

# School Charters

## Mission Statement:

We seek to promote a caring and committed school community  
*which will facilitate the education of our students*  
*and where each individual is valued as a unique human being.*  
*“Is ar scáth a chéile a mhairimid”*

## Charter for Parents/Guardian’s

### Rights

- To have access to the school’s policies and guidelines
- To have access to information about their child
- To feel confident in sharing issues or concerns
- To have your child spoken to in a professional and controlled manner
- To ensure your child will have access to all areas of the curriculum subject to available resources
- To participate in the Parents Association

### Responsibilities

- To encourage and support their children by showing interest in their work and school life
- To praise their child’s efforts
- To provide space and time for your child to do their homework
- To support the wearing of the school uniform
- To keep up to date with the school journal
- To monitor the use of mobile phones and the internet
- To ensure your child attends regularly and punctually
- To ensure that your child does not leave school early unless in exceptional circumstances
- To attend meetings organised by the school
- To support your child by attending concerts/activities etc
- To listen to both school and child when a problem occurs
- To inform the school of any change of circumstances
- To support the school positively

## **Charter for Staff**

### **Rights**

- To work in a clean, attractive and safe environment free from verbal, physical abuse/intimidation
- To be allowed teach without interruption or disruption
- To be kept up to date about changes and developments as they occur
- To have fair and equal access to staff development
- To be treated in a professional manner by all colleagues
- To be supported by management whilst carrying out duties
- To be supported in the delivery of the curriculum
- To have adequate resources to deliver the curriculum effectively
- To have adequate time to carry out professional duties
- To have personal welfare issues dealt with in a sensitive and confidential manner

### **Responsibilities**

- To prepare effective teaching resources
- To manage time effectively
- To be punctual and attend in accordance with timetable
- To keep up to date with changes and developments
- To incorporate learning opportunities into the curriculum
- To treat all pupils, staff and parents/guardian's in a professional manner
- To help provide a caring environment for all
- To support management in the implementation of decisions
- To help maintain a clean, safe and attractive work environment

## **Charter for Students**

### **Rights**

- To the highest standard of education to meet the individual needs of students
- To be safe and secure in a non-bullying environment
- To be treated with respect
- To be taught in a clean and orderly environment
- To have access to all areas of the curriculum subject to available resources
- To have classes start punctually and have lessons that are well prepared
- To be assessed regularly (homework-testing)
- To have access to extra-curricular activities
- To have property treated with respect

### **Responsibilities**

- To be well behaved both inside and outside the school and obey school rules
- To work hard in class and cooperate with teacher
- To arrive punctually, be prepared for class and do nothing to interrupt the teaching of the lesson
- To leave school early with permission only in exceptional circumstances
- To work to the best of ability at all homework and assessments
- To treat everyone with respect
- To wear the correct uniform and take care of property
- To aim to take part in extra curricular activities
- To not bully others through verbal, text, internet and exclusion
- To use language and materials that are appropriate and inoffensive
- To support the school in implementing the Code of Behaviour

## **Code of Behaviour and Discipline**

The Code of Behaviour was reviewed by all partners – students, staff, parents and the board of management during the school year 2010/2011. The Board of Management will review the Code of Behaviour on an annual basis.

The aim of Borrisokane Community College is to provide a comprehensive system of Post-Primary education open to all the children of the community and to develop each student's intellectual, human and spiritual potential to the maximum. To achieve this there is a need for close co-operation between parents/guardians, teachers and pupils.

The school has a student population of over six hundred and a staff of over fifty. This is equivalent in terms of administration, organisation endeavour and human relationships to a large industrial or commercial concern. Discipline and rules are necessary in order to function effectively and provide a pleasant atmosphere in which students can learn and teachers can teach and deal with the needs of pupils. Rules, however well conceived, are only effective if understood and supported, and for this reason, they are reproduced here for the information of parents and pupils. Sanctions, which are intended to be beneficial, are included and it is hoped that this code of behaviour will develop the student into a positive and constructive individual, well able to take his/her place in an organised and disciplined society.

Parents have the right to make representation to the college on behalf of their children. However, this places the obligation on them to be supportive of the college when it is pursuing a course for the general good. Adults should at all times give young people positive advice and in no way encourage negativism. To have a positive attitude is to be well equipped for life. Students who have reached the age of 18 years are adults and must take personal responsibility for abiding by the Code of Behaviour.

### **CODE OF BEHAVIOUR FOR STUDENTS**

College regulations fall into three categories and should be seen by students as positive and constructive. They should be interpreted as follows:

#### **A. Respect for People**

1. Each student has the right to learn, therefore I don't disturb the class and deprive my fellow students of their rights.
2. I must not engage in any form of bullying or fighting. Bullying is dealt with in the schools Anti Bullying Policy and refers to all people in the school, students and staff.
3. Teachers: Teachers have the right to teach without having to constantly correct me for inattention, lack of co-operation or disruptive behaviour.
4. Prefects: Prefects have the right to complete their duties and be respected in the role that they undertake.
5. Parents/Guardians: My parents/guardians have the right to expect from me that I perform to the best of my ability. I recognise that study will secure my livelihood, develop my talents and skills and help me to enjoy rest and recreation.
6. I understand that I must not use inappropriate language.

