

Our Lady's College, Greenhills, Whole School Policy on Student Code of Behaviour.

Mission Statement

We are a Christian Community founded by the Presentation Order, which is committed to:

Fostering Gospel values and ensuring a Catholic ethos as the cornerstone of school life, in co-operation with parents and the local community.

Being aware of the Pastoral needs of all the students and providing an environment which will enable them to develop to their full potential as individuals who recognise their own worth.

Reflecting Nano Nagle's mission to educate the marginalised.

Offering a balanced curriculum of subject choices that will enable each student to develop at her own rate and to her own potential.

Delivering the highest standard of teaching, learning and performance.

Cultivating an ongoing awareness of the beauty of the school surroundings and its maintenance.

Scope

This policy applies to all students during the school day and while on school activities.

Rationale

This policy is rooted in the school's mission statement to provide an environment which will enable students to develop their full potential as responsible, independent individuals and to foster Gospel values of love and respect for people. It is rooted also in the requirement of the Presentation Philosophy of Education and the CEIST Charter to provide a discipline procedure which is fair, consistent and transparent, aimed at developing self esteem through affirmation and good relationships as reflected in the school's pastoral care policy. It is in accordance also with National Education Welfare Board policy/guidelines.

Aims

- To provide an environment where teaching and learning can happen effectively.
- To provide an environment in which students feel safe, secure and respected.
- To develop a moral framework within which initiative, responsibility and sound relationships flourish.
- To enable students to develop a sense of self worth and a respect for and tolerance of others.
- To encourage students to take responsibility for their own behaviour.
- To ensure that the school is operating best practices in accordance with NEWB policy/guidelines.

Objectives

That students develop:

- Self-confidence
- Sensitivity and consideration for others
- A pride in themselves and in their school
- Responsibility for their learning and their environment
- An independence of mind
- A sense of fairness
- An understanding of the need for rules
- A respect and tolerance for another's way of life and different opinions
- Non-racist attitudes
- An appropriate response to bullying and abuse.

A Positive Focus

This code of conduct has been devised to enable standards of excellence to be achieved in all school activities. Students who adhere to the code will be rewarded by the quality of their learning, by the quality of their environment and by the affirmation they receive. Acknowledgement of good behaviour in the classroom and in the school is central to the policy. Positive behaviour is promoted in many different ways in Our Lady's College.

1. Pastoral Care Structure of Year Head and Class Teacher:
 - Class teachers, subject teachers and Year Heads praise good behaviour whenever they can by writing positive comments in students' journals.
 - Class teachers commend good work and behaviour during Pastoral Care class.
 - At morning assembly students are praised for their achievements, good behaviour, participation and learning.
2. Awards Ceremony:
 - A range of awards is presented to students in each class at our annual Prize-giving ceremony for effort and achievement in curricular and extra-curricular activities.
3. Prefect system, Mentoring Programme and The Students Council:
 - The Students Council provides a voice for students and involves them in school activities and policy development.
 - The Class Prefect system fosters in students a sense of responsible leadership.
 - The Mentoring Programme helps First Year students settle in to their new school and encourages leadership skills in student mentors.
4. Extra Curricular Programme:
 - Students are encouraged to get involved in the wide range of extra-curricular activities available. Activities form an important part of the educational programme in the school and are enormously beneficial to students in developing personal skills.

The School Rules and the Classroom Code of Behaviour are an integral part of this policy; they represent the standards of behaviour expected from students in Our Lady's College. Any breaches will be deemed contrary to our Code of Behaviour.

