St Mel's College, Longford

Code of Behaviour

2026-2027

School Roll No: 63750B

Diocese of Ardagh and Clonmacnoise



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1.Rationale

The rationale for the code of behaviour is to help St. Mel's College to promote our school ethos, relationships, policies, procedures and practices that encourage good behaviour and prevent unacceptable behaviour. The code of behaviour helps teachers, other members of staff, students and parents to work together for a happy, effective and safe school.

2.Type of School

St. Mel's College is a Catholic, Diocesan voluntary, post-primary school.
It was established in 1865 and serves Longford Town and surrounding areas. It provides a Catholic education, with a range of subjects. The College has a very experienced teaching staff and many extra-extracurricular activities. It is situated in the centre of Longford Town and has a range of sporting facilities: sports hall, fitness gym, Astro pitch, many playing fields, the Longford Athletics Club is also located on our grounds.

St. Mel's College encourages each student to strive to achieve his full potential academically, physically, morally, socially and spiritually. Our school motto, Aemula Virtus, to strive for excellence, is at the core of our school.

3.Mission Statement

St. Mel's College is a Catholic Diocesan College under a Board of Management, whose spiritual, academic, athletic and social programme is intended to enable the student to live a full, active, working Christian life. Our value system is based on mutual respect and courtesy along with honesty and integrity in our dealings with one another. We promote an environment where each student is valued for himself, supported in developing his full potential, learns self-discipline and personal responsibility and where misconduct can be reasonably seen as unacceptable.

Characteristic Spirit

St. Mel's College is committed to excellence. The school provides a caring and disciplined environment in which all students are challenged to reach their academic and personal potential. We show concern for the disadvantaged, and we make every effort to ensure that the uniqueness and dignity of each person is respected, and responded to, especially through the student support system in the college.

We realise that we must cater for the changing needs of today's world, especially in the light of our DEIS status, and to that end, we review our various programmes.

The College Board of Management, parents, staff and students, working together as a school community within the resources available, aim to provide an education in the best possible environment for all its students.

4. Operating Context

St. Mel's College operates within the legal context of relevant sections of:

- Education Act, 1998
- Education Welfare Act, 2000

- Equal Status Acts, 2000-2018
- Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs Act, 2004
- Disability Act, 2005
- Education Act, (Miscellaneous Provisions) 2007
- Data Protection Acts, 1988 and 2003: the school is a data controller under the Data Protection Acts.

St. Mel's College also operates within the regulatory, legal and financial context of:

- The regulations of the Department of Education and Skills
- The rights of trustees as set out in the Education Act, 1998, 2000
- The Diocese of Ardagh and Clonmacnoise
- The Articles of Management of Catholic Secondary Schools
- The regulations of the Department of Education and Skills and the curricular programmes so prescribes which may be amended from time to time in accordance with Sections 9 and 30 of the Education Act, 1998.
- The funding and resources available to the school at any given time. The financial and teaching resources of the school are provided by a combination of grants and teacher allocations from the Department of Education, voluntary contributions and occasional fundraising. Implementation of the school plan and school policy has due regard to the resources and funding available.
- National Educational Welfare Board Developing a Code of Behaviour: Guidelines for Schools, 2008.

Within this operating context, St. Mel's College is a school that:

- Is inclusive and welcomes students with different values, beliefs, traditions and ways of life.
- Supports the principle of equality of access to and participation in education

5. Scope

This code of behaviour applies to St. Mel's College students:

- During school time, before and after class
- At break and lunch times
- While travelling to or from school or using school transport
- While supporting school teams or school activities.

6. Principles of the Code of Behaviour

In St. Mel's College, our Code of Behaviour is one that is built on the following principles:

- Creating a climate that encourages and reinforces good behaviour.
- Promoting respectful relationships for effective learning and behaviour in our school community.
- Promoting positive behaviour and an environment of safety, inclusion and forgiveness.
- Communicating personal responsibility for behaviour and the consequences of behaviour to all members of the school community.
- Helping young people to mature into responsible participating citizens.
- Building positive relationships of mutual respect and mutual support among students, staff and parents.

- Ensuring that that school's high expectations for the behaviour of all the members of the school community are widely known and understood.
- Recognising vulnerability and providing a safe and encouraging school environment.
- Maintaining equality and fairness for all members of the school community.

The orderly functioning of our school as a community depends on the observance of certain basic rules of good behaviour, to which each of us must give a personal consent. Pupils are expected to:

- Respect the proper authority of their principal and teachers.
- Apply themselves fully to their homework, class work and studies.
- Attend school and be punctual for class.
- Abide by school rules when representing the school in activities outside the school. (This applies to all school tours.)
- Adhere fully to our school uniform code, by dressing neatly and wearing the prescribed uniform.
- Respect school property and that of their fellow students and their teachers.
- Report any damage, deliberate or otherwise, to school authorities.
- Work with their teachers in creating a positive learning environment in all classes.
- Respect the good name of the school both within and outside the school.

Effective and meaningful implementation of our code requires full parental support and cooperation. Our students behave in a positive and respectful manner from the time they first come to our school until they leave.
Every effort is made to create a positive and supportive learning environment and to reward and recognise individual and group effort, achievement and success.
This is done in class through praise and encouragement by teachers, in the daily announcements to the school community, in local papers and radio, school website at school assemblies, VSWare comments and through school reports.
Students respond positively to praise, encouragement, acknowledgement of effort and fair treatment. Students accept the need for positive behaviour and good discipline.

7.Objectives

- To promote good behaviour and encourage achievement.
- To enable effective learning and teaching.
- To support the students in learning self-discipline.
- To teach students to understand, accept and tolerate differences in individuals.
- To create a safe and secure environment for pupils and staff.

8.Understanding Behaviour

An understanding of the factors that influence behaviour is fundamental to developing and implementing the school's code of positive behaviour. Learning, relationships and behaviour are inextricably linked. Teachers, parents and students need to have a common understanding about behaviour. A common understanding will provide a sound foundation for a whole-school approach to promoting good behaviour and for responding to inappropriate behaviour.

School life is fundamentally social and individual students and teachers are part of the many groups and subgroups in the course of a single day. The dynamics that operate within and between these groups are very powerful and are themselves significant influences on individual and group behaviour.

Some key principles are shared by almost all developed models of behaviour.