#### **B. Respect for Property.**

1. I must respect what belongs to me and what belongs to others. Consequently, I should not damage, take, mark, break or write on college property, or another person's property. Damage must be paid for by the student concerned. We are very fortunate to have modern new school buildings and I have a duty to ensure that I do not damage the building fabric, furniture and equipment.
2. Smoking adversely affects the health of smokers and those in close proximity. In everyone's interest smoking (including tobacco, non-tobacco products and electronic

cigarettes) is not permitted in or around the college or while attending college organised activities. Please refer to the School's Smoke Free Policy.

3. I acknowledge that chewing gum may be used to vandalise clothes and property and that I must not have possession of it within the college or its grounds.

4. Littering seriously demeans the college environment. I have a duty to use the bins provided. Food served on plates must be eaten in the canteen. Wrappers etc should be disposed in the canteen bins before leaving the area.

5. Throwing of objects is immature behaviour and is highly dangerous to person and property. I must not do so.

6. Gates are provided for my convenience and I should not climb over the fencing.

7. I accept that others are entitled to their privacy and that certain areas are out-of-bounds to students. These include the private residence and turf-shed. The walkway is the boundary for students in the sports field. Trespassing on adjoining property is not permitted as we must be courteous to our neighbours.

8. I accept that my property is my own responsibility and should bear my name. Any money or valuables should be carried on my person.

9. My locker should be always clean and tidy and not used to store anything objectionable. Management has the right to inspect the lockers at any time.

(Management accepts no responsibility for lost, stolen or damage to student's property).

10. I accept that in order to keep the college building clean I have a duty to ensure that my uniform is kept clean during games at lunchtime.

11. I accept that I must not climb onto the school roof as it is dangerous. If a ball needs to be retrieved the Caretaker will do so.

### **C. School Duties**

1. I acknowledge that once I arrive at the college grounds I am subject to the discipline of the college and may remain only as long as I behave myself. I understand that the same rules apply when taking part in college-organised activities.

2. I understand that in order to achieve to the best of my ability my attendance must be regular, and I should only be absent from school or leave early in exceptional circumstances. I have a duty to be punctual for school and classes. Rollbooks/Eportal is the official record of my attendance at school and will be checked when I need a reference. I will require a note from my parents in my journal explaining absence, which must be produced on my first day returning to school. I understand that prolonged absence will be notified to the Education Welfare Officer/Tusla. A medical certificate should be furnished for illness where possible.

3. I have a duty not to leave the college or its grounds without the permission of the Year Head, Deputy Principal or Principal and if I wish to go home for my lunch I must complete the form in my journal which must be signed by the Principal/Deputy Principal. If leaving the school for whatever reason during school hours a note must be produced from my parents with a contact number in my school journal which must be signed by the Principal/Deputy Principal/Year Head. Note: A text message from parents is not sufficient. I should be collected from the school grounds by my parent/guardian or an adult designated by my parents/guardian. The name of the person collecting me must be specified on the note in the journal. This person must sign the register in the office before I have permission to leave. I accept that mitching will be immediately notified to my parents. I understand that the school cannot accept responsibility for me if I decide to absent myself from the school grounds without prior permission of the Year Head, Principal or Deputy Principal. **I understand that I should only leave school early in exceptional circumstances such as for appointments etc. that cannot take place outside of school hours. I understand that the school can decline permission to leave if it is felt that leaving school early is not in the best interest**

**of my education. Evidence to support the reason for leaving the school early may be requested. Note:** For the purpose of this policy the footpaths and roadway that passes through the school site (i.e. from the walkway entrance on the town end to the entrance gate of the Borrisokane Community Sports Field) will be considered part of the School Grounds for pedestrians. I understand that I must be careful in these areas in order to protect myself from other road users.

4. I understand that I cannot enter the main school building until ten minutes before the official school start time and I must leave the main school building at the beginning of breaktime and lunchtime. I can re-enter the main school building seven minutes before the end of break/lunch to allow time to use my locker and the toilet facilities if required. The canteen building is available for students from 8am in the morning and at break and lunchtime.

5. I have a duty to wear my uniform to college and for college related activities and be in possession of the correct gear and footwear for P.E. and Activities. If I cannot comply with these rules, I must have a letter of explanation from my parents. Details of the current school uniform are available on the school website. In order to ensure uniformity, the uniform skirt must be worn to a length below the knee. I must not wear any form of jewellery when playing games. Note: Full school uniform must be worn during state examinations. If I am wearing incorrect jackets, scarfs etc. they will be confiscated. I understand that it is my duty to collect the item at the appointed time. Items not collected by the appointed time will be placed in the Lost/Found box and disposed to recycling if not collected.

