

## 4.3 Code of Behaviour

### 1. Introduction

This Code of Behaviour is effective on and from 15 January 2019 and supersedes all previous Codes. It has been prepared in accordance with “Developing a Code of Behaviour: Guidelines for Schools”, NEWB, May 2008. The Code has been approved by the Loreto trustees.

Loreto Secondary School, Wexford is an educational establishment catering for 780 students (from September 2018) and a total staff of approximately 65 people. To ensure that all members of the school community can work in an orderly and safe environment it is essential that this Code of Behaviour be implemented in full and evaluated from time to time by the BOM following consultation with staff, students, parents and any other interested parties.

Parents are made aware of the code prior to the registration of their daughter in the school in compliance with Section 23(4) of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000. Registration and admission of students into the school is conditional on parents’ giving a written undertaking that they find this Code of Behaviour acceptable and that they will make all reasonable efforts to ensure compliance by their daughter. The Code of Behaviour applies to all students up to the completion of senior cycle education.

In accordance with the Age of Majority Act, 1985 the school recognises that a student aged 18 or over is an adult and has capacity to enter contracts and make decisions affecting her legal and other rights.

The Code of Behaviour is posted on the school’s website with all other policies. A hard copy is available on request from the Principal.

Students will be made familiar with the code in the following ways:

- By daily interaction with subject teachers
- Following input by class teachers
- In SPHE/Wellbeing classes
- At assemblies with the Principal, Deputy Principals and Year Heads (where applicable) and in the course of their visits to classes
- By regular intercom announcements
- By its inclusion in the student journal

### 2. Mission and Values Statement

Truth, freedom, justice, sincerity and joy – as relevant today in Loreto, Wexford as for Mary Ward in 1609.

As a Health Promoting School, the following are the values that are central to life in this school:

- People feel valued
- Self-esteem is fostered
- There is respect, tolerance and fairness
- People in difficulty are supported
- There is open and honest communication
- Effort is recognised
- Difference is valued
- Conflict is handled constructively
- Social, moral and civic values are promoted

- Initiative and creativity are stressed
- Doing one's best

### 3. Mutual expectations

The school undertakes to provide the service of education to its students that will be broad and challenging in nature. Students will be prepared for Junior and Leaving Certificate examinations and a comprehensive Transition Year Programme will be provided for all students. The school also undertakes to provide a wide range of extra-curricular activities in an attempt to enhance the social, personal, sporting and aesthetic development of students. All members of staff, teaching and non-teaching, are expected to adopt high professional standards in their dealings with each other and with all members of the school community i.e. students and parents.

This service of education is offered in the expectation that each student presents herself in a state to receive it, behaves in a satisfactory manner, displays a general readiness to learn, attends frequently and punctually and adheres to uniform and dress code requirements.

It is further expected that all parents will be supportive of the Code of Behaviour and that their dealings with the school will also be of a high standard.

The school is very pleased to acknowledge the long tradition of very good behaviour by the general student population. This reflects very well on the students' sense of responsibility, their home background and the level of support and respect afforded them by school staff.

### 4. Recognition of good behaviour

The school's culture is to be such that good behaviour is seen as the norm and that recognition of this should be embedded practice.

To this end, the following measures will be adopted:

- Staff will give frequent, informal and low-key recognition of good behaviour.
- Staff will write positive messages in student journals.
- A "Well Done / Good News" noticeboard will be located in a prominent position to give recognition to students' positive achievements.
- Staff will be encouraged to write positive postcards to students and/or their parents in recognition of particularly laudable behaviour or achievement. Any such correspondence will be placed on student files.
- Class teachers and Year Heads may choose to organise rewards for students or groups in respect of particularly positive behaviour. Examples of such rewards might be:
  - A "chill", "chat" or "reflection" class
  - Going for a walk
  - Going to an outdoor social space
  - Going to the Prayer Room for a relaxation/ meditation
  - A "Drop Everything and Dance" (DEAD) class
  - A "Drop Everything and Read" (DEAR) class
  - To organise a Table Quiz in class
  - To visit the library
  - A "Tea" class
- Year Heads and Deputy Principals will recognise good attendance by students on a regular basis throughout the school year.

- The Principal and Deputy Principals will provide recognition of good behaviour in the course of class visits and assemblies.