- Behaviour has meaning. It is not random. It serves a purpose and has goals, though these goals may not be easy to recognise.
- Behaviour can be learned. This means it can change.
- Behaviour takes place within a particular context and in relation to other people. Understanding the context is central to understanding the behaviour.
- What teachers, other adults and other students do in response to a student's behaviour is critical in influencing the choices students make about how they behave.
- Effective teaching and learning are closely linked to good behaviour.
- Positive acknowledgement is a very effective way of influencing and promoting good learning behaviour.
- The quality of relationships affects behaviour.

The two categories of factors that influence behaviour are within-person factors and external and interpersonal factors.

Within-person Factors	External and Interpersonal Factors
• Age & stage of development • Personality & temperament • Personal history & experience • Physical, sensory or medical characteristics • Skills, ability to learn • Beliefs about self & others • Resilience & self-efficacy	• Parental & family patterns & relationships • Social networks, including friends & peer groups • Neighbourhood & community factors • The status & standing of different groups in society • School factors • Time, opportunity & support for personal /social development

9.Expectations and Setting Standards of Behaviour

Everyone in the school community is encouraged to be ready, be kind and respectful and be responsible.
Our school acknowledges the contribution of all members of the school community. Each member has responsibility for the promotion of good behaviour and a role in responding to negative behaviour. Clearly defined roles and responsibilities allow for consistency among staff as well as ensuring that there is a planned approach to helping students to change their own behaviour.

Students of St. Mel's College are encouraged to:

- Treat all members of the school community (themselves, staff, fellow students and visitors to the school) with kindness, respect and courtesy.

This is expected in our school because having respect for oneself and for others promotes a respectful, caring atmosphere where the rights of all are upheld. Having consideration for the rights and feelings of others creates a better, more pleasant learning environment.

- Behave in a manner that facilitates learning for all by co-operating and following the instructions of all staff members. Students will co-operate with each other. They will listen to each other and their teachers and not disrupt learning.
- Be aware of the school rules and behave in a responsible way.
- Attend every class, every day.
- Be punctual at all times.
- Report to the school office if feeling sick.
- Always wear full school uniform.
- Share responsibility for the school environment by respecting school property.
- Work to the best of their ability, in line with our school motto Aemula Virtus.
- Complete homework and assignments on time and ask for help when needed to reinforce learning and boost confidence.
- Endeavour to participate in as many extra-curricular activities as possible. This is encouraged in our school as it ensures students explore and develop their talents and skills as well as availing of the opportunity to experience something new.
- Set targets and goals and engage in on-going evaluation and reflection for improvement.
- Be encouraged to become part of the school's leadership team- Student Council, Prefect System.

Staff members are encouraged to:

- Treat all members of the school community with kindness, respect and courtesy.
- Be professional and show respect for the interest and welfare of students.
- Provide a quality education to students in a safe and secure environment.
- Provide regular class work and homework.
- Promote positive attitudes.
- Provide equality of opportunity without discrimination.
- Communicate with parents through written reports, at parent/ teacher meetings.

Parents/ Guardians are encouraged to:

- Treat all members of school community with kindness, respect and courtesy.
- Encourage their children to attend school every day.
- Inform the school when their child will be absent and provide an explanation.
- Encourage that their child is punctual for school.
- Encourage and support their child with schoolwork.
- Check the progress of their child's homework assignments and sign any note sent by teachers.
- Ensure their child has the required textbooks and resources necessary for school.

- Communicate effectively with the school by attending parent/ teacher meetings and /or any special appointments if requested.
- Share information with the relevant school personnel in order to assist the school in understanding a student's behaviour and to plan in interventions where necessary.
- Support school policies.

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

Board of Management
The Board of Management is the decision making body of the school. The school acknowledges the role of the Board of Management in the development and operation of the code of behaviour. All policies are developed with the authority of the Board and must be approved by it before becoming official school policy. While it is not involved in the day to day procedures, it is the body to which parents and students over the age of 18 years can appeal in cases of suspension and exclusion.

10.Whole School and Curriculum Support for Positive Behaviour

Students are informed and supported in meeting the expectations of the code of positive behaviour in the following ways:

1. The code of behaviour is circulated to the parents/guardians of all new entrants into the school and they are asked to read it and to sign their agreement to live by it.

2. At the start of each new academic year assemblies are held and each class is brought through the expectations for behaviour. Kindness/ Bí Cineálta and respect are themes running through all assemblies.

3. The emphasis on student voice and leadership motivates students to maintain high standards of behaviour and to aspire to be good role models.

4. Personal responsibility, acceptance of others, kindness and respect are discussed as part of RE and SPHE classes.

5. Issues such as bullying, racism, sexism, harassment, violence, substance misuse are discussed with the students during their time in our school using SPHE, CSPE, current affairs and/or outside speakers.

6. The Student Support Team, Guidance Team, Year Head and class tutor system are in place to support students who need additional guidance in terms of regulating their behaviour.

11.Promoting Good Behaviour

The promotion of good, kind and positive behaviour is central to the ethos in St. Mel's College. We strive to create a healthy and respectful atmosphere for our students, students are encouraged to behave in a manner that supports their learning and development. Strategies to promote positive behaviour and relationships include:

- Giving students responsibility in the school, involving them in the preparation of the school and rules.
- Having clear and fair standards of behaviour.
- Adopting an open, collaborative and consultative approach to the behaviour of individual students and having a Student Support Team and Guidance Team .
- Teaching and reminding students of expectations through communication with Year Heads and in class subjects. Facilitating conversations with students on how people should treat each other and what this looks like in our school environment.
- Adults modelling the behaviour that is expected from students.
- Good school and class routines being carried out.
- Helping students themselves to recognise and affirm good learning behaviour. Positive behaviour is reinforced through praise, encouragement, feedback and mutually respectful relationships.
- The elections of the Student Council and Prefects encourage responsibility and positive relationships between staff and students.
- Students will be invited to develop and implement community-based projects (School charity events, GAISCE, etc.)
  This is expected in our school because it fosters an awareness and appreciation of the diversity of others as well as helping to develop our students into responsible young adults.
- A mentoring system is in place. This promotes positive relationships among students and staff.
- A student may be instructed to complete a Report Card in the school journal if there is need for improvement in their behaviour. It is the responsibility of the student to ask teachers to fill in the categories on their card regarding their behaviour. This is to promote responsibility and self-motivated behavioural improvement.
- Parents/ Guardians are provided with a copy of the Code of Behaviour on the school website. A declaration of compliance must be signed for on the enrolment of their child. This promotes understanding and compliance with the high behavioural standards expected in the school.
- Teachers provide constructive comments to parents/ guardians about each students' behaviour and attainment in reports. Written communication in student journals and annual parent-teacher meetings allow for constructive communication regarding both behaviour and attainment. If there is a particular concern or concerns in relation to attainment, appropriate contact will be made.
- The school arranges informative talks to support parents/ guardians.