6. In line with the dress code and for personal safety I understand that I am not allowed wear body rings/studs with one exception - single pair of ear studs worn one on the lobe of the ear.

7. I have a duty to be polite and courteous to others. I have a duty to move quietly and in an orderly manner within the college. I am to queue outside classrooms until the teacher bids me enter.

8. I understand that sports equipment (e.g. footballs, soccer balls, rugby balls and sliothars, etc.) are not permitted on the school corridors. They should be kept in my school bag or in my locker. I am not permitted to play games inside or outside the school between classes. Playing of field games such as hurling, football etc. are only permitted on the sports field. For safety reason I need to be aware of other students and staff in the vicinity when playing hurling.

9. I have a duty not to disrupt class and allow those students who are anxious to work and study the opportunity to do so.

10. I have a duty not to be in possession of or distribute any substance or literature injurious to moral or physical well being. Drug related issues will be dealt with in accordance with the college's Substance Use Policy.

11. I understand that the sharing of explicit content including texts, video, photographic or other materials is an unacceptable and absolutely prohibited behaviour and is a major offence. Please note that all incidents involving creating, storing, or sharing of explicit content of children under the age of 17 will be reported to the Gardai and Tusla. Sanctions for students involved in this area will be as outlined for a Major Offence in the Code of Behaviour.

12. I have a duty not to loiter in the toilet areas

13. I understand that I may only use my locker before school, at break, lunch and after school. I must not access my locker between classes unless I have permission from a teacher.

14. I understand that I may only use the water fountain before school, at break lunch and after school. I must not go to the water fountain between classes unless I have permission from a teacher.

15. I understand that I may only use the lifts with the permission of the Principal, Deputy Principal or Year Head.

16. I have a duty to possess a school journal and daily enter homework assigned to me. I also have a duty to complete all homework to the best of my ability. I am aware that homework includes revision. I must also have the necessary books with me. All communication between home and school must be in my school journal. Notes not in the school journal may not be accepted as valid. If I lose my journal or if my journal is in an unacceptable condition I will have to purchase a new one from the school costing €10.

17. I understand that I must travel to school activities by the transport provided by the college and if using any other means of travel a note from my parents must be produced.

18. If I have a mobile communications device I have a duty to have it switched off and out of sight during class time and on the corridors when moving from one class to the next. I understand that if my mobile phone is visible or switched on during class time it may be confiscated and may not be returned for at least one week. I understand that cameras (e.g. phones, I pads, etc.) cannot be used on the school premises to record pictures, videos etc. unless students are making videos or taking photos in class for educational purposes or on fieldtrips for educational purposes and then only with the permission of a teacher. I understand that music devices such as walkman, MP3 Player, or I pod, etc., cannot be used during class time. These may also be confiscated and may not be returned for a period.

Failure to hand up mobile phones and music devices when asked is a major offence. **Note:** Class time includes while changing from one class to another. I understand that I must not have any inappropriate or offensive material on my phone or music device. If I receive any such material I should report it to my parents or school authorities and have it deleted. If using a Tablet/Laptop/ Computer or any other electronic device I understand that I must follow the ICT Acceptable Use Policy, I pad Acceptable Use Policy and Social Media Policy. Inappropriate use of Social Media/Internet sites such as uploading material of an offensive nature in relation to any member of the school community – students, staff, parents/guardians will be regarded as gross misconduct and will be referred to the board of management.

19. I have a duty not to be in possession of or consume alcoholic drink while attending school or while involved in school activities. Also I understand that in order to function to the best of my ability I must not be under the influence of alcohol.

20. I understand that contact or conduct deemed inappropriate by College authorities is not allowed between students.

21. The school reserves the right to search any part of school property (including lockers) and any bags, vehicles or other belongings on college property or at college events.

Where there is a reasonable cause to believe that a person on school property or at a school event has on their person (which includes clothes etc. actually being worn) any stolen property, offensive weapon or dangerous thing (including a drug within the meaning of the drugs policy of the school), that person may be asked to volunteer the property weapon or thing. If they fail to do so the Gardai may be called in to conduct a search. Two staff members must be present during any form of search. An attempt will be made to notify a minor students parent/guardian prior to the Garda search. If a medical emergency arises, medical/emergency services will be sought.

22. For Health & Safety I understand that students who drive to school cannot access the vehicle during the school day from the time they arrive in school until the time they are leaving to go home unless with the prior permission of a teacher. For Health & Safety students are only allowed park in designated areas which excludes the staff/visitors carpark.

23. I understand that all school rules apply during state examinations with one exception. Students are allowed leave the college grounds outside of the time they are completing their examination. Junior Cycle students must remain in their examination centre for the duration of their examination.