School Rules

Attendance and Punctuality

1. Students must attend school regularly and punctually. In accordance with the requirements of the Child Welfare Act 1998, the area Educational Welfare Officer will be notified of any student who is absent for 20 days in any one academic year, or who otherwise contravenes the requirements of the Child Welfare Act 1998.
2. In case of absence from school, a note from the student's Parent(s)/Guardian(s), giving a full explanation of the reason(s) for the absence, must be given to the student's Class Teacher on her return to school. This is required by law.
3. Attendance at all school assemblies is compulsory.
4. Students are expected to attend school and classes on time. If a student is late on three occasions she may be given a detention.
5. Students must not leave class or school premises without permission.
6. Should a student wish to leave the school premises for any reason during the school day, she must have a note from parents/guardians and then she must get permission from her Class Teacher or, failing that, from her Head of Year, one of the Deputy Principals or Principal before leaving the school. Having been given permission to leave the school premises, she should sign out in the Secretary's office. A note of explanation should be presented to her Class Teacher on her return to school.
7. Medical, dental or other appointments should be made outside school hours if at all possible. Where this is not possible, an appointment card should be presented by the student to her Class Teacher when requesting permission to leave the school.
8. Students who do not go home for lunch must remain on the school premises. Students are not allowed to go to another student's house at lunchtime nor to order in food for lunchtimes.

School Hours: 9.00 a.m. – 3.50 p.m.

Lunch Hour: 12.50 p.m. – 1.50 p.m.

Total = 28 hours per week

Uniform

- Correct uniform must be worn by every student daily in school, during state examinations and on school outings unless otherwise stipulated.
- P.E. uniform must be worn for all P.E. classes.
- Make-up or unconventional hair colouring or unconventional hairstyles are not allowed with uniform.
- One pair of stud earrings and one finger ring are the only jewellery that may be worn. Other types of jewellery and incorrect items of apparel will be confiscated.

- School shoes must be flat and may be navy or black in colour. Platforms, boots, high-heels and runners are strictly forbidden. Students may be suspended from class or sent home for repeated infringements of this rule. Parents will be informed/contacted in this situation.

Studies

Students must have all necessary books and materials for every class every day. If books are lost or abused they must be replaced. All books and equipment should be maintained in good condition and free of all unnecessary markings. Homework should be done conscientiously and tidily.

General Behaviour

Behaviour at all times should be a credit to home and school. Students should behave in a considerate manner and should treat other people – fellow-students, teachers, non-teaching members of staff, visitors to the school – with dignity, due respect and courtesy at all times. Care for the school environment, for school property and for the property of others should be practised at all times. Instances of theft, vandalism, breakages or damage to property should be reported as soon as possible to the Class Teacher or Head of Year.

Bullying is regarded as being particularly offensive to the spirit of the school. Instances of bullying – of whatever kind – should be reported immediately to the Class Teacher, Head of Year, one of the Deputy Principals or the Principal. All reported cases of bullying will be fully investigated.

Please note:

1. Every student must have her journal with her and keep it up to date.
2. Cigarettes are not allowed in the school buildings or grounds. Smoking on the school premises or while in school uniform outside the school is not allowed. A detention and a fine of €40 is the penalty for infringement of the school rule on smoking. Under government legislation a person found guilty of a smoking offence under Section 47(2) of the Public Health (Tobacco) Act is liable, on summary conviction, to a fine of up to €3000.
3. The use of spray deodorants, spray perfumes and hair sprays in school is strictly forbidden.
4. The possession or use of alcohol or banned substances in school is strictly forbidden. Any student who breaks this rule will be suspended from school and she will be required to appear with her parents/guardians before the Board of Management where the offence will be considered.
The school authorities reserve the right to have students show the contents of their bags, lockers or desk and to ask students to empty out their pockets in cases where (a) items of value have gone missing; (b) there is any suspicion that banned substances are being concealed. Such requests would be the exception rather than the norm.
5. The chewing of gum and the inappropriate use of felt tipped markers is forbidden.