## 5. School Discipline

### (a) Levels of Responsibility

Responsibility for the implementation of school behaviour policy rests, in the first instance, with each individual Subject Teacher. Should cases of indiscipline be persistent or serious in nature, the Subject Teacher will seek the advice of the Class Teacher. The Class Teacher may, in turn, refer serious or persistent matters to the Year Head (where applicable) or Deputy Principal for more detailed consideration. In extreme cases, the Deputy Principal will refer to the Principal. The Principal will inform the BOM of any terms of suspension that s/he imposes and will also refer particularly serious instances of indiscipline to the Board. The BOM, in turn, shall have reference to natural justice, fair procedure, the Trustees and the Education Welfare Officer in any instance where the sanction of permanent exclusion is being considered.

### (b) Sanctions

The following sanctions may be applied by teachers in accordance with the seriousness of the offence, the student's previous record and any other factors deemed to be relevant:

verbal warning	(least serious sanction)
written entry in the Student's Diary	(next most serious sanction)
written disciplinary exercise	(next most serious sanction)
referral to the Class Teacher	(next most serious sanction)
referral to the Year Head/Deputy Principal	(next most serious sanction)
referral for detention	(next most serious sanction)
disciplinary meeting with parents	(most serious sanction)

Other appropriate sanctions for minor offences may be imposed by teachers following consultation with the Principal.

In addition to the above sanctions, the Principal is empowered to impose suspension from school.

The BOM, in turn, shall invoke principles of natural justice and fair procedure while informing the Education Welfare Officer of any instance where the sanction of permanent exclusion is being considered.

Sanctions must be used in the school as a form of positive intervention in the management of behaviour. In particular, a sanction should:

- Defuse and not escalate a situation
- Preserve the dignity of all parties
- Be applied in a fair and consistent way
- Be timely

### (c) School expectations

The school's principal expectations of conduct for students are as follows:

1. Students are expected to be courteous, respectful and well-mannered to teaching and non-teaching staff and to other students at all times so that learning can occur in a safe and non-threatening environment for all.
2. Students are expected to apply themselves diligently to their work at all times in order to reach their full potential

3. Any behaviour in class that disrupts the work of others is considered a very serious offence. All students have a responsibility to behave properly.

4. Students are expected to be in attendance on all school days and to register their attendance daily on the Anseo system in order that the school can fulfil its responsibilities under the Education (Welfare) Act, 2000.

5. The following procedures must be followed by students leaving the school during the school day:

(i) Students going home for lunch time on a regular basis must get a note signed by their parent and present it to the Deputy Principal before the end of school on the second Friday of September each year.

(ii) In exceptional cases i.e. lunch time on individual days, a note signed by the parent may be presented to the Deputy Principal in the general purpose area from 08.30 to 08.50 daily.

(iii) A half day will only be considered in very exceptional circumstances. In this case, the parent must give a telephone number where s/he may be contacted and the student must present a signed note to the Deputy Principal in the general purpose area from 08.30 to 08.50 daily.

(iv) A student leaving the school at any time during the school day, having first given a note signed by a parent to the Deputy Principal, must complete the sheet outside the general office. Students must have the prior approval of a teacher when completing this sheet.

(v) Breach of these procedures will lead to the imposition of detention for a first offence and suspension for a repeated breach.

(vi) At the discretion of the Principal and staff, 6<sup>th</sup> year students may be permitted to leave the school at lunchtime on the last Wednesday of each month and on a number of days immediately prior to Christmas. A consent note from a parent delivered to the Class Teacher at the start of the year will be necessary.

6. In the interests of health and safety, students should show care for school property and will be required to make good any damage to such property; classrooms, toilets and corridors are to be kept neat and tidy at all times; tippex and chewing-gum are strictly forbidden.

7. As the following forms of misbehaviour are deemed by the school to undermine its key values of respect and honesty, they will be dealt with by reference to more serious sanctions e.g. detention, suspension, expulsion:

- stealing
- bullying
- unauthorised absence from school/class
- smoking
- use/supply of alcohol/illegal substances (see below - Forbidden/illegal substances)
- forging a parent's/guardian's signature
- assault

## **6. Support for students**

The school recognises and appreciates the fact that most students behave appropriately. Subject and class teachers are best positioned to provide advice and direction to students when minor misbehaviour needs to be addressed.

Students who might need additional help or specialised support in adhering to the Code of Behaviour are advised to avail of the services provided by school counsellors and the Student Care Co-ordination Team. Where necessary, support services outside the school may be contacted to provide more specialised assistance to students in managing their behaviour.

The Principal will ensure that students joining the school after 1<sup>st</sup> year are made familiar with all aspects of this Code.