24. I understand that interfering with the fire safety and other safety systems is dangerous and I must not cause false alarms.
25. I understand that the emergency exit doors are only to be used in an emergency situation e.g. to leave the school building when the fire alarm sounds or during an emergency evacuation event. This is to prevent unauthorised access to the school buildings.
26. Students are encouraged to only use deodorants of the non aerosol type and if using aerosol type deodorants students must be aware of the dangers associated with their use in enclosed areas. Please observe the safety notices printed on the deodorant container.
27. After school study begins at 4.15pm and finishes at 6.30pm. I have a duty to arrive on time and I understand that school rules apply while attending study and I accept that any misbehaviour will be notified to my parents. If leaving afterschool study early I must present the supervisor with a note signed by my parent or guardian.
28. When I reach the age of 18 as an adult, I understand that I have the right to be treated as an adult. I understand that I must also take on the responsibilities of an adult. If an issue of vital interest to students arise the school in line with legislation may contact parents.
29. I understand that I must not adjust classroom blinds or windows unless I have permission from a teacher.
30. I understand that I must comply with all Health and Safety regulations in place to protect myself and others. Failure to comply with Health and Safety regulations is a Major Offence. Due to the Covid-19 Epidemic regulations will be put in place to protect the school community and must be complied with.
31. I have a duty to comply with any further regulations which may be introduced for my own good and the good of the college.

### **Promoting Positive Behaviour**

A whole school strategy approach to inappropriate behaviour exists which is taught to students as a visual “Ladder of Intervention”. This system is a school wide response from staff to assist students in learning by helping them change their behaviour. Promoting positive behaviour is central to our code of behaviour and hence our responses to inappropriate behaviour foster support and guidance to students.

All teachers’ use their Positive Intervention Strategies to counteract inappropriate behaviours. The rationale for this is:

- To give students responsibility in the development of school and classroom rules
- To develop positive everyday interactions between teachers and students
- To give students options
- Give students a chance to change their behaviour

### **Positive Strategies**

**Positive Comments:** Eportal has a section for recording positive comments. Teachers give positive comments to students as a means of encouraging effort and good behavior as well as commending good deeds done for any member of the school community.

**Annual Awards Ceremony:** A major event at the end of the school year is the Awards Ceremony where students are presented with awards in various areas such as sporting, attendance, music, drama, debates, Subject Awards, Student of the Year, Gaeltacht Scholarships etc. Trophies and certificates are presented in the various categories to commend positive involvement in school life.

*We also recognise the importance of motivating students, encouraging them to channel their energy in developing key skills and participation in areas of responsibility throughout the school.*

**Prefects:** Senior Cycle students are chosen to act as Prefects for the school year. Their duties include supervising the queue in the canteen and supervising in the sports complex corridor. Prefects also supervise in the canteen encouraging students to use bins and consume food in the canteen.

**Cairde:** Cairde are a group of Transition Year students selected each year to Mentor the first year students. The Cairde are invited to apply for the role. The core duty of the Cairde is to make the transition from Primary to Post Primary school as easy as possible. They meet with first year students on the first year induction day and thereafter engage with the first year students through activities and keeping a watchful eye on them during breaks.

**Students Council:** The main aims of the council are to act as a representative body for the students of the College and to help with the maintenance of a genuine school spirit.

### **Responding to Inappropriate Behaviour**

Teachers differentiate between levels of behaviour: **(a) Minor Offences (b) Major Offences**

**(A) Minor offences:** Minor offences are split into behavioural and organisational offences to ensure that the student receives the most appropriate intervention or sanction

<b>Behavioural</b>	<b>Organisational</b>
(a) Disrupting Class	(a) No Journal/diary when asked for
(b) Disturbing other classes	(b) No books/Materials
(c) Talking in class	(c) Not doing homework
(d) Throwing (anything) in the classroom	(d) Late for class
(e) Low order defiance	(e) Not wearing uniform correctly
(f) Other	(f) Other

### **(B) Major Offences:**

- |  |                              |
|--|------------------------------|
| 1. Abusive to staff                              | 2. Abusive to students       |
| 3. Absent from a whole class without permission. | 4. Damage to school property |
| 5. Smoking or taking alcoholic drink.            | 6. Stealing                  |
| 7. Leaving school grounds without permission     | 8. Creating false alarms     |

9. Possession of substance, literature or objects injurious to the moral or physical well being of individuals.
10. Bullying or Harassment
11. Failure to hand up mobile phone etc. when requested.
12. Inappropriate use of the Internet and Social Media.
13. Sharing of Explicit Content.
14. Failing to comply with Health & Safety regulations.

**Record Keeping: All strategies to prevent and respond to inappropriate behaviour are recorded and filed**

- Class teacher – keep record of dates of interventions, targets, offences of misbehaviour, sanctions – upload behavioural issues as events on eportal, informs the Year Head when two incidents are recorded and emails the Year Head with referrals
- Year Head –Keep record of all issues involving students – reports received, meetings with student, teachers, parents or other personnel, interventions, targets, behavioural plans, contracts. To be stored in students file in Year Heads office.
- Deputy Principal and Principal – Keep record of all interventions, sanctions, referrals and inform Year Head. All records to be kept in students file – Year Heads, Principal, Deputy Principal Offices.

