

# *Coachford College Discipline Policy*

## **Scope**

This policy applies to students of Coachford College and relates to all school activities, including those taking place outside school hours. The Policy was drawn up in consultation with all the school partners, constituting students, parents, staff and Board of Management.

This Policy has been developed in line with our school ethos, which has at its core, care of the student. The school strives to provide a safe and secure learning environment for the development of our students. Our Discipline Policy is based on respect for oneself, for others, and for our environment, so that a positive and co-operative school atmosphere prevails.

## **Rationale**

Many people work together in our school and therefore a high level of courtesy and consideration is necessary. Behaviour, which is ill mannered, annoying, dangerous or disruptive cannot be allowed. Our policy is one which is based on the recognition of the student as an individual, and yet creates an environment in which the welfare of all is protected.

## **Aims/Objectives**

Coachford College is an educational community which seeks to provide a pleasant learning experience for its students and a caring, safe and secure environment for all its members – staff, students and parents. Central to this a recognition of each person's human dignity through practising respect for ourselves and others.

## **Roles and Responsibilities**

Our school acknowledges the contribution of all members of the school community. Each member has responsibility for the promotion of good behaviour and a role in dealing with and minimizing negative behaviour.

***(a) Students***

The school expects that students will adhere to the school's Discipline Policy at all times.

***(b) Parents***

The school acknowledges the role of parents in the development and operation of the code of behaviour and expects them to support the code and encourage the students to uphold it.

***(c) Teachers***

The school acknowledges the role of teachers in the development and operation of the Discipline Policy. The school recognizes that a teacher's main focus is in the area of teaching and learning, but that they also have a pivotal role to play in behaviour management. This pivotal role forms a core element of this Policy. Teachers have been assigned to each class and year group with special responsibility for implementing this Policy. Class Teachers, Tutors, Year Heads, Guidance Counsellor, Chaplain, Deputy Principal and Principal all have roles to play in upholding this Policy.

***(d) Other staff***

The school acknowledges the contribution of ancillary staff in the day to day running of the school. They too have a part to play in the successful operation of our Discipline Policy. In particular, they have a responsibility to report incidents of misbehaviour and examples of positive behaviour they witness.

***(e) Board of Management***

The Board of Management is the decision-making body of the school. The school acknowledges its role in the development and operation of our Discipline Policy. All policies are developed under the authority of the Board of Management and must be approved by its members before becoming official school policy.

## Content

### *(a) Rules*

The school expects that the student will adhere to the following rules:

- (1) Students must show respect for themselves, the staff, other students and the general public at all times.
- (2) Students must respect the authority of the teacher at all times in the school environs and during out-of-school activities.
- (3) Students must respect school property and the property of others.
- (4) Students' uniforms should be clean and tidy.
  - Students must wear assigned school jumper, shirt, pants/skirt and tie.
  - School tie is optional when a round-necked jumper is worn.
  - Black shoes must be worn (runners are not permitted).
  - Students may wear one ring per hand, one stud per ear, and avoid wearing any jewellery which may be perceived to be of a Health and Safety hazard.
- (5) Students must attend on all school days and be punctual. Students must observe current school practice in respect of absences, late arrival and early departure.
  - A note must be presented from parent/guardian the day after a student is absent, outlining the reason for absence.
  - On arrival on school grounds, students must proceed directly to the school building. The following are the only areas that students may congregate before 9.00 am:
    - The school building
    - The courtyard
    - The tarmac area in front of the B corridor
  - Students travelling on Special School Buses must arrive in school and leave school on their designated school bus. They do not have

permission to leave the grounds at any time. Students may only travel on the Special School Bus for which they have a pass.

- Students who arrive late must have a note from parent/guardian, sign in at reception, and present a “late slip” to their teacher.
- Students who leave school early must present a note from their parent/guardian to their tutor and Deputy Principal, and sign the relevant book at reception.

(6) Students are expected to move to class in a purposeful and orderly manner, and at the *first* bell when relevant.

(7) Students must co-operate fully in class, have all necessary materials and must complete the work assigned to them.

- Students must keep journals in a presentable condition in all classes.

(8) Students are expected to remain within areas assigned as inbounds by the school authorities.

- See Appendix *Designated out of Bounds Areas*.

(9) Students must avoid engaging in any activity which poses a Health and Safety risk to themselves and/or others.

