

## ST. RAPHAELA'S SECONDARY SCHOOL



### CODE OF BEHAVIOUR – POLICY STATEMENT

The objective of our code is to create a respectful and cooperative atmosphere in which every individual is given the best possible opportunity to grow and develop academically, socially and personally within an ordered and safe school community.

**Students, school staff and parent/guardian/carers have a duty to cooperate with each other in upholding the code if this objective is to be achieved.**

**Praise and positive consequences** are seen as more desirable and important by staff in motivating pupils, than punishment and negative consequences. In St. Raphaela's we employ a number of mechanisms to achieve this.

- We endeavour to **affirm students' self-worth and self-esteem** with praise for progress and effort as well as for high grades and achievements.
- **VShare is used for communication** between home and school, and both positive and negative behaviour is recorded on VShare.
- **Award ceremonies** are held where students are rewarded for their achievements twice a year.
- A **student achievement awards ceremony** is held in the last term where achievements in areas outside the classroom are recognised and rewarded, such as sports awards, competitions and initiatives
- A high profile and prestigious annual **prize-giving ceremony** is held each May to recognise and reward exceptional achievement and school spirit.

While this policy details how infringements of school rules will be dealt with, it is important to note that each case will be dealt with on an individual basis, taking into account the individual circumstances that may apply.

#### **Ladder of referral**

1. The class teacher deals with minor infringements of discipline that occur in their class.
2. Should these infringements recur on a regular basis, or should more serious misdemeanours be committed, the class teacher should record the events on Vshare for parent/guardian/carer consideration.
3. Behaviour is monitored on Vshare by the class tutor and Year Head. Where a student has three negative behaviour notes in any given half-term, the tutor will speak to them and give

them an afterschool detention. The assignment of detention is also noted on Vsware so parents/guardians/carers are informed.

4. If no progress is made the matter is referred to the Year Head. The class teacher may be asked to prepare a written report for the Year Head. In some circumstances the Year Head may decide to contact the parent/guardian/carers directly, or to give the student a detention.
5. If resolution is still not reached, the Deputy Principal or the Principal may ask the parent/guardian/carers to come to the school as a matter of urgency. A suspension or exclusion may result, in accordance with the guidelines issued by the Department of Education and Skills.
6. In the case of a very serious misdemeanour this ladder of referral will cease to apply, and a student may be sent directly to the Deputy Principal/Principal where appropriate action will be taken.

### **Minor misdemeanours**

The following is a list of examples of some minor misdemeanours (not exhaustive) which will generally be dealt with by the class teacher.

- Occasional bouts of inattention in class, distracting others, talking, lacking in concentration, **interfering with the learning of others.**
- Occasionally not having books/materials for class.
- Being late for class without an approved excuse.
- Not having a journal in class.
- Chewing gum
- **Infraction of rules governing Jewellery/makeup/nail varnish**

**Sanctions** deemed appropriate for dealing with the above include:

- Verbal reprimand
- Moving a student's position within a class
- Note to parent/guardian/carers on Vsware

### **More serious misdemeanours**

The following is a list of examples of some more major misdemeanours (not exhaustive) which will generally be referred to the Year Head.

- Minor misdemeanours which recur regularly
- Being physically or verbally abusive to teachers or other students
- Smoking/vaping
- Substance Abuse

**Sanctions** deemed appropriate for dealing with the above include:

- Verbal reprimand from Year Head
- Removing the student from the class in question
- Informing parent/guardian/carers
- Detention
- Parent/guardian/carers asked to meet the Year Head to discuss the issue
- Suspension

The above sanctions will normally be applied in these circumstances. However, it should be noted that in the case of a serious misdemeanour the Principal will take whatever action is appropriate, up to and including recommending expulsion to the Board of Management.

Where matters of bullying are reported, these will be dealt with by the Year Head following the BÍ Cineálta procedures. Where behaviour is not deemed to be bullying, but rather an infraction of the Code of Behaviour, then the Year Head will revert to this policy for appropriate sanction.

### **Detention**

Regular detention takes place every second week, or at the end of the school day, which may be given by the Tutor, Year Head, Deputy Principal or Principal.

The assignment of after-school detention is noted by the Tutor, Year Head, Deputy Principal or Principal in the student journal, and on their profile in Vsware under the Behaviours tab.

The PE teacher may give a detention for infringements of school rules related to PE.

Where a student is caught using their mobile phone during the school day without permission the procedure is as follows:

1. The teacher will confiscate the phone immediately and bring it to the office. The student may collect the phone from the office when they are leaving to go home that day
2. The teacher will note the assignment of a Saturday Detention on Vsware and briefly outline the incident and circumstances
3. The teacher will notify the Deputy Principal who will issue a letter to the parents/guardians/carers, informing them of the infringement and of the date and time of the detention.