## Whole School Responses/Positive Interventions to Inappropriate Behaviour (Minor Offences)

Support Level	Who is Supported	Type of Support
Level 1	Whole school support: The school continually develops consistency around clear rules and routines in the class and throughout the school environment.	<p>COB Reminders: In September all students are re-taught the code of behavior. Lesson plans are prepared in advance. Throughout the school year regular reminders are given to students and planned lessons are taught when the need arises.</p> <p>First Year Induction: Students are introduced to the schools Code of Behaviour by the Year Head.</p> <p>Year Head: The Year head meets with students regularly reminding students of rules and routines and promoting our use of positive rewards.</p> <p>Class Mentors: As students regular point of contact class mentors are important in promoting positive behaviour and Code of Behaviour reminders.</p> <p>Classroom supports: Classroom teachers deal with minor offences. Teachers use their Teacher Strategy Card to prevent inappropriate behaviour by using positive strategies and respond to inappropriate behaviour by implementing suitable sanctions.</p> <p>Rule reminders in the classroom - Mobile phone rules, posters reminding students of the importance of listening in class and punctuality.</p>
Level 2	Level 2 supports are offered to students who require additional support to level one. Support is offered at step 3 of our Ladder of Intervention.	This is additional help to support the student managing their behaviour. Level 2 support is put in action at Step 3 of our Ladder of Intervention. Level 2 support is organised by the Year Head and Student Support Team. The Year Head and Student Support team work together to support the student. The support centers on skills development for the students and survival in the classroom. A resource folder is available for supporting teachers in this role. A student is referred to the Year Head after 3 misdemeanors.
Level 3	Level 3 supports are available for students that present with challenging behaviour. These students have not responded to lower level interventions.	Level 3 support is organised by the Deputy Principal at Step 4 of our Ladder of Intervention. The deputy principal collaborates with relevant supports –resource/learning support teachers, Student Support Team, classroom teachers, Year Head, parents, and outside agencies where necessary. The support is personalised to meet the needs of the student.

## **Responding to Inappropriate Behaviour Using Sanctions**

### **Sanctions**

In applying sanctions the following should be remembered:

- Allow time before giving sanction
- Proportionate
- Preserve dignity of all parties
- Be applied fairly and consistently
- Be timely
- Take account of frequency, duration, persistence of misbehaviour
- Take account of Special Needs of child
- Detention – parents should have adequate notice.
- Duty of Care – student is appropriately supervised at all times while at school

**The purpose of sanctions is to bring about a change in behaviour by:**

- helping students to learn that their behaviour is unacceptable
- helping them to recognise the effect of their actions and behaviour on others
- helping students to understand they have choices about their own behaviour and that all choices have consequences
- helping them to learn to take responsibility for their behaviour
- reinforcing the boundaries set out in the code of behaviour
- signalling to other students and to staff that their wellbeing is being protected

**Sanctions may be needed to:**

- prevent serious disruption of teaching and learning
- keep the student, or other students or adults safe

### **Examples of sanctions**

1. File entry.
2. Reprimand (including advice on how to improve).
3. Temporary separation from peers.
4. Additional work.
5. Apologise to teacher and students.
6. Detention at lunchtime/breaktime.
7. Written report to Parents/Guardian's
8. Parents called in for consultation.
9. Students put on daily report.
10. Detention outside school hours.
11. Confined to a designated area of the school.
12. Not taken on tours or outings.
13. Paying for damage.
14. Attend meeting of Year Head and Principal/Deputy Principal.
15. Suspension.
16. Expulsion.

**Note:** It is the misconduct that is penalised and not the individual.

# Whole School Responses/Positive Interventions to Inappropriate Behaviour (Major Offences)

## Major Offences

Staff member involved makes a report on offence and uploads the offence to eportal which may include witness statements

- Pass to Year Head
- Year Head deals with the offence
- Refer to Deputy Principal if matter considered to be very serious.
- Refer to Principal if sanction of Suspension to be considered
- Principal refer to Board of Management if sanction of Expulsion to be considered

In the case of Major Offences parents/guardians will be informed.

## Appeals

Parents/Guardian's have a right to appeal on behalf of their child in line with the school's complaints procedures and under Section 29 of the Education Act 1998.

Student's over eighteen have a right to appeal decisions made by the school authorities in line with the complaints procedures and under Section 29 of the Education Act 1998.

## Note:

Borrisokane Community College reserves the right to disclose information regarding a third party.

## Restorative Practices

In the case of some major offences Restorative Conferences may be organised. This will involve arranging a meeting of the students involved in an incident (person(s) who has caused harm and person(s) who have been affected). Depending on the seriousness of the incident parents of students involved and staff involved may be invited/requested to attend the conference. The conference will be chaired by school personnel who have received training in restorative practices.

In relation to minor incidents restorative practices are also used. Students are brought together to resolve issues in a collaborative manner. The emphasis is on maintaining relationships rather than assigning blame.