12.Rewards and Recognition

In St. Mel's College teachers use the following methods to reward students for meeting expectations for positive behaviour and or to mark noticeable efforts at improving their behaviour.

- Verbal praise to student in class or privately
- Acknowledgement at assembly or over the Intercom system
- Recording a positive note in school journal or sending home a letter to parents
- Positive phone call home
- Positive comment to class tutor or year head
- Recognition on school website, social media platforms and local paper school notes
- Students gaining positive points on VsWare
- Canteen and shop vouchers
- Display of students' work
- Leadership roles given to students e.g. class prefect, class representative on Student Council, school team
- End of year award ceremony award and acknowledgement of good behaviours

13. School Day

Students to arrive to school at 8:50am each morning.
Class begins each morning at 9.00am and each afternoon at 2.05pm.
Morning Break takes place from 11am-11:5am for Senior House (T.Y, 5TH and 6TH Years) and 11:30-11:45am for Junior House. (1ST, 2ND and 3rd Years).
Lunch break for Junior and Senior House is from 1:15-2:05pm.

14. Punctuality

We encourage students to be punctual and have the necessary books and equipment in order to participate fully in class.

In this regard, students should:

- Be on the school grounds no less than 8.50am to organise. themselves and ensure that they are set up for the day ahead.
- Senior students should be back on the school's grounds no later than 1.55pm after lunch.
- Arrive at their locker so that they have the necessary time in the morning and afternoon to get ready for class.
- Late arrival for school/class will be noted.
- A reason for lateness should be given by parent/ guardian in an instance of late arrival to the school.
- In cases of recurrent issues with punctuality, the circumstances will be considered and the matter referred to the Student Support Team and Year Head.
- Students should move quickly and directly from one classroom to another and not loiter between classes. This is expected as not being on time causes disruption for the teacher and the class. St. Mel's College is concerned about

the development of the whole student and so we encourage students to develop good punctuality which will be expected of them in the workplace.

For the orderly conduct of class students are expected to:

- Enter and leave classrooms in an orderly fashion.
- Respond immediately to teacher's requests.
- Follow the directions of their teachers.
- Complete homework/ class work and participate fully in class. This is expected in our school because homework reinforces learning and helps students to reach their full potential-Aemula Virtus.
- Pay attention during class.
- Have their school journal/diary, all books, copies and materials required for each class. This is expected in our school to ensure that students can benefit fully from classes and minimise time wasting.
- Dress in accordance with the standard set down in our Uniform Code.
- Act responsibly and with self-discipline at all times. Students are responsible for maintaining a safe and productive learning environment.
  This is expected in our school to maintain good order, avoid disruption and create a positive working environment for all. Instructions given to assist the smooth day to day running of the school are carried out in the interests of all.

15. Student movement between classes

Students will move quietly around the school in an orderly manner. A one-way system operates in certain areas of the school for ease of movement and prevention of congestion.

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16. School Uniform

The uniform of St. Mel's College is very much part of our identity as a school community and reflects the personal attitude of the student towards himself and our school community. All students are expected to attend school wearing the full uniform properly and to be neat and tidy in appearance. Students must be in full uniform before being admitted to class. The wearing of the correct and complete uniform is a most important part of school culture.

The school uniform consists of the following:

- School Jacket (must be black or navy)
- Blue Jumper with school crest
- Blue Shirt
- Grey Trousers
- Black Footwear

FULL BLACK TRAINERS/ SHOES WITH A FULL BLACK SOLE. NO WHITE OR COLOURED MARKINGS ARE PERMITTED

The onus is on parents and students to ensure that the proper and complete uniform is worn. Students should present a neat and tidy appearance in school. Hair must be worn in a manner that presents an overall clean, neat and tidy appearance.

No part of the uniform may be defaced in any way.

- Full school uniform must always be worn in school and any school event or trip such as debates, quizzes, football games, school tours etc.

- Any variances are at the discretion of the principal.
- Students who present themselves without full uniform will be encouraged to do so. In the case of repeat offenders, parents will be contacted.

This behaviour is expected in our school because because uniforms promote a sense of pride and equality among the student population. The uniform is the public image of the school and it is the responsibility of each member of the school community to promote that image. The code of dress is clearly communicated to students and parents/guardians through the school journal, information nights and letters/information sheets sent to homes.

17. Mobile Phones and Electronic Recording Equipment

Students must be responsible for appropriate use of technological devices.
This is expected in our school to ensure that students can benefit fully from classes and minimise time wasting. Students will agree not to use their phones or any electronic devices to record or photograph any person/thing related to school without prior permission. This is a rule of our school for the following reasons:

- Mobile phones can cause many disruptions in school
- Camera phones impinge on the privacy of others
- Inappropriate use of mobile phones or electronic recording/listening devices causes disruption, prevents students from hearing instructions and impinges on the privacy of others.

St. Mel's College is a 'phone free zone' and runs a 'switch off to switch on' campaign for students. This means that mobile phones/ smart devices must be fully powered off (not on silent) on the school campus.
This is expected to ensure the safety of students and staff and to encourage students to give their full potential to their school day.
We expect all students to adhere to this and parental support helps to enhance this campaign.

Phones seen or heard will be held until 4.05pm the next day.

All communication between parents/guardians and students should be done through the office.

As the school is a 'phone free zone' for students, St. Mel's College is not responsible for the loss or damage of mobile phones/ smart devices etc. It is the student's responsibility to ensure that their mobile phone/ smart device is safe.

18. School Journal /Diary

The School Journal is a very important school document and is used for the following purposes:

- As a school diary for recording homework for each subject each day.
- As a means of parent/teacher communication through the Parent /Teacher Remarks.
- It provides useful information about the school, Time Management. Study Skills, Exam Information, Code of Expected Behaviour, Uniform/Dress Code
- Each student is required to have his school Journal/Diary with him in all classes and to bring it home each evening for parental inspection.