6. Under no circumstances should mobile phones be powered on or be visible between 9.00a.m. and 3.50p.m. Infringement of this rule on mobile phones will result in the mobile phone being taken up. There are adequate facilities for students to make phone calls from the school. Personal radios, iPods and mp3/4 players may be used at lunchtime (12.50 – 1.50p.m. daily). The use of all other electrical equipment is strictly forbidden. Requests for the return of items that have been taken up will not be entertained before a minimum of 2 weeks has elapsed.
7. Students are responsible for all personal property, including money, P.E. gear, books, pens, etc. Each item of property must be clearly marked with an identifying sign or name. The school cannot be held responsible for the loss of personal items.
8. Students must not mark or otherwise damage school property such as desks, chairs, walls or other equipment.
9. Students must fulfil their duties on cleaning rotas for classroom, corridor, cafeteria and school grounds as well as other duties which may be assigned to them.
10. Students should enter computer rooms and other specialist rooms only when a teacher or adult supervision is available.
11. Students should frequent the staffroom/general office area of the school and the main entrance hall only when they have particular business to conduct there.
12. A student may not change subjects or levels in a subject before she has obtained the permission of the subject teacher(s) concerned, her Head of Year and a Deputy-Principal.
13. All students must take part in an annual day of reflection and in the other events and programmes which are organised for them by the school.
14. Students should be reverent and quiet in the school chapel and prayer room at all times.
15. Permission to hold cake sales, sponsored silences, fundraising events, lunchtime discos etc., must be sought from the Principal.
16. Coming to and leaving school, students should board buses in an orderly manner, take their seats, wear seatbelts and avoid loud and unseemly behaviour.
17. Students must follow the rules of the Library when using the Library.
18. A student who decides to leave school during the school year should, out of courtesy, inform her Subject teachers, her Class teacher, her Head of Year and the Principal.
19. At the end of each academic year each student who wishes to continue in Our Lady's College must enrol, through her parents/guardians, for the following year in the school.
20. A student who has been unsatisfactory during a particular year may be required, along with her parents/guardians, to meet with the Principal before returning in September.
21. For a student to qualify for graduation from Our Lady's College she must have a satisfactory attendance throughout her years in the school, including 6th year, and sit the Leaving Certificate Examination in the college.

Class

1. When students are moving between classrooms they should do so as quickly and as quietly as possible. Students are requested to walk on the left in corridors and on stairways.
2. When students do not have class due to a teacher's absence, they should proceed quietly to the cafeteria for supervision, bringing with them the books for the subject in which they are missing a class. In the case of P.E. they should bring the books for the class that follows.
3. Permission to leave class, for any reason, must be obtained from the subject teacher(s) concerned. In the case of illness, where a student is unable to sit in class, the student should report to the Secretary or to a Deputy Principal, having first obtained permission to leave the class from her Subject Teacher.
4. On her return to class/school after absence, a student should request permission to rejoin the class of each teacher whose class she has missed.
5. Students should not interrupt a class to make announcements, etc., unless acting with the permission of, or at the request of, another teacher and having asked the permission of the teacher present in the classroom.

Lunchtime

1. Students must remain on the school premises during lunchtime unless they have written permission to go home.
2. First and second year students may not remain in classrooms for any purpose during lunchtime, except when a teacher is present.
3. Cups of hot liquid may not be taken from the cafeteria by students.
4. Students should be mannerly in the Cafeteria, should show appreciation for food and should not litter the floor or tables which are provided for their use. Lunch should be eaten in the cafeteria or in the other areas designated. Eating lunch in classrooms (other than those designated), corridors or in specialist rooms is not permitted.
5. During lunchtime junior students should not be in the senior part of the school.
6. Where a student goes home for lunch and is not returning to school, the Secretary's office should be contacted as soon as possible after 1.50p.m. A note of explanation must be provided on her return to her Class Teacher.

Classroom Code of Behaviour

1. Respect each student's right to learn and each teacher's right to teach.
2. Be prepared for class. Be on time. Have all necessary books, homework, journal and relevant materials.
3. Cooperate and participate in all class activities.
4. Class discussion is an important part of learning. Listen to what others are saying and respect their views. Value the democracy of the class.
5. Do not ridicule or criticise.
6. Listen to the teacher. Follow the teacher's instructions at all times.

7. Raise your hand if you have a question to ask. Avoid speaking out of turn. Never use offensive or objectionable language.
8. Respect all visitors to the classroom.
9. No eating during class. Water, if necessary, should be taken only with the teacher's permission. Classroom should be kept litter-free and tidy at all times. This is everybody's responsibility.
10. Respect all school property and the property of others.

Procedures for Implementing the Code of Behaviour

All necessary information regarding the Code of Behaviour is given to parents/guardians before a student is enrolled in Our Lady's College. Both parents/guardians and students are required to read the Code of Behaviour and to sign the School Rules Acceptance Form(Appendix 1) before a student is enrolled. At the end of each school year, when enrolling for the following school year, each student and her parents/guardians are required to sign the annual agreement to abide by the Code of Behaviour.