## Uniform:

- Students are expected to have full uniform every day
- The only jacket allowed to be worn on school grounds is the School Uniform Jacket.
- Year Heads to check uniform at assembly each morning
- Class Teachers to record on eportal if students do not have full uniform and what is not correct.
- Class teachers confiscate scarf's, hoddies, earrings, jackets and t-shirts that are not part of the school uniform and pass onto the year head. It is the students responsibility to collect their possessions from the Year Head.
- Year Head to be informed if incorrect uniform consistently
- Year Head to contact parents
- If uniform is not corrected then discuss with Deputy Principal.

- Deputy Principal contact parents and if situation not resolved then discuss with Principal.
- Class Teachers keep a check on uniform in all classes
- Runners which are coloured black ONLY can be worn as part of the school uniform
- Jackets should not be worn in class. Students should not have other coloured runners on view in the school building
- Lockers are available for runners.
- Other coloured runners should only be worn when playing sports – P.E. or games on courts at lunchtime

# **Suspension Policy**

## **Definition of Suspension:**

Suspension is requiring the student to absent himself/herself from the school for a specified, limited period of school days.

## **Authority to suspend**

The Board of Management has the authority to suspend a student. The Board of Management of Borrisokane Community College has delegated to the Principal, the authority to suspend a student for up to three days. For very serious offences which will be reported to the Board of Management the authority to suspend may be increased to up to five days. This decision was made at a Board of Management meeting on 27<sup>th</sup> April 2009. The decision was again adopted by the Board of Management in May 2020. The Principal is accountable to the Board of Management for the use of suspension.

If **Health & Safety issues** arise and cannot be dealt with within the school the Gardai may be called. If possible parents should be informed if Gardai are to be involved.

## **Automatic suspension:**

All offences will be looked at on an individual basis.

Suspension will be considered for very serious breaches of the code of behaviour. Immediate suspension will be considered if health & safety of staff and or students is an issue.

## **The following factors will be considered before suspending a student:**

### ***The nature and seriousness of the behaviour***

- What is the precise description of the behaviour?
- How persistent has the unacceptable behaviour been?
- Has the problem behaviour escalated, in spite of the interventions tried?

### ***The context of the behaviour***

- What are the circumstances of the incidents of serious misbehaviour (e.g. in class, in a particular teacher's class, in the yard, in a group)?
- What factors may have triggered incidents of serious misbehaviour (e.g. bullying, cultural or family factors)?
- What is the age, stage of development and cognitive ability of the student?
- Are there any factors that may be associated with the behaviour (e.g. particular home circumstances, special educational needs)?

### ***The impact of the behaviour***

- How are other students and staff affected by the student's behaviour?
- What is the impact of the behaviour on the teaching and learning of the class?
- Does the behaviour have a particular or greater impact on some students or teachers?
- Does the student understand the impact of their behaviour on others?

### ***The interventions tried to date***

- What interventions have been tried? Over what period?
- How have the interventions been recorded and monitored?
- What has been the result of those interventions?
- Have the parents been involved in finding a solution to the problem behaviour?

- Has the intervention of NEPS or other psychological assessment or counselling been sought, where appropriate?
- Are any other interventions such as peer mediation, restorative justice approaches or family conferencing available?
- Is the student or parent involved with any support service and has this agency or support service been asked for help in solving this problem?
- Has any other agency been asked for assistance (e.g. Child Guidance Clinic, Child and Adolescent services)?

***Whether suspension is a proportionate response***

- Does the student's behaviour warrant suspension?
- Is the standard being applied to judging the behaviour the same as the standard applied to the behaviour of any other student?

***The possible impact of suspension***

- Will suspension allow additional or alternative interventions to be made?
- Will suspension help the student to change the inappropriate behaviour?
- How will suspension help teachers or other students affected by the behaviour?
- Will suspension exacerbate any educational vulnerability of the student?

Before returning to school after a suspension a meeting will take place with the Principal or his/her representative. At the meeting the student and parent/guardian must sign an agreed behaviour contract before the student returns to class.

**Suspension during a state examination:**

Suspension will be considered if any of the following circumstances arise:

- A threat to good order in the conduct of the examination
- A threat to the safety of other students and personnel
- A threat to the right of other students to do their examination in a calm atmosphere

**Procedures in respect of suspension**

Fair procedures in line with natural justice will be applied in all cases where suspension is considered.

Where a preliminary assessment of the facts confirms serious misbehaviour that could warrant suspension has occurred the school will observe the following procedures:

- Investigate the matter
- Inform the student and parents about the situation
- Give parents and students an opportunity to respond
- Impose the sanction – parents will receive written notification of the suspension period, the arrangements for returning to school and the appeals procedures.
- Reintegrate the student

**Procedures in relation to immediate suspension**

Immediate suspension will be considered if health & safety of staff and or students is an issue.

In the case of an immediate suspension parents/guardians will be notified and requested to arrange collection of the student from the school. The matter will then be investigated as for any other suspension.