## **7. Written records**

Written records of students' behaviour and school performance are kept as a matter of policy. Instances of laudable behaviour will also be placed on students' records e.g. photocopies of all school certificates presented to students.

All records will be kept in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR), 2018.

## **8. Home/School contact**

Students' behaviour may be discussed at the annual Parent-Teacher Meeting and/or at any time during the school year on an appointment basis.

The school will use the opportunity presented by information meetings e.g. induction meetings, Autumn and Spring general meetings, subject choice meetings to keep parents informed about the code.

## **9. Behaviour outside school**

Any specific behaviour outside school which is considered by the school authorities to damage the school, to interfere with its workings, to be detrimental to other students or to undermine school discipline is subject to the school's sanction.

## **10. Health and Safety**

The BOM will take every reasonable measure to ensure that school buildings, fittings and equipment are maintained in proper order. This commitment is set out in more detail in the school's Health and Safety Policy – section 7.10 of the School Plan.

All students have particular responsibilities for maintaining the building and grounds in a neat and tidy condition, particularly their base classrooms and communal areas e.g. toilets, general purpose area and corridors. To facilitate them in these matters, the school will provide a number of cleaning stations, each containing basic cleaning materials for use by students. The school will also establish a Tidy Schools Committee of students and a lead staff member to actively promote cleanliness and tidiness throughout the buildings and grounds.

Students are required to follow all lawful instructions given by school management and teachers so as to more fully ensure their health and safety. The attention of students is drawn, in particular, to instructions that apply in the following areas:

- Science laboratories
- Home Economics rooms
- Computer rooms
- Art, Craft and Design rooms
- Design and Communication Graphics Room
- Technology Room
- General Purpose Area and kitchen
- Sports areas
- Music and Drama classes
- Corridors

## **11. Punctuality**

Students are expected to be in attendance by 8.50 a.m. on each school day and to be punctual for every class throughout the day. The Principal and Deputy Principals will monitor punctuality on a daily basis and may impose sanctions up to and including detention for repeat breaches of this regulation.

## **12. Attendance procedures**

1. The school uses the Anseo Computerised System to record students' attendance and punctuality.
2. Each student is required to register her attendance in school between 8.00 a.m. and 8.50 a.m. on a daily basis. This can be done at any of the three control points in the general purpose area by swiping her Anseo Card.
3. Students who arrive for school between 8.50 a.m. and 9.30 a.m. are expected to register their attendance at Reception immediately upon arrival and to explain the reason for being late.
4. Students arriving after 09.30 a.m. are obliged to report to Reception and will be deemed to be absent for the day unless:
  - a. evidence of medical or dental appointments - the reason for their late arrival - can be produced at the time of arrival in school
  - b. the Principal or a Deputy Principal accepts another explanation on exceptional grounds presented at the time of arrival
5. Students leaving school before 12.25 p.m. for the rest of the day will be marked absent for the full day unless:
  - a. they are leaving for a confirmed medical or dental appointment – where possible, such students should return to school after their appointment
  - b. they are leaving for an exceptional reason that is acceptable to the Principal or a Deputy Principal
6. Students leaving school after 12.25 p.m. for the rest of the day will be marked present on the following conditions:
  - a. that they are leaving for a confirmed medical or dental appointment – where possible, such students should return to school after their appointment
  - b. that they are leaving for an exceptional reason that is acceptable to the Principal or a Deputy Principal
7. A Deputy Principal checks the system shortly after 9.00 a.m. each day and posts a report of absent students in the staffroom at that time. Staff can use this list as they monitor attendance in their classes. All staff are expected to keep their own attendance rolls in class and to report any deviations between these and the Anseo Report to the Deputy Principal as soon as possible for early investigation.
8. The school will send a text message to a parent's mobile phone stating that his/her daughter has failed to register attendance in school that morning. An exception to this will be when the school has been informed in advance and in a written note from a parent that a student will be absent on a given day.
9. Spot checks of attendance will be carried out at any time by the Principal and Deputy Principals.
10. All absences must be explained in writing by parents by means of the special forms in the student's school diary. The Deputy Principals and Year Heads will arrange for the reasons for absences to be entered into the Anseo system.

11. The Deputy Principals may impose disciplinary sanctions up to and including detention on any student who fails to comply with these procedures.
12. Parents may access their daughter's attendance record on the school's e-Portal system.

### 13. Uniform and dress code

All students are expected to comply in full with the school's uniform and dress code as set out in section 4.12 of the school plan. Uniform and dress code will be monitored on a daily basis and sanctions up to and including detention may be imposed for breaches in this regard.