The Code of Behaviour is included in the school journal, of which each student has a copy, and its rationale and operation are explained at Form classes and assemblies by Class Teachers, Heads of Year, Deputy Principals and Principal.

All teachers are given a copy of the Code of Behaviour, the Student School Journal and Guidelines on the operation of the Discipline system in Our Lady's College. They are briefed on the implementation of the Code of Behaviour at the start of each academic year or on taking up employment in the school.

Most misdemeanours, whether in the classroom or elsewhere, will be dealt with on the spot by the nearest teacher. Oftentimes this may mean no more than a word of admonition. Other sanctions that may be used by the teacher on the spot are outlined in the Discipline Referral Guidelines (Appendix 2).

The Negative Comments and Positive Comments section of the student journal are used to communicate with the student's parents/guardians regarding noteworthy student behaviour. Teachers are encouraged to continually and proactively reward deserving students.

Whenever a teacher feels that it is necessary to seek the help of the Class Teacher, Head of Year, a Deputy Principal or Principal s/he will write a referral note in the student's journal and will pass a copy on to the relevant person for later action. A copy will remain in the student's journal as a record of the incident.

Should a breach of discipline requiring immediate action by a Deputy Principal or Principal occur the teacher involved will send for a Deputy Principal or Principal on the spot, or if s/he considers it safe to do so, send the student with an explanatory note to the Deputy Principal or Principal. On no account will a student be put outside the classroom door and left to her own devices.

In disciplining students all staff members will adhere fully to the agreed guidelines and will not impose ad hoc penalties of their own making. The action that may be taken at the various levels of authority (Subject Teacher, Class Teacher, Head of Year, Deputy Principal, and Principal) in the school is outlined in the Discipline Referral Guidelines(Appendix 2). Counselling may be recommended when dealing with some cases of indiscipline.

Each Head of Year will investigate all incidents referred to her/him and will report on disciplinary matters to the Heads of Year meeting once per week. The Deputy Principals will investigate all incidents referred to them and will report on disciplinary matters to the Principal on a daily basis. The Principal will investigate all incidents referred to him/her and will report on disciplinary matters to the Board of Management at the next meeting.

When an investigation into an incident is carried out, notes will be recorded by the person carrying out the investigation, including a record of interviews with students and others. Students may be asked to make a written statement about their knowledge of an incident.

Sanctions

Parents/Guardians will be contacted by phone in certain cases of indiscipline.

Parents/Guardians may be asked to remove their daughter temporarily from the school in cases of serious indiscipline. Serious offences or continued disregard for school rules may lead to detention outside of school hours, suspension from class, suspension from school or expulsion from school.

Detention is held after school from 4.00p.m. to 6.00p.m. Requests for change of time of detention to another time of the week cannot be considered. Failure to be present in school uniform for detention may result in suspension from school.

Suspension

Suspension is defined as: requiring a student to absent herself from the school for a specified, limited period of school days.

Our Lady's College regards suspension as a very serious sanction.

The Board of Management delegates to the Principal the authority to suspend a student for up to 3 school days or 5 days in exceptional circumstances.

Rationale for Suspension

Suspension can provide:

- A respite for staff and the student,
- Give the student time to reflect on the link between her actions and its consequences
- Provide time for staff to plan ways of helping the student to change unacceptable behaviour.

Reasons why a student may be suspended:

The decision to suspend a student requires serious grounds such as:

- A student's failure to present for detention.
- A student's behaviour has a serious detrimental effect on the education of other students.
- A student's continued presence in the school at this time constitutes a threat to safety.
- The student is responsible for serious damage to property.
- A single incident of misconduct may be grounds for suspension.