**Period of suspension:**

The Board of Management has authorised the Principal to suspend students for periods up to three days. This may be increased to five days when the issue causing concern needs to be referred to the Board of Management. The Board of Management may impose a suspension of up to ten days.

**Reintegrating the student:**

The school will have a plan to help the student reintegrate on returning to school following a suspension. This plan will involve the Year Head meeting with the student and monitoring behaviour etc. To assist with monitoring behaviour the student may be placed on a White Report Card.

While a record will be kept of the incidents that caused the suspension the student will be given the opportunity of a fresh start when returning to school after a suspension.

**Appeals**

The Board of Management will offer an opportunity to appeal the Principal's decision to suspend a student. If the Board of Management imposes a suspension this can be appealed to Tipperary Education & Training Board.

**Section 29 Appeal**

Where the total number of days for which the student has been suspended in the current school year reaches twenty days, the parents, or a student aged over eighteen years, may appeal the suspension under section 29 of the Education Act 1998, as amended by the Education Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2007.

At the time when parents are being formally notified of such a suspension, they and the student will be told about their right to appeal to the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Science under section 29 of the Education Act 1998, and will be given information about how to appeal. As Borrisokane Community College is under the management of Tipperary Education & Training Board, the appeal must be made in the first instance to Tipperary Education & Training Board. Where an appeal to the ETB is concluded, parents, or a student aged over eighteen years, may appeal to the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Skills.

**Records and reports**

Records of investigation and decision-making

Formal written records will be kept of:

- the investigation (including notes of all interviews held)
- the decision-making process
- the decision and the rationale for the decision
- the duration of the suspension and any conditions attached to the suspension.

Report to the Board of Management. The Principal will report all suspensions to the Board of Management, with the reasons for and the duration of each suspension.

Report to Tusla. The Principal is required to report suspensions in accordance with the Tusla reporting guidelines (Education (Welfare) Act, 2000, section 21(4)(a)).

**Review of use of suspension**

The Board of Management will review the use of suspension in the school at regular intervals to ensure that its use is consistent with school policies, that patterns of use are examined to identify factors that may be influencing behaviour in the school and to ensure that use of suspension is appropriate and effective.

# **Expulsion Policy**

## **Definition:**

A student is expelled from a school when a Board of Management makes a decision to permanently exclude him or her from the school, having complied with the provisions of section 24 of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000.

## **Authority to Expel:**

The Board of Management of Borrisokane Community College has the authority to expel a student.

## **Grounds for Expulsion:**

Expulsion will be considered in the following cases:

- The student is involved in extreme cases of unacceptable behaviour
- The student persistently refuses to abide by the Code of Behaviour
- the student's behaviour is a persistent cause of significant disruption in the school
- the student's continued presence in the school constitutes a real and significant threat to safety
- the student is responsible for serious damage to property
- serious breach of substance use policy.

## **The following factors will be considered before expelling a student:**

### **The nature and seriousness of the behaviour**

- What is the precise description of the behaviour?
- How persistent has the unacceptable behaviour been and over what period of time?
- Has the problem behaviour escalated, in spite of the interventions tried?

### **The context of the behaviour**

- What are the circumstances of the incidents of serious misbehaviour (e.g. in class, in a particular teacher's class, in the yard, in a group)?
- What factors may have triggered or provoked incidents of serious misbehaviour (e.g. bullying, cultural or family factors)?
- Are there any factors that may be associated with the behaviour (e.g. particular home circumstances, special educational needs)?

### **The impact of the behaviour**

- How are other students and staff affected by the student's behaviour?
- What is the impact of the behaviour on the teaching and learning of the class?

### **The interventions tried to date**

- What interventions have been tried? Over what period?
- How have the interventions been recorded and monitored?
- What has been the result of these interventions?
- Have the parents been involved in finding a solution to the problem behaviour?
- Has the intervention of NEPS or other psychological assessment or counselling been sought, where appropriate?
- Is the student or parent involved with any support service and has this agency or support service been asked for help in solving this problem?
- Has any other agency been asked for assistance (e.g. Child Guidance Clinic, Child and Adolescent Mental Health services)?

- Is the Board satisfied that no other intervention can be tried or is likely to help the student to change their behaviour?

**Whether expulsion is a proportionate response**

- Is the student's behaviour sufficiently serious to warrant expulsion?
- Is the standard being applied to judging the behaviour the same as the standard applied to the behaviour of any other student?

**The possible impact of expulsion**

- To what extent may expulsion exacerbate any social or educational vulnerability of the student?
- Will the student be able to take part in, and benefit from, education with their peers?
- In the case of a student who is in care, what might be the implications of expulsion for the care arrangements?

**Procedures in respect of Expulsion:**

Borrisokane Community College is committed to following fair procedures as well as procedures under the Education (Welfare) Act 2000, when proposing to expel a student. When a preliminary assessment of the facts confirms serious misbehaviour that could warrant expulsion, the procedural steps will include:

*1. A detailed investigation carried out under the direction of the Principal.*

In line with fair procedures, the Principal will:

- inform the student and their parents about the details of the alleged misbehaviour, how it will be investigated and that it could result in expulsion
- give parents and the student every opportunity to respond to the complaint of serious misbehaviour before a decision is made and before a sanction is imposed.