### 14. Use of mobile phones/devices in school by students

When may phones/devices be used by students?

- Before classes begin at 08.50 daily
- During the first 20 minutes of lunch-time each day. The bell will ring to signify the end of this time period.
- If given permission by a teacher during class for educational purposes
- After the last class each day
- If given permission by a teacher during supervised study for educational purposes
- If given permission by a teacher at school events

When may phones/devices not be used by students?

- During morning break
- Between classes
- To arrange collection from school if feeling unwell. Such calls will be made by staff at Reception

What is considered by the school to be the inappropriate use of mobile phones/devices and what sanctions will apply?

Inappropriate use	Sanction
Using a phone/device at prohibited times	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Name given by teacher to Deputy Principal</li> <li>• Detention for repeated offences</li> <li>• Suspension if problem persists</li> </ul>
Taking any recording (sound, photo or video) of any staff member without her/his permission	Suspension
Posting of any recording (sound, photo or video) of a staff member on social media without her/his permission	Suspension
Using a phone/device to bully, intimidate, harass or embarrass any student or staff member	Suspension
Taking any recording (sound, photo or video) of any student without her permission	Suspension
Posting of any recording (sound, photo or video) of a student on social media without her permission	Suspension
Using a phone/device in the course of the school day to access what the school considers to be offensive or harmful information	Suspension

Using a phone/device in any other way that damages the school's good standing and reputation	Suspension
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#### Other points

- Students are not permitted to re-charge their phones/devices in school
- When being used in class or during supervised study, phones/devices must be clearly visible at all times on the student's desk
- Phones/devices must not be used in a manner that causes a nuisance to others e.g. playing music loudly
- Whilst this policy relates to the use of phones/devices in school by students, the school reserves the right to investigate the inappropriate use of phones/devices outside of school if such usage impacts negatively upon students or staff

### 15. Forbidden/illegal substances

Students are forbidden to smoke in school and on the school premises. Any student in breach of this regulation will face suspension from school and referral to the Environmental Health Officer.

The consumption, possession and supply of alcohol and illegal substances are also forbidden in the school, on its grounds, at and/or prior to all school-related activities. Breaches of this regulation will result in suspension from school, referral to the BOM and to the Gardaí.

These regulations are required in order to protect the health and safety of the full school community.

### 16. Personal property

Students are responsible for the safe-keeping of their personal property. The school will assist by providing a locker and a secure lock to each student for the full duration of her studies. Students must ensure that lockers are secure at all times. Lockers and locks remain the property of the school and may be inspected by school authorities at any time.

Any damage to or loss of locker/lock will result in a financial charge being imposed upon the student.

The school accepts no responsibility for the loss of, damage to or theft of students' personal property.

### 17. Disciplinary procedures

#### (a) Detention

Detention of students for an hour after school is considered to be a serious sanction that can be imposed for behavioural reasons. It is deemed to be the appropriate sanction for breaches of uniform regulations, repeated failure to comply with the requirements of the Anseo student attendance and punctuality system, unauthorised absence from class and insolence towards school staff, to give but four examples.

Parents will receive written notification of a detention 7 days prior to the date of such detention. Any resultant query should be directed in writing to the teacher imposing the detention. Meetings between parents and teachers to discuss a detention will only be held on an appointment basis.

Any appeal against a detention should be addressed to the Principal. The Principal will only become involved if attempts to resolve the matter between the parents and teacher have been unsuccessful. Detention will not be enforced while an appeal is being processed. Should the Principal decide to delete a detention, s/he will inform the student, her parents, the teacher who placed the student on detention as well as the detention co-ordinator.

If a student due for detention is absent on the day of a detention, as verified by the Anseo system, notice of an alternative date will be sent to parents. Failure to attend detention without adequate explanation, following investigation and determination by the Deputy Principal, will lead to the consideration of more serious sanctions.

The Deputy Principal will contact the parents of students receiving two detentions in a school year. A student receiving three or more detentions in a school year will be considered by the Principal for suspension.

#### **(b) On Report**

In cases where a student is consistently disruptive in a particular class, she may be placed on report to the Deputy Principal for a period of one week. Under this sanction, the Deputy Principal will provide the student with a sheet to be signed at the end of each class by her subject teacher to state that classroom behaviour, homework and general attitude were of a satisfactory standard. Failure by the student to submit a fully-signed sheet at the end of the week to the Deputy Principal will lead to the consideration of more serious sanctions.