A longer period of detention takes place regularly on Saturday mornings from 9.00 a.m. to 11.00 a.m. or at another time during the week. These detentions are for more serious breaches of discipline. These longer detentions may be given by a Year Head (following approval by the Deputy Principal), Deputy Principal or Principal or by a teacher, only in the case outlined above, with regard to mobile phone use, and also pending Deputy Principal or Principal approval.

Parent/guardian/carers will receive communication via Vsmail & post if a student is required to attend these periods of Saturday detention and the student's VSware profile will also contain a copy of same.

Time in detention is spent in total silence doing prescribed work in the form of a student reflection or essay the guidelines for which will be provided to them on the day. Detention will take precedence over all other commitments. Non-attendance at an allocated detention may result in suspension. Students must attend Saturday detention in full school uniform.

### **Suspension**

- All suspensions must be approved by the Principal, or if the Principal is absent, by the Deputy Principal.
- All suspensions will be reported to the Board of Management.
- Parent/guardian/carers will be notified in writing if a student is to be suspended and the reason for the suspension, in advance of the date of the suspension. Parent/guardian/carers (or students over 18) may appeal a suspension to the Board of Management for consideration at its next

meeting. However, short term suspensions will be carried out at the time specified in the notice from the school to parent/guardian/carers.

- Parent/guardian/carers may be asked to come to the school to discuss their child's behaviour. Any written records of behaviour will be open to inspection by parent/guardian/carers.
- Parent/guardian/carers (or students over the age of 18) may appeal cumulative suspensions of 6 days or more to the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Youth.
- Suspensions of 6 or more consecutive days, or cumulative suspensions of 20 days or more in one school year, will be reported to the Education Welfare Officer.
- Before returning to school the student may be interviewed by the Principal or Deputy Principal, and the Guidance Counsellor, in an effort to help their smooth transition back into school life and to advise them on strategies to avoid any further conflict. A meeting with parent/guardian/carers may also be arranged.
- In some cases, a referral to a private Counsellor may be suggested.

### **Expulsion**

- Expulsion is the ultimate sanction imposed by the school and is exercised by the Board of Management in extreme cases of indiscipline. Procedures for expulsion are in accordance with the requirements set out in the Guidelines for Codes of Behaviour by the National Education Welfare Board.
- Parent/guardian/carers (or students over the age of 18) may appeal an expulsion to the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Youth..

### **Below is some information that students and parent/guardian/carers need to be familiar with.**

#### **1. Journals**

Each student must have a school journal. This journal functions as a link between home and school. Students must always have their journals with them and failure to do so may result in a sanction. Students should note that the journal is not a private diary and should not contain personal or sensitive information. Journals should not be defaced in any way. Forging parent/guardian/carers' signatures in the journal will be treated as a most serious misdemeanour.

#### **2. Attendance**

Under the Education Welfare Act it is the parent/guardian/carers' responsibility to ensure that their child attends school each day. The school must inform the Education Welfare Board if a student is absent for more than 20 days. Following a warning from the Education Welfare Board, a parent/guardian/carer can then be prosecuted for not ensuring that their child attends school regularly.

**If a student is absent, a Parent/guardian/carer/Guardian should make an absence request on VShare as soon as possible.**

If a student is absent from school the Year Head may contact their parent/guardian/carers by phone to investigate their whereabouts.

If there is a valid reason why a student cannot attend school for a protracted length of time, parent/guardian/carers should contact the tutor, Counsellor, Year Head or Principal to discuss the problem at the earliest opportunity.

### **3. Punctuality**

We value punctuality very highly because punctuality and attendance have been shown to have a significant positive effect on students' academic progress'. Students are expected to be in their classroom ***no later than 8.30 a.m.*** in the morning and ***no later than 1.30 p.m.*** in the afternoon.

If a student is late for school, they will get a late stamp in their journal, sign the 'lates' sheet at the office, and it is noted on their Vsware profile. Three lates in a half term (unless there are strongly mitigating circumstances) will merit a detention. Where a student is late for a genuine reason, parents may report a 'Late Excused' on Vsware outlining the reason, no later than one week after the event.

### **4. Leaving school without permission**

Before leaving school during the school day a student must firstly have a note from a parent/guardian/carer on VSware. They must then get permission to leave from office staff and sign out on the sign out sheet. If a student becomes ill during the school day they should look for their Year Head for permission to come to the office in order to ring a parent/guardian/carer to go home. ***Under no circumstances*** should the student make this call on their mobile phone – ***all such calls must be made from the office.*** If their Year Head is not available, they must get permission from another Year Head, the Deputy Principal or the Principal, before ringing home. Before leaving they must sign the signing-out book and include the name of the person who gave their permission to leave. Failure to do so may result in a detention or a suspension.