Parents will be informed in writing of the alleged misbehaviour and the proposed investigation.

*2. A recommendation to the Board of Management by the Principal.*

The Principal will:

- inform the parents and the student that the Board of Management is being asked to consider expulsion
- ensure that parents have records of: the allegations against the student; the investigation; and written notice of the grounds on which the Board of Management is being asked to consider expulsion
- provide the Board of Management with the same comprehensive records as are given to parents
- notify the parents of the date of the hearing by the Board of Management and invite them to that hearing
- advise the parents that they can make a written and oral submission to the Board of Management

*3. Consideration by the Board of Management of the Principal's recommendation; and the holding of a hearing.*

The Board will review the initial investigation, all documentation and circumstances of the case. It will ensure that no party who has had any involvement with the circumstances of the case is part of the Board's deliberations. Where the Board of Management decides to consider expelling a student, it will hold a hearing. The Board meeting for the purpose of the hearing will be properly conducted in accordance with Board procedures. At the hearing, the Principal and the parents, or a student aged eighteen years or over, put their case to the Board in each other's presence. Each party should be allowed to question the evidence of the other party directly. The meeting may also be an opportunity for parents to make their case for lessening the sanction. In the conduct of the hearing, the Board will take care to ensure that they are, and are seen to be, impartial as between the Principal and the student. Parents may

wish to be accompanied at hearings and the Board will facilitate this, in line with good practice and Board procedures.

After both sides have been heard, the Board will ensure that the Principal and parents are not present for the Board's deliberations.

*4. Board of Management deliberations and actions following the hearing.*

Having heard from all the parties, it is the responsibility of the Board to decide whether or not the allegation is substantiated and, if so, whether or not expulsion is the appropriate sanction. Where the Board of Management, having considered all the facts of the case, is of the opinion that the student should be expelled, the Board will notify the Educational Welfare Officer in writing of its opinion, and the reasons for this opinion. (Education (Welfare) Act 2000, s24(1)). The student cannot be expelled before the passage of twenty school days from the date on which the EWO receives this written notification (Education (Welfare) Act 2000, s24(1)).

The Board will inform the parents in writing about its conclusions and the next steps in the process.

*5. Consultations arranged by the Educational Welfare Officer.*

Within twenty days of receipt of a notification from a Board of Management of its opinion that a student should be expelled, the Educational Welfare Officer must:

- make all reasonable efforts to hold individual consultations with the Principal, the parents and the student, and anyone else who may be of assistance
- convene a meeting of those parties who agree to attend (Education (Welfare) Act 2000, section 24).

Pending these consultations about the student's continued education, a Board of Management may take steps to ensure that good order is maintained and that the safety of students is secured (Education (Welfare) Act 2000, s24(5)). A Board may consider it appropriate to suspend a student during this time. Suspension should only be considered where there is a likelihood that the continued presence of the student during this time will seriously disrupt the learning of others, or represent a threat to the safety of other students or staff.

*6. Confirmation of the decision to expel.*

Where the twenty-day period following notification to the Educational Welfare Officer has elapsed, and where the Board of Management remains of the view that the student should be expelled, the Board of Management will formally confirm the decision to expel. Parents will be notified immediately that the expulsion will now proceed. Parents and the student will be told about the right to appeal and supplied with the standard form on which to lodge an appeal. A formal record should be made of the decision to expel the student.

## **Appeals**

A parent, or a student aged over eighteen years, may appeal a decision to expel to the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Skills (Education Act 1998 section 29). An appeal may also be brought by the Educational Welfare Board on behalf of a student. As Borrisokane Community College is a school under Tipperary Education & Training Board, the appeal must be made in the first instance to Tipperary Education & Training Board, Church Road, Nenagh, Co. Tipperary. Telephone 067-31250. Where an appeal to the ETB has been concluded, parents, or a student aged over eighteen years, may go on to appeal to the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Skills.

## **Review of use of expulsion**

The Board of Management will review the use of expulsion in the school at regular intervals to ensure that its use is consistent with school policies, that patterns of use are examined to

identify factors that may be influencing behaviour in the school and to ensure that use of expulsion is appropriate and effective.

**Code of Behaviour Review:**

Reviewed 4<sup>th</sup> October 2010.

Reviewed 2<sup>nd</sup> June 2011.

Reviewed 20<sup>th</sup> June 2013.

Reviewed 17<sup>th</sup> June 2014.

Reviewed 10<sup>th</sup> June 2015

Reviewed 16<sup>th</sup> Jun 2016.

Reviewed 15<sup>th</sup> June 2017

Reviewed 14<sup>th</sup> June 2018

Reviewed 10<sup>th</sup> June 2019

Reviewed 25<sup>th</sup> June 2020