19. Property

- Students will show respect for all property and equipment in the school and on the school grounds.
  This is expected in our school because defacing/damaging school property is destructive and shows a lack of respect and consideration for the school community of which the student is a member. Damage to property costs money in repairs, which could be better spent on other school items and could also cause a hazard to health and safety. Everyone deserves to come to school/work in a pleasant environment.
- Each student is responsible for looking after his own property and ensuring it is identifiable to him.
- Students who store their books and other materials in the Lockers must have collected what they require before 8.55am in the morning and 2.00pm in the afternoon after which times the locker rooms are closed.
- Students may not leave their belongings lying around the College. There are racks placed around the school for bags at break times. This is expected so there will be no hazard to health and safety.
- Lockers are provided at a reasonable fee and should be used for storing books and items not immediately required. The lockers should be locked.
- The lockers are always the property of St. Mel's College and are provided for the convenience of students. The College reserves the right to open and search lockers, where this is deemed necessary by the school authorities.
- The College does not accept responsibility for loss of student's property. Students must take reasonable care to ensure that loss of property does not occur.

20. Absence from school

Students' attendance will be taken every day and for every class. Students will attend school regularly, remain for the full school day and if absent, the school will be notified of the reason for the absence. This is expected in our school because missing class adversely affects progress and can impede the progress of the students present. The school is legally obliged to report the reason for all absences. When students are absent due to school activities they are responsible for catching up on the work missed. Students and parents/guardians must
follow the correct sign out procedures if a student must leave school early.

- All absences from school must be explained either through: the VSWare App, an email or phone call to the school office.
- Students' absences will be monitored by the Year Heads, Deputy Principal, Attendance Officer and Home School Liaison Officer.
- Rewards for full attendance each year will be given at Awards Day.

21. Permission to Leave

- Reasonable requests for a student to leave school will be accommodated by the school, for example medical appointment, student illness etc.
- Parents can use the VsWare App or complete a note in the school journal. Students are not permitted to use the parental VsWare App.

- A student must present a request on the Permission to Leave outlining the reasons for leaving the school, the times of departure and return. A student cannot leave the school grounds without the permission of the Principal, Deputy Principal or Year Head.

22. Health and Safety

In St. Mel's College we want to create a healthy and safe environment for everyone. Our school is a school for all and it is a space shared by all.

In compliance with the Health and Safety at Work Act, 2005 and the Equal Status Act, 2000 we are committed to creating a safe environment for everyone. A breach of any of the following may result in consequences up to and including expulsion. Students should follow all public health advice provided to schools to maintain a safe learning and work environment.

Students will not use or bring into school prohibited substances such as cigarettes, e-cigarettes, alcohol or drugs. This rule applies going to and from school, during break and lunch time, while wearing school uniform, away on trips and or representing the school.
This is expected in our school for the following reasons:

- Smoking on the school grounds is illegal and smoking seriously damages health.
- Banned/prohibited substances pose a risk to the safety of all.

The following are breaches of our expected code of behaviour:

- Absence from school or class without permission.
- Repeated failure to do homework.
- Littering in classrooms and school grounds.
- Use of mobile phone during school day.
- Presentation of fraudulent note to explain absence from school.
- Failure to follow directions/instructions
- Insolent, disrespectful, or aggressive, behaviour towards a member of the school community in or out of school.
- Bullying or intimidation whether physical, verbal or psychological of any member of our school community.
- Violent behaviour, either physical or verbal, towards staff or fellow students or any other member of our school community
- Discourtesy or disrespect towards any visitor to the school.
- Deliberate damage to school property or that of fellow students or any member of our school community.
- Extortion, intimidation, abusive phone calls, persistent abusive name calling, persistent offensive slagging.
- Possession or use of illegal drugs, dangerous substances, or alcohol
- Possession of weapons or any item that could be classified as such.
- Any action that undermines threatens or exposes to danger, any person or aspect of school life.
- Under Health and Safety Legislation smoking is illegal anywhere on school grounds.
- Vaping is prohibited on the school grounds.
- Repeated class or study disruption that prevents other students from learning.

- Any action inside or outside school which brings our school's good name into disrepute.
- Any action, word or deed that is grossly offensive to another student's race, colour, religion, person or family.
- Junior students (1st/ 2nd/ 3rd) leaving the school environs at lunchtime.
- Students should not eat or drink in class.
- Chewing gum
- Headphones
- Face piercing jewellery
- Decorative chains and necklaces
- T-shirts or other multi-coloured items of clothing
- Baseball Caps

23.Student Cars

Students are strictly prohibited from parking cars on school premises.

24. Responding to Inappropriate Behaviour and the Ladder of Referral/Intervention

Despite the best efforts of schools, inappropriate behaviour happens. Even minor breaches of the code of behaviour can be disruptive, particularly if they are persistent. Serious misbehaviour can have damaging and long-lasting effects including disruption of the student's own learning and the learning of others. It can cause distress and anxiety or even pose a threat to the safety of students and teachers.

In our approach to supporting good learning behaviour and responding to inappropriate behaviour, the school needs a systematic way of attending to both the impact of inappropriate behaviour on other students and staff and the impact of a sanction on the student. It is the responsibility of school authorities to maintain a classroom and school environment which is supportive of the learning of every student in the school and which ensures continuity of instruction for them. The Board of Management, with the school community, has developed a strategy for intervening early and positively when student behaviour does not meet the standards expected in the school.

An important element of the approach to a student's inappropriate behaviour is a problem-solving approach: that is, one where the teacher and the school respond to the unwanted behaviour using these steps.

1. Gather information. Understand the context and the factors that may be affecting behaviour.
2. Generate ideas about possible solutions that take account of the reasons why it may be happening.
3. Decide and agree on specific strategies.
4. Implement the agreed strategy consistently.
5. Review progress: evaluate the impact and effectiveness of the intervention.
6. Throughout, keep the relationship with the student as positive as possible; involve the student and parent.

The procedures for dealing with incidents of unacceptable behaviour/breach of the school rules are referred to as our 'ladder of referral'. The basic principle is that the more serious the incident, the higher up the ladder it is dealt with varying degrees of response. This whole-school approach allows for consistency among staff as well as ensuring that there is a planned approach to helping students to change their behaviour.