(10) Banned items, as defined by the school authorities, are not allowed.

***(b) Preventative Measures***

In keeping with the school ethos, every effort is made to provide a secure and caring environment for all. Students are welcome to discuss issues of concern to them with members of the Pastoral Care team.

***(c) Rewards***

In our school the following methods are used to reward students for good behaviour:

1. Verbal praise to student either in class or privately.
2. Positive comment to class Tutor/Year Head.
3. Communication with parents/guardians via homework journal, phone-call, letter, parent/teacher meetings, etc.
4. Occasional homework concession.
5. Display of students' work.
6. Student of the Year/Endeavour awards, etc.

***(d) Sanctions***

The following sanctions are used so that our students understand the consequences of misbehaviour. They are intended to take account of the nature of the incident and the situation leading up to the incident.

*(i) Classroom Sanctions:*

- 1) Verbal reprimand.
- 2) Note to parents/guardians in journal.
- 3) Phone-call to parents.
- 4) Educationally directed extra work.
- 5) Teacher detention
- 6) Withdrawal of classroom privileges in practical subjects.
- 7) Withdrawal of lunchtime privileges.
- 8) Withdrawal from extra/co-curricular activities.
- 9) Placement on a Homework/Classwork card.
- 10) Placement on a Probation 1 or Probation 2 card.
- 11) Other measures which the teacher deems appropriate.
- 12) Referral to Year Head/Deputy Principal/Principal.

*(ii) Sanctions following Referral:*

- 1) Verbal reprimand.
- 2) Note to parents/guardians in Journal.
- 3) Phone-call to parents.
- 4) Educationally directed extra work.
- 5) Withdrawal of classroom privileges in practical subjects.
- 6) Withdrawal of lunchtime privileges.
- 7) Withdrawal from extra/co-curricular activities.
- 8) Placement on Probation 1 or Probation 2 card.
- 9) Year Head detention.
- 10) Placement on Attendance card, Interim Review card and/or Monitor sheet.
- 11) Referral to Disciplinary Committee.
- 12) Referral to Deputy Principal/Principal.
- 13) Suspension.
- 14) Probationary period.
- 15) Expulsion.
- 16) Other measures which Year Head/ Deputy Principal/Principal/Disciplinary Committee may deem appropriate.

*(e) Interventions:*

The Pastoral Care structure facilitates early intervention, and therefore has a fundamental role in preventing unacceptable behaviour.

***(f) Record-Keeping:***

Records of acts of indiscipline will be kept by Year Heads and/or Deputy Principal.

***(g) Appeals:***

The principles of Natural Justice demand that there should be a right to appeal to a higher authority. The practicalities of school life mean that having a formal appeal to the Board of Management on short suspensions imposed by the Principal may be inappropriate, very time-consuming, and render the suspension meaningless.

It may also be appropriate to formalise a meeting before the suspension is actually imposed, perhaps comprising of the Principal, Deputy Principal, Guidance Counsellor and the parents, in an attempt to resolve matters and/or to explain the reasons for the long suspension.

An appeal may be made to the Board of Management in the case of

- (a) a suspension of six or more consecutive days;
- (b) a suspension which brings the cumulative suspension to twenty or more days.

The school may insist that the student remain at home while any appeal on a suspension is in process.

It is possible that suspension may already be served before the appeal is actually heard. If the appeal is successful, the only remedy may then be to have the suspension removed from the student's file/record.

All appeals should be heard as soon as is practically possible.

**Success Criteria/Monitoring**

This policy was drawn up in consultation with the parents, students, staff and management of our school and was ratified by the Board of Management. It will be reviewed in one year after its implementation.

Any amendments which need to be made will be in keeping with the general philosophy of our code of behaviour and will be communicated to all members of the school community.

A major review of the Policy will be carried no later than five years after the date of implementation.

## **Timeframe**

The development of this Policy was begun in January 2004, and the resulting Discipline Policy was piloted in the school year 2005/06.

## **Implementation**

As the official code of discipline of Coachford College, all registered students of the school will be given a copy of this Policy, and parents/guardians will be required to sign an agreement that they will uphold it and that their child will abide by it.

The Policy is also available from the school on request.

Amendments to the Policy will be communicated to the stakeholders in writing.

Following a major review, the resulting amended Policy will be circulated to all stakeholders in written format.