No student is allowed to loiter at the local shops or shopping centre during the lunch time break. All students must remain in school for the duration of the school day. Sixth year students have permission to leave school during lunch time.

### **5. Smoking/Vaping**

Smoking/Vaping is strictly forbidden throughout the school, travelling to and from school, on all school trips, or any time a student is in uniform. It is also forbidden for a student to have in their possession matches, a lighter, cigarettes, e-cigarettes, nicotine pouches, tobacco or a vape, or to be in the presence of other students who are smoking. Parent/guardian/carers will be notified, and a sanction up to and including suspension will be given.

### **6. Alcohol**

Consumption of alcohol before coming to school, during school or during any school related activity is strictly forbidden. It is also forbidden for a student to be in the possession of alcohol. A breach of this rule will lead to suspension and possible expulsion. A student found guilty of this rule will in any case not be allowed to take part in any school trip.

### **7. Drug & Substance Use**

A policy on drug and substance use is available for inspection in the school. This policy covers the use of all drugs, both legal and illegal. Students are educated in the dangers of substance use, and strategies for dealing with situations where they might come in contact with them during SPHE classes.

Any student found to be in possession of, using, or under the influence of, or supplying such substances, whether legal or illegal, will face very severe consequences, up to and including expulsion. The school will inform the parent/guardian/carers and the Gardaí where deemed appropriate by the Principal, and will advise parent/guardian/carers on where to access professional help for their child.

#### **8. Chewing gum**

Chewing gum will not be tolerated in the school. Chewing of gum or damaging property with chewing gum will be treated as a serious offence and will be noted on Vsware by teachers.

#### **9. Healthy Eating**

The school strives to encourage healthy eating where possible. Energy drinks, which contain stimulants that may adversely affect student wellbeing and concentration are not allowed.

#### **10. Uniform**

Full school uniform must be worn at all times during school hours, and on the way to and from school. Students may come to school in P.E. uniform on the days that they have P.E. Classes or for specific designated activities. PE uniform must be worn for PE class.

For Health & Safety reasons, no necklaces may be worn. Any earrings worn must be studs only. Students may be asked to remove inappropriate jewellery and will be responsible for its safekeeping for the remainder of the day themselves.

No makeup (including false eyelashes) or nail varnish may be worn. Nails should be of a length that neither impede a student's ability to access the curriculum (eg; using a keyboard, calculator, interactive screen etc) nor cause a Health and Safety issue (eg: playing sports, cooking etc). We request that hair colour is kept in line with the formality of the school setting.

Students breaching these rules will be given an out-of-uniform note on VSware. Multiple notes may result in detention. For continual breaches of these rules, the parent/guardian/carer may be contacted.

#### **10. Mobile phones**

While we appreciate that phones are a valuable resource, it is important to set in place good habits for responsible phone use at an early age. We want to make sure that students have every opportunity to engage and be social with their peers without the distraction of technology.

To this end, we use **Yondr pouches** which allows students to have their phones on the way to and from school, but which limits their use during the school day. Students must switch their phone off and place it in a *Yondr pouch* on entering the building. The pouch will remain in the possession of the student at all times and will be clearly identified with each student's name. The pouch will be

sealed magnetically, and students will be able to release the seal on exiting the building at the end of the day.

Circumventing or breaching this arrangement will be considered a serious breach of school rules. The phone may be confiscated and the student will be required to attend a Saturday detention. Repeated offenders may face more serious sanctions.

Communications between home and students will be facilitated **solely** through the school office whenever necessary. (Parents/guardians/carers should not engage in communication with students via mobile phone during school hours.)

### **11. Property**

Students must take responsibility for their own belongings. Valuables or money should be kept on the person or locked in the locker; the school cannot take responsibility for mislaid or lost items.

Lockers remain the property of the school and may be subject to inspection in certain circumstances. Each student is responsible for keeping their locker locked when not in use, with the lock provided to them by the school at the start of the school year. Students are not allowed to bring in their own locks for use on lockers.

Graffiti on school property is treated as a serious issue in all cases. In particular, where something is written about a student on school property, this may be construed as a form of bullying and serious action may be taken (up to and including suspension or expulsion of the culprit).

### **12. School related activities**

Students are expected to comply with this Code of Behaviour during the school day and on all school related activities such as trips, outings, sporting occasions etc. **whether or not** they fall within the school day.

### **13. Book Scheme**

All schoolbooks and resources loaned under the book scheme are the property of the school and are on loan for the duration of the Junior/Senior Cycle. They must be kept in good condition, not written on, and returned at the end of the programme, as lost or damaged items will not be replaced.