Procedures for Suspension:

- A letter outlining the reasons for suspension, the length of the suspension and the Right of Appeal to the Board of Management will be sent to Parents/Guardians.
- On completion of the period of suspension Parents/Guardians will be expected to accompany the student to school on her return from suspension to meet with the Principal/Deputy Principal or Year Head. At this meeting the student will be expected to sign a pledge of good behaviour.
- All suspensions are reported to the Board of Management at the next Board meeting.
- Parents/Guardians may appeal the decision of the Principal to suspend to the Board of Management. Where the appeal is upheld, the record of the suspension will be removed from the student's record.
- Where the total number of days for which a student is suspended in the current school year reaches 20 days, the Parents/Guardians or a student over 18 years of age, may appeal the suspension under Section 29 of the Education Act 1998.

Expulsion:

The Board of Management of Our Lady's College has the right to expel a student. Expulsion is the most serious sanction which can be applied and will usually only be applied in extreme cases of misbehaviour or where the school has exhausted a range of other sanctions and interventions to bring about an improvement in a student's behaviour.

A student is expelled from the school when a Board of Management makes a decision to permanently exclude her from the school, having complied with the provisions of Section 24 of the Education Act 1998.

A proposal to expel a student will usually be based on the following grounds:

- The student's behaviour is a persistent cause of significant disruption to the learning of others or to the teaching process.
- 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.

Expulsion for a first offence:

There may be exceptional circumstances where the Board of Management forms the opinion that a student should be expelled for a first offence.

Some examples of behaviour which may result in expulsion include:

- A serious threat of violence against another student or member of staff
- Actual violence or physical assault
- Possession or supply of drugs to other students in the school
- Sexual assault

Procedures for expulsion:

When expulsion of a student is being considered the following steps will be followed:

The Principal will conduct a detailed investigation of the case. The student and Parents/Guardians will be informed in writing of the details of the alleged misbehaviour, the investigation which is underway and that it could result in expulsion.

Parents/Guardians and the student will be invited to a meeting where they will be given an opportunity to respond to the complaint of serious misbehaviour(s) before any decision or sanction imposed.

Where the Principal forms the view, based on the investigation of the case, that the expulsion may be necessary, the Principal will make a recommendation to the Board of Management to consider expulsion of the student.

Prior to the Hearing by the Board of Management, the Principal will inform in writing the Parents/Guardians and the student that the Board is being asked to consider expulsion. The Principal will supply in writing the details of the case (including the grounds for expulsion) which are to be presented to the Board. Parents/Guardians will be notified well in advance of the Hearing and will be invited to attend the Hearing and present a verbal submission or supply a written submission for consideration.

The Board of Management will give due consideration to all the facts of the case and consider any submissions made before reaching its decision. Parents/Guardians and the student will be informed in writing of its decision.

Should it be necessary to begin the process of expulsion the Board of Management will notify the NEWB of its opinion and the reasons for it. The student cannot be expelled before a period of 20 school days has elapsed from the date of receipt of notification by the NEWB. However, the Board may decide to suspend the student for that period if it feels that this is warranted.

When the 20 school day period has elapsed the Principal and the Chairperson, acting on behalf of the Board, will formally confirm the decision to expel. Parents/Guardians will be informed of this decision immediately. They will be informed of their Right to Appeal under Section 29 of the Education Act and supplied with the appropriate Appeal Form.

Right of Appeal:

Parents/Guardians or a student over 18 years, may appeal a decision to expel to the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Skills. An appeal may also be brought by the NEWB on behalf of a student.

Conclusion

The Code of Behaviour will be reviewed one year after its implementation. Any amendments which need to be made will be in keeping with the ethos of Our Lady’s College and the Code of Behaviour will be communicated to members of the school community in writing.

Any changes made to the Code of Behaviour or to the school rules are binding. A major review will be carried out no later than five years after the date of implementation and will involve consultation with the Parents/Guardians, students, staff and Board of Management. The Code of Behaviour for students was devised in consultation with staff, students, Parents/Guardians and the Board of Management of Our Lady’s College.

Ratification

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management on: _____

Signed: _____ Chairperson, Board of Management

Agreement to Comply with School Rules

I/We _____

(Parent(s)/Guardian(s)/Civil Partner) accept the School Rules and Code of Discipline – a copy of which we received with the School Application Form.

Signature(s): _____

Date: _____

I _____ (Student) agree to comply with the School Rules and Code of Discipline, without exception, while a student of Our Lady's College, Greenhills.

Signature: _____

Date: _____