Our Disciplinary ladder of referral/intervention is implemented through the following school structures:

- Class/subject Teacher
- Year Head
- Student Support Team (SST)
- Deputy Principal
- Principal
- Board of Management

Where it is deemed appropriate for acts of indiscipline the school may involve a member or members of our Student Support Team to assist the student in resolving issues.

Levels of Intervention	
Support for all	Most students behave appropriately, with the help of consistent and clear rules and routines in class and in school. Occasional, minor misbehaviour should be attended to routinely and effectively through the skill of the classroom teacher. the principle of restorative practice is encouraged.
Additional support for some students	Some students need more active intervention to help them to manage their behaviour. Without additional help, they may be at risk of failing, behaviourally, socially and educationally. Additional inputs or interventions might include: • referral to another teacher or adult who can work with the student. • involving the Student Support Team. • setting targets for behaviour and monitoring them with the student in a supportive way. • behaviour contracts.
Specialised support for a small minority of students	A small minority of students may show particularly challenging behaviour. They may have great difficulty in learning new behaviour and may not respond to low-level interventions. These students will need a sustained and systematic response involving the important adults in their lives, in school and at home.

	The Principal and staff should build good links with any local support services that may be able to assist in responding to the needs of a student with behavioural difficulties. Sources of support may include the National Educational Psychological Service, HSE Community Psychology Services, the National Behavioural Support Service, the National Council for Special Education, Child Guidance Services or Adolescent Mental Health Services. Schools must be cognisant of their obligations under the *Equal Status Acts 2000 to 2004* with regard to making reasonable accommodation for students with disabilities.

Level 1
Each subject teacher has responsibility for promoting positive behaviour in his/her own classroom. With the help of consistent rules and routines in class/school, occasional minor behaviours for concern should be attended to effectively by the classroom teacher. Subject teachers may use some of the schools agreed sanctions. Subject teachers should record all incidents of failure to meet expectations in their own records, on VsWare and in the student journal where necessary.

Level 2
Each class group is assigned a Class Tutor with special responsibility for them. The Class Tutor monitors the student diaries and ensures students are familiar with the code of expected behaviour at the start of the year.

Level 3
Each year group is assigned a Year Head. The Year Head has special responsibility for the year group and has a supportive and disciplinary role to play for the students in their year group. Year Heads usually deal with more serious offences or an accumulation of minor offences. Year Heads can impose school sanctions up to and including suspension (sanctioned by Senior Management). Year Heads should keep detailed records of student conduct and may enter them onto VsWare.

Students whose behaviour has not modified despite the schools best efforts will be referred by the Year Head to the Guidance Team, Deputy Principal or Principal. Members of staff, working as a team, can also support the classroom teacher in a number of ways:
• helping a teacher to think about and analyse possible reasons for a student's poor behaviour.
• helping to devise possible ways of changing the behaviour.

The Principal informs the Board of Management of all suspensions and recommendations of exclusion).

Bullying behaviour is unacceptable and will be dealt with under the Bí Cineálta this includes all forms and types of bullying behaviour including instances of online

bullying behaviour. Procedures and the Anti-Bullying and Harassment and Sexual Harassment policies in our school that protects students and staff and other members of the school community from harassment.

25.The consequences of Unacceptable Behaviour/ Sanctions

The aim of sanctions is to create a climate that encourages and reinforces good behaviour, encouraging students to take personal responsibility for their learning and behaviour.

The purpose of a sanction 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 (in ways appropriate to their age and development) to understand that they have choices about their own behaviour and that all choices have consequences
• helping them to learn to take responsibility for their behaviour.

A sanction may also:
• reinforce the boundaries set out in the code of behaviour
• signal to other students and to staff that their wellbeing is being protected.
In instances of more serious breaches of school standards, sanctions may be needed to:
• prevent serious disruption of teaching and learning
• keep the student, or other students or adults, safe.

St. Mel's College uses a range of sanctions as part of our disciplinary procedures. Below is the ladder of referral and suggested responses for students who struggle or fail to meet the schools expectations regarding behaviour.

Some Minor Incidences of behaviour concern		
Behaviours	Suggested Responses	Positive Affirmations when improving
• Lack of materials for class • No homework • Chewing gum • Bad language • Incorrect uniform • Littering • Disengagement • Talking in class • Late coming	• Non-verbal reminders • Rule reminder • Differentiation • Speaking to the student after class • Note in journal/ VsWare • Phone call home • Report card • Additional homework • Tidying classroom/ lunch duty • Lunch time detention	• Verbal praise • Positive note on VsWare/school diary • Phone call home

Recurring Incidences of behaviour concern		
Behaviours	Suggested Responses	Positive Affirmations when improving

• Refusal to follow instruction • Bad language to teacher • Defiance • Graffiti • Damage to property • Using materials inappropriately in practical subjects • Out of class without permission • Refusing to hand up phone • Many notes in diary/VsWare	• Speaking to the student after class • Note behaviour in journal/ VsWare • Year Head referral • Meeting with parents/guardians • Report card • Additional homework • A school community task such as tidying classroom/ lunch duty/ picking up litter/ assisting a teacher with a task • Withdrawal of privileges not allowed to play or attend games, go on school tour etc. The principal reserves the right to refuse permission to any student to travel on a school trip/tour. • Confinement to school grounds during school day (Senior Students) • Confinement to a particular area in the school grounds. • Removal from class group. • Full payment must be made for damage to school or fellow student's property. • Thursday after school detention (4:10-5pm)	• Verbal praise and recognition • Positive note on VsWare/school diary • Phone call home • Acknowledgement by Year Head.

Serious Incidences of behaviour concern or Exhaustion of previous steps		
Behaviours	Suggested Responses	Positive Affirmations when improving
• Physical fighting • Intimidation/bullying • Mitching • Changes in behaviour • Concerns about student welfare including attendance • Disengagement from learning • Smoking/ Vaping • Threatening behaviour • Substance Abuse	• Investigation of incidents • Restorative meeting with student • Mediation between students • Academic tracking and attendance targets, return to school plan • Report card • Home contact • Refer to Guidance/Student Support Team/ AEN Team/HSCLO/Tusla/NEPS etc • Thursday evening detentions	• Verbal praise • Positive note on VsWare/school diary • Phone call home • Support a fresh start

	• Suspension • Expulsion • Board of Management referral	

In certain circumstances the degree of disrespect or disregard for school rules shown by a single act or a pattern of persistent incidences of misconduct may warrant that a student be immediately referred to the principal or be suspended or expelled without going through the process of minor sanctions.