#### **(c) Suspension**

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

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

- The student's behaviour has had a seriously detrimental effect on the education of other students
- The 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 serious misconduct may be grounds for automatic suspension e.g. assault, gross defiance, smoking, drug or alcohol offences.

In considering a term of suspension, the following factors will be relevant:

- The nature and seriousness of the behaviour
- The context of the behaviour
- The impact of the behaviour
- The interventions tried to date
- Whether suspension is a proportionate response
- The possible impact of suspension

The BOM has delegated the power to suspend for a maximum of 3 days to the Principal. With the approval of the Chairperson of the BOM, a suspension of 4 or 5 days may be imposed by the Principal. A suspension in excess of 5 days and for not more than 10 days can only be imposed by the BOM. Additionally, any suspension that would bring the total number of days for which the student has been suspended in the current school year to 20 days or more must be formally reviewed by the BOM.

Fair procedures based on the principles of natural justice will be followed by the school when proposing to suspend a student, as follows:

- The right to be heard

The Principal will inform the student and her parents in writing of the complaint, how and by whom it will be investigated and that it could result in suspension. The student and her parents will be given an opportunity to reply to the Principal's letter within 5 working days before a decision is made and before any sanction is imposed.

- The right to impartiality

This requires that the investigation of a complaint is separated from the process of making a decision with regard to sanctions. Accordingly, the Principal will usually arrange for another member or members of staff to conduct the investigation and to present a full report on the facts of the case, as well as any other relevant information, to the Principal. The Principal will then decide whether to impose suspension on a student.

The Principal will notify the student and her parents in writing of a decision to suspend. Such a letter will confirm the period of suspension and reason/s for it as well as the right of appeal to the BOM or to the DES as relevant. A suspension will not be served while an appeal is being processed except in the case of behaviour that endangers members of the school community.

#### **(d) Expulsion**

Expulsion will only be resorted to by the BOM in the most extreme cases of indiscipline and only after every effort at rehabilitation has failed and every other sanction has been exhausted. Any decision of the BOM to expel a student may be appealed under Section 29 of the Education Act, 1998, as explained below.

The following behaviours, however, may be grounds for automatic expulsion, even if for a first offence, and after the following of due process and fair procedures:

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

In considering the expulsion of a student, the following factors will be relevant:

- The nature and seriousness of the behaviour
- The context of the behaviour
- The impact of the behaviour
- The interventions tried to date
- Whether expulsion is a proportionate response
- The possible impact of expulsion

Summary of procedures in respect of expulsion:

1. A detailed investigation carried out under the direction of the Principal that will allow for the student and her parents to be given every opportunity to respond to the alleged misbehaviour
2. A recommendation to the BOM by the Principal and the allowing of the parents to attend the relevant part of that BOM meeting and/or to make a written and/or oral submission to the BOM
3. Consideration by the BOM of the Principal's recommendation and the holding of a special hearing to consider expelling a student
4. BOM deliberations and actions following the hearing including the informing of parents and the Educational Welfare Officer (if expulsion is being recommended)
5. Consultations arranged by the Educational Welfare Officer – 20 days must be allowed for this stage
6. Confirmation of the decision to expel

The full procedures to be followed by the BOM in the case of expulsion are set out in “Developing a Code of Behaviour: Guidelines for Schools”, NEWB, May 2008.

## **18. Modification Clause**

The BOM of this school reserves the right to modify the details of the Code of Behaviour at short notice in response to events or circumstances that were not foreseeable when the Code was being first drafted or subsequently reviewed. Written notification of such modification will be communicated to families prior to its becoming operational.

## **19. Appeals Procedure**

Under Section 28 of the Education Act, 1998:

- (a) the parent of a student or, in the case of a student who has reached the age of 18 years, the student, may appeal to the BOM against a decision of a teacher or other member of staff of a school,
- (b) grievances of students, or their parents, relating to the students' school (other than those which may be dealt with under paragraph (a) of Section 29), shall be heard,
- (c) appropriate remedial action shall, where necessary, be taken as a consequence of an appeal or in response to a grievance.

Under Section 29 of the Education Act, 1998, there are three contingencies in which the student (over 18) or the parent may appeal to the Secretary General of the DES, as follows:

- (i) where the Board permanently excludes a student from the school,
- (ii) where a student is suspended for a period of 20 days or more in one school year,
- (iii) where the school refuses to enrol a student.

Such an appeal may only be made following the conclusion of any appeal procedures provided by the school in accordance with Section 28.

## **20. Concerns/complaints**

Any member of the school community who has a concern or complaint about any aspect of this code should contact the Principal in confidence.