e. no equipment, books including not having their diary.
- Littering anywhere on school grounds.
- Incorrect uniform without providing a note.
- Failure to get notes in diaries signed by a parent/guardian without a valid reason.
- Chewing gum.
- Going to lockers outside of allocated times without diaries signed.
- Damage to school property including desks, chairs, books, school diary.
- Late arrival to class without an adequate explanation.
- Mildly disruptive behaviour which is deemed to inhibit the progress of the class (e.g. persistent talking, diverting attention etc.).

Note
The above list is an example of current misdemeanours; however, it should be acknowledged that this list is not exhaustive in nature and is subject to change without notice.

A Referral is deemed a greater breach of our Code of Behaviour and is subject to the inappropriate action caused by the student.

12.1 Behavioural Scale and Stages

In the event of a student misbehaving, it is the responsibility of the teacher to attempt to address this behaviour.

Stage 0: (0 points)
This is the first initial step. The teacher speaks with the student about behaviour.
If the behaviour continues, a note will be sent home in the journal for parents/

guardians' signature. A zero point will be recorded on VSWare by the teacher to denote the teacher's intervention.

Stage 1: (3 points)
When a student receives three Misdemeanours or one Referral, the Tutor will be notified. The Tutor will meet with the student to discuss their behaviour and offer guidance and support in a pastoral capacity.

Stage 2: (6 Points)
When Stage 2 is reached, the Tutor meets with the student again to discuss their behaviour and will offer guidance and support in a pastoral capacity. The Tutor will caution the student about a further escalation of their behaviour. A text is sent home to the Parent/Guardian to inform them of behaviour issue.

Stage 3: (9 Points)
When Stage 3 is reached, the Tutor refers the situation to the Year Head. The Year Head contacts the parents/guardians to inform them of the breach of the Code of Behaviour.

As a result of reaching this stage, the student will be required to complete one lunchtime detention.

Stage 4: (12 points)
When stage 4 is reached, the Year Head will contact parents/guardians to inform them.

As a result of reaching this stage, the student will complete one after school detention and complete one week of a daily report sheet. If a student refuses to comply, they will be suspended for one day. In addition, management will conduct a review of the student's access to extracurricular activities and privileges. This includes, but is not limited to, sports, trips, treats, and other school events. These withdrawals will be addressed on a case-by-case basis.

Stage 5: (15 points)
When stage 5 is reached, the Principal and Deputy Principal are informed. parents/guardians will be contacted to inform them.
As a result of reaching this stage, the student will complete an after-school detention and two weeks (at school discretion) on a daily report sheet.

In addition, withdrawal of the student's access to extracurricular activities and privileges will begin. This includes, but is not limited to, sports, trips, treats, and other school events. These withdrawals will be addressed on a case-by-case basis.

Stage 6: (18 points)
When stage 6 is reached, students will be required to complete two after school detentions. The Year Head will contact parents/guardians to inform them of this detention. If a student refuses to comply, they will be suspended for one day. In addition, all privileges continue to be withdrawn from this stage.

Stage 7: (21 points)
When stage 7 is reached, students will be placed on in-house suspension. parents/guardians will be requested to attend a meeting regarding behaviour. The student will not attend their regular classes, breaks or lunchtime. They will be fully supervised throughout the day, and relevant class work and homework will be given. All privileges are withdrawn.

Stage 8: (24 points)
When Stage 8 is reached, the student will be suspended. The Principal or Deputy Principal will contact parents/guardians by phone and letter to inform them of the suspension, and a meeting with the parents will be arranged.

As a result of reaching this stage, the student will be required to meet with school management to discuss their behaviour before returning to class. Additionally, a daily report will be implemented.

Stage 9: (27 points)
When stage 9 is reached, the student will be suspended for a second time. The Principal or Deputy Principal will contact parents/guardians by phone and a meeting will be arranged.

Stage 10: (30 points)
When stage 10 is reached, a referral of incidents is made to the Board of Management with the possibility of expulsion.

Stage 11: (33 points)
When stage 11 is reached, the student will be referred to the Board of Management.

13.0 Suspension Procedures

4.1 Contact with Parents/Guardians
When parents/guardians are contacted regarding suspension, and they do not answer the call or refuse to meet etc., their son/daughter will not be permitted to attend classes until they present themselves for this meeting.

4.2 Student procedure following return from suspension
The student will be required to attend a meeting with the Principal, Deputy Principal, Year Head and members of the Behaviour Committee (possibly a parent/guardian), to be held in the office before they return to classes.

At this meeting there will be a review of the incidents which led to their suspension. They must write an account of these and give assurance that there will be no repeat of such incidents.

They will sign a contract of good behaviour. Refusal to adhere to any of these conditions will lead to the student not returning to classes until a further meeting is held with their parents/guardians.

14.0 Serious Breaches of the Code of Behaviour

School management reserves the right to suspend a student with immediate effect when serious breaches of our Code of Behaviour occur.

In cases of repeated breaches of the Code of Behaviour, or when a student receives multiple misdemeanours or referrals in a single day or within a short time frame, the student's well-being will be assessed. A referral will be made to the Care Team through the Year Head. The Home School Community Liaison, Guidance Counsellor, or appropriate staff member will engage with the student and their parent/guardian.

However, if repeated breaches occur without well-being concerns, this will be considered a serious escalation of misbehaviour, negatively impacting teaching and learning, as well as the health, safety, and well-being of other students and staff. In such cases, the student will be moved up the behavioural scale, even if not all stages have been addressed, as this will be deemed an exception. In addition, a withdrawal of privileges will occur.

Parents / guardians will be requested to attend a meeting to discuss these breaches with the Principal/Deputy Principal and relevant Year Head.

Management retains the right to interpret all individual cases as seen fit.

15.0 Rewarding Positive Behaviour

St. Tiernan's College expects positive behaviour from all students. It wishes to recognise the many students who consistently display such behaviour. During the course of the school year students will be rewarded on this basis.

Examples of this behaviour include:

- Working to the best of their ability
- Participation when the opportunity arises and being co-operative.
- Have a positive and helpful attitude towards others.
- Being attentive and respectful towards fellow students and school staff.
- Being punctual and prepared for class, training activities etc.

Examples of rewards include:

- Trips away
- Film afternoon
- Special activity
- Raffle, for those with no referrals, carried out during each term.
- Other rewards deemed appropriate by the school

Examples of Positive Behaviour noted on our VSWare system

- Extra-Curricular Achievement
- Has brought positive attention to our school through a personal achievement
- Has helped a peer without being asked
- Has helped a teacher without being asked
- Has shown major initiative
- Has shown significant maturity or leadership
- Offered support to others in school
- Showed kindness to others
- Student has produced an exceptional piece of work
- Working Hard in class

15.1 Promoting Positive Behaviour

St. Tiernan's College believes in fostering positive behaviour and has implemented a range of measures as an incentive to improve previous inappropriate behaviour. As part of our commitment, students are given the opportunity to reduce their stage on the behaviour scale through the following

- If a student demonstrates consistent positive behaviour for a period of 15 consecutive school days (they must attend the fifteen days), they will revert back one stage on the behaviour scale. This will be a recurring action for each subsequent 15-day period.
- At the beginning of the new school year a student's behavioural record will start at stage zero.
- Green merit slips will be issued if students exhibit positive behaviour. They will then be entered into a draw or given a treat at the end of term. This will be reviewed after one term.

16.0 Recording and Reporting

All misdemeanours and referrals related to students will be recorded, reported, and stored in the student's file on the VSWare system

Students should be informed when receiving a misdemeanour or referral.

When documenting a student on VSWare, staff should ensure that the relevant Tutor is assigned to the write-up.

Year Heads will record all phone calls to parents/guardians in the phone record book. If a parent/guardian fails to answer, an email containing the details will be issued.

17.0 List of Related Policies

- Admissions Policy
- Mobile Phone Policy
- Locker Policy
- Attendance Policy
- Homework Policy
- Acceptable use of Technology Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Uniform Policy
- Anti-bullying policy
- Substance Abuse Policy
- * SPHE Policy
- RSE Policy
- * Guidance Policy

This policy was last reviewed and updated in October 2025.