26.The school's duty of care

The school will ensure that, in applying any sanction, the duty of care to the student is maintained. The teacher's duty of care is a professional duty of care, reflecting the teacher's training, skill and knowledge. This duty requires, for example, that a student is appropriately supervised at all times while at school. Appropriate arrangements will also be made to ensure that child protection guidelines are observed.

27.Students with additional/special educational needs

Sanctions may be needed to help a student with additional educational needs to learn about appropriate behaviour and skills, as in the case of any student. Teachers and SNAs will take particular care that they help the student with additional needs to understand clearly the purpose of the sanction and the reason why their behaviour is unacceptable. The school and classroom practices that support good learning behaviour are valid for all students, including those with identified additional educational needs.

28.Applying sanctions in response to behaviour that takes place outside school

The standards and rules contained in the code of behaviour apply in any situation where the student, although outside the school, is still the responsibility of the school. Examples include school tours, games and extracurricular activities and attendance at events organised by the school.

The Board of Management and the principal has the authority to decide on the interpretation of all rules in the school's Code of Behaviour and Uniform Code. The principal's interpretation shall be final.

29.Implementing the code of behaviour

The implementation of the Code of Behaviour for St. Mel's College includes the following:

- All school partners are involved in the development and review of the code
- Amendments to the Code of Behaviour will be communicated to the stakeholders
- A major review will involve consultation with and ratification by all partners
- The code will be made accessible to all through its publication on our school website and hard copies will be available on request
- All incoming students will receive a copy of the Code of Behaviour and parents/guardians will be required to sign an acknowledgement of receipt of it
- A synopsis of the code will be published in the student journal for students to refer to. The code will also be referred to in class by teachers on a regular basis. Students

and their parents/guardians must sign a student contract in the student journal each year.

30.Whole School Approach

The code of behaviour, on its own, cannot create the environment that makes it possible for students to learn and behave well. All members of the school community have responsibility to ensure that our students behave well. The main elements of a whole school approach to behaviour include:

- An ethos, policies and practices that are in harmony to create a positive school environment. Related policies include the school's Bí Cineálta, Wellbeing and Substance Misuse Policies.
- A teamwork and consistent approach to behaviour
- Effective classroom management and good curricular planning
- An inclusive and involved school community

Classroom management and teaching methods have a strong influence on students' behaviour.

The classroom environment, like the wider school community, gives students clear messages about teachers' expectations and creates boundaries. The skills of the teacher in managing a routine engagement with students are critical in preventing problems. In addition, the supervision of students at break times also helps to ensure the school creates and maintains a positive school environment for all members of the school community.

Suspension and Expulsion Policy and Procedures.

1.Suspension

Suspension is defined as:
requiring the student to absent himself/herself from the school for a specified, limited period of school days.
During the period of a suspension, the student retains their place in the school.

Authority to suspend

The Board of Management and the Principal of St. Mel's College has the authority to suspend a student.

2.The grounds for suspension

At St. Mel's College suspension will be a proportionate response to the behaviour that is causing concern. Normally, other interventions will have been tried before suspension, and school staff will have reviewed the reasons why these have not worked.
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
• the student breaches the Code of Behaviour. (At the discretion of the Principal.)

A single incident of serious misconduct may be grounds for suspension.

Suspension will be part of a behaviour plan and will enable the school to set behavioural goals with the student and parent/guardian, give the staff an opportunity to plan other interventions and impress on a student and their parents the seriousness of the behaviour. It will also afford a student time to reflect on their behaviour, to acknowledge and accept responsibility for their behaviour and to accept the need for the behaviour to change.

A student may be suspended for the following reasons (the list is not exhaustive):
• For serious misbehaviour
• For an unacceptable level of repeated misbehaviour
• For bullying, insulting, aggressive or violent behaviour towards others whether in person, by mobile phone or via social media or other electronic means in the

school, or when identifiable with the school

- For the supply/possession /use of alcohol and /or illegal drugs
- For the supply /possession /use of weapons/ hazardous materials
- For behaviour that may be a danger to self or others
- For racist behaviour /supply of racist behaviour/use of racist material
- For sexual harassment and/or the possession/supply /use of pornographic material

Factors to consider 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?

3.Forms of suspension

Immediate suspension
In exceptional circumstances, the Principal may consider an immediate suspension to be necessary where the continued presence of the student in the school at the time would represent a serious threat to the safety of students or staff of the school, or any other person.

Suspension during a State examination
This sanction should normally be approved by the Board of Management and will be used where there is:
• 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.

'Automatic' suspension
A Board of Management may decide, following the consultation process with the Principal, parents, teachers and students, that particular named behaviours incur suspension as a sanction. This does not remove the duty of the Board to follow due process and fair procedures in each case.

Inappropriate use of suspension
Students should not usually be suspended for:
• poor academic performance
• poor attendance or lateness
• minor breaches of the code of behaviour.

However, any behaviour that is persistently disruptive to learning or potentially dangerous can be a serious matter. Behaviour must be examined in context to understand both the behaviour itself and the response or sanction that is most appropriate.

Rolling Suspension	A student should not be suspended again shortly after they return to school unless: • they engage in serious misbehaviour that warrants suspension and • fair procedures are observed in full and • the standard applied to judging the behaviour is the same as the standard applied to the behaviour of any other student.
Informal or unacknowledged suspension	Exclusion of a student for part of the school day, as a sanction, or asking parents to keep a child from school, as a sanction, is a

	suspension. Any exclusion imposed by the school is a suspension, and should follow the Guidelines relating to suspension.
Open-ended suspension	Students should not be suspended for an indefinite period. Any such suspension would be regarded as a de-facto expulsion and would be treated as such under section 29 of the *Education Act 1998*

4.Procedures in respect of suspension

St. Mel's College is required by law to follow fair procedures when proposing to suspend a student. Where a preliminary assessment of the facts confirms serious misbehaviour that could warrant suspension, the school should observe the following procedures:

• inform the student and their parents/ guardians about the complaint
• give parents/guardians and student an opportunity to respond.

The student and their parents/guardians should be informed about the complaint. Parents /guardans may be informed by phone or in writing, depending on the seriousness of the matter.

A meeting with the student and their parents/guardians provides an opportunity for them to give their side of the story and to ask questions about the evidence of serious misbehaviour, especially where there is a dispute about the facts. It may also be an opportunity for the school to explore with parents how best to address the student's behaviour. If a student and their parents/guardians fail to attend a meeting, the Principal should write advising of the gravity of the matter, the importance of attending a re-scheduled meeting and, failing that, the duty of the school authorities to make a decision to respond to the negative behaviour. The school should record the invitations made to parents and their response.

Procedures in relation to immediate suspension.
In the case of 'immediate' suspension, a preliminary investigation should be conducted to establish the case for the imposition of the suspension. Parents/guardians will be notified and arrangement made for the student to be collected from the school. The school will have due regard for its duty of care for the student.

5.The period of suspension

A student should not be suspended for more than three days, except in exceptional circumstances where the Principal considers that a period of suspension longer than three days is needed in order to achieve a particular objective. The Board of Management should provide guidance to the Principal concerning the kinds of circumstances under which suspensions of longer than three days might be approved.

If a suspension longer than three days is being proposed by the Principal, the matter should be referred to the Board of Management for consideration and approval, giving the circumstances and the expected outcomes.

However, a Board of Management may wish to authorise the Principal, with the approval of the Chairperson of the Board, to impose a suspension of up to five days in circumstances where a meeting of the Board cannot be convened in a timely fashion, subject to the guidance concerning such suspensions.

The Board of Management should normally place a ceiling of ten days on any one period of suspension imposed by it. The Board should formally review any proposal to suspend a student, where the suspension would bring the number of days for which the student has been suspended in the current school year to twenty days or more. Any such suspension is subject to appeal under section 29 of the *Education Act 1998*.

These provisions enable school authorities to give the student a reasonable time to reflect on their behaviour while avoiding undue loss of teaching time and loss of contact with the positive influences of school. They recognise the serious nature of the sanction of suspension and ensure that this seriousness is reflected in school procedures. The provisions mean that the Board of Management takes ultimate responsibility for sanctions of significant length, especially where such suspensions might reach twenty days in one school year and therefore might lead to an appeal.

6.Appeals

The Board of Management should offer an opportunity to appeal a Principal's decision to suspend a student. In the case of decisions to suspend made by the Board of Management, an appeals process may be provided by the Patron.

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/guardians, 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/guardians are being formally notified of such a suspension, they and the student should 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 should be given information about how to appeal.

7.Implementing the suspension

Written notification

The Principal of St. Mel's College should notify the parents/guardians and the student in writing of the decision to suspend. The letter should confirm:

- the period of the suspension and the dates on which the suspension will begin and end
- the reasons for the suspension
- any study programme to be followed

• the arrangements for returning to school, including any commitments to be entered into by the student and the parents (for example, parents might be asked to reaffirm their commitment to the code of behaviour)
• the provision for an appeal to the Board of Management
• the right to appeal to the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Science (*Education Act 1998*, section 29).

The letter should be clear and easy to understand. Particular care should be taken in communicating with parents who may have reading difficulties, or whose first language is not the language of the school.

Engaging with student and parents/guardians
Where a decision to suspend has been made, it can maximise the impact and value of suspension if the Principal or another staff member delegated by the Principal meets with the parents/guardians to emphasise their responsibility in helping the student to behave well when the student returns to school and to offer help and guidance in this. Where parents do not agree to meet with the Principal, written notification will serve as notice to impose a suspension.

Grounds for removing a suspension
A suspension may be removed if the Board of Management decides to remove the suspension for any reason or if the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Science directs that it be removed following an appeal under section 29 of the *Education Act 1998*.

After the suspension ends
A period of suspension will end on the date given in the letter of notification to the parents about the suspension.

Re-integrating the student
The school should have a plan to help the student to take responsibility for catching up on work missed. This plan will help to avoid the possibility that suspension starts or amplifies a cycle of academic failure. Successful re-integration goes beyond academic work. A suspended student may feel angry or resentful about their suspension, and these feelings can trigger problems with re- integration which, in turn, may lead to further problem behaviour. Where possible, the school should arrange for a member of staff to provide support to the student during the re-integration process.

Clean slate
When any sanction, including suspension, is completed, a student should be given the opportunity and support for a fresh start. Although a record is kept of the behaviour and any sanction imposed, once the sanction has been completed St. Mel’s College should expect the same behaviour of this student as of all other students.

8.Records and reports

Records of investigation and decision-making	Formal written records should 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 should report all suspensions to the Board of Management, with the reasons for and the duration of each suspension.
Report to NEWB	The Principal is required to report suspensions in accordance with the NEWB reporting guidelines (*Education (Welfare) Act, 2000*, section 21(4)(a))

9.Review of use of suspension

The Board of Management should 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.

1.Expulsion

A student is expelled from a school when a Board of Management makes a decision to permanently exclude that student 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 a recognised school has the authority to expel a student. As a matter of best practice, that authority should be reserved to the Board of Management and should not be delegated.

2.The grounds for expulsion

Expulsion should be a proportionate response to the student's behaviour. Expulsion of a student is a very serious step, and one that should only be taken by the Board of Management in extreme cases of unacceptable behaviour. The school should have taken significant steps to address the misbehaviour and to avoid expulsion of a student including, as appropriate:

• meeting with parents /guardians and the student to try to find ways of helping the student to change their behaviour
• making sure that the student understands the possible consequences of their behaviour, if it should persist
• ensuring that all other possible options have been tried
• seeking the assistance of support agencies (e.g. National Educational Psychological Service, Health Service Executive Community Services, the National Behavioural Support Service, Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services, National Council for Special Education).

A proposal to expel a student requires serious grounds such as that:

• 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.

The grounds for expulsion may be similar to the grounds for suspension. In addition to factors such as the degree of seriousness and the persistence of the behaviour, a key difference is that, where expulsion is considered, school authorities have tried a series of other interventions, and believe they have exhausted all possibilities for changing the student's behaviour.

3.'Automatic' expulsion

The Board of Management of St. Mel's College may decide, as part of the school's policy on sanctions, and following the consultation process with the Principal, parents/guardians, teachers and students, that particular named behaviours incur expulsion as a sanction. However, a general decision to impose expulsion for named behaviours does not remove the duty to follow due process and fair procedures.

4.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. The kinds of behaviour that might result in a proposal to expel on the basis of a single breach of the code could include:

• 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.

5.Determining the appropriateness of expelling a student

Given the seriousness of expulsion as a sanction the Board of Management of St. Mel's College will undertake a very detailed review of a range of factors in deciding whether to expel a student.

6.Inappropriate use of expulsion

Expulsion will not be proposed for:

• poor academic performance
• poor attendance or lateness
• minor breaches of the code of behaviour.

However, any behaviour that is persistently disruptive to learning or dangerous can be a serious matter. Behaviour must be examined in context to understand both the behaviour itself and the response or sanction that is most appropriate.

7.Procedures in respect of expulsion

Schools are required by law to follow fair procedures as well as procedures prescribed under the *Education (Welfare) Act 2000*, when proposing to expel a student. Where 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.
2. A recommendation to the Board of Management by the Principal.
3. Consideration by the Board of Management of the Principal's recommendation; and the holding of a hearing.
4. Board of Management deliberations and actions following the hearing.
5. Consultations arranged by the Educational Welfare Officer.
6. Confirmation of the decision to expel.

The Board of Management is the decision-making body in relation to expulsions. **It is a matter for the Board of Management to decide which of the tasks involved in these procedural steps requires separate meetings and which tasks can be accomplished together in a single meeting, consistent with giving parents due notice of meetings and a fair and reasonable time to prepare for a Board hearing.**

Step 1: A detailed investigation carried out under the direction of the Principal

In investigating an allegation, in line with fair procedures, the Principal should:

• inform the student and their parents/guardians about the details of the alleged misbehaviour, how it will be investigated and that it could result in expulsion
• give parents /guardians 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/guardians should be informed in writing of the alleged misbehaviour and the proposed investigation in order to have a permanent record of having let them know. This also ensures that parents/guardians are very clear about what their son is alleged to have done. It serves the important function of underlining to parents/guardians the seriousness with which the school views the alleged misbehaviour.

Parents/guardians and the student must have every opportunity to respond to the complaint of serious misbehaviour before a decision is made about the veracity of the allegation, and before a sanction is imposed. Where expulsion may result from an investigation, a meeting with the student and their parents/guardians is essential. It provides the opportunity for them to give their side of the story and to ask questions about the evidence of serious misbehaviour, especially where there is a dispute about the facts. It may also be an opportunity for parents /guardians to make their case for lessening the sanction, and for the school to explore with parents how best to address the student's behaviour.
If a student and their parents /guardians fail to attend a meeting, the Principal should write advising of the gravity of the matter, the importance of attending a re-scheduled meeting and, failing that, the duty of the school authorities to make a decision to respond to the inappropriate behaviour. The school should record the invitation issued to parents and their response.

Step 2: A recommendation to the Board of Management by the Principal
Where the Principal forms a view, based on the investigation of the alleged misbehaviour, that expulsion may be warranted, the Principal makes a recommendation to the Board of Management to consider expulsion. The Principal should:
• inform the parents/guardians and the student that the Board of Management is being asked to consider expulsion
• ensure that parents/guardians 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/guardians
• notify the parents/guardians of the date of the hearing by the Board of Management and invite them to that hearing
• advise the parents/guardians that they can make a written and oral submission to the Board of Management
• ensure that parents/guardians have enough notice to allow them to prepare for the hearing.

Step 3: Consideration by the Board of Management of the Principal's recommendation; and the holding of a hearing
It is the responsibility of the Board to review the initial investigation and satisfy itself that the investigation was properly conducted in line with fair procedures. The Board should undertake its own review of all documentation and the circumstances of the case. It should ensure that no party who has had any involvement with the circumstances of the case is part of the Board's deliberations (for example, a member of the Board who may have made an allegation about the student).

Where a Board of Management decides to consider expelling a student, it must hold a hearing. The Board meeting for the purpose of the hearing should be properly conducted in accordance with Board procedures. At the hearing, the Principal and the parents/guardians, 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 must take care to ensure that they are, and are seen to be, impartial as between the Principal and the student. Parents/guardians may wish to be accompanied at hearings and the Board should facilitate this, in line with good practice and Board procedures.

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

Step 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 must notify the Educational Welfare Officer in writing of its opinion, and the reasons for this opinion. (*Education (Welfare) Act 2000*, s24(1)). The Board of Management should refer to National Educational Welfare Board reporting procedures for proposed expulsions. 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)).

An appeal against an expulsion under section 29 of the *Education Act 1998* will automatically succeed if it is shown that the Educational Welfare Officer was not notified in accordance with section 24(1) or that twenty days did not elapse from the time of notification to the Educational Welfare Officer to the implementation of the expulsion (*Education (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2007*, s4A).

The Board should inform the parents in writing about its conclusions and the next steps in the process. Where expulsion is proposed, the parents should be told that the Board of Management will now inform the Educational Welfare Officer.

Step 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).

The purpose of the consultations and the meeting is to ensure that arrangements are made for the student to continue in education. These consultations may result in an agreement about an alternative intervention that would avoid expulsion. However, where the possibility of continuing in the school is not an option, at least in the short term, the consultation should focus on alternative educational possibilities.

In the interests of the educational welfare of the student, those concerned should come together with the Educational Welfare Officer to plan for the student's future education.

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.

Step 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 should formally confirm the decision to expel (this task might be delegated to the Chairperson and the Principal). Parents should be notified immediately that the expulsion will now proceed. Parents and the student should 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.

8.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 Science *(Education Act 1998* section 29). An appeal may also be brought by the National Educational Welfare Board on behalf of a student.

9.The appeals process
The appeals process under section 29 of the *Education Act 1998* begins with the provision of mediation by a mediator nominated by the Appeals Committee (Department of Education).

10.Review of use of expulsion
The Board of Management should 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 expulsion is used appropriately.

Consultation and Review

This policy has been reviewed in consultation with stakeholders in September 2026. It will be reviewed by the Board of Management annually.

Ratification and Publication

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management on the 16th September 2026.

Some relevant legislation and legal documents relating to this policy:

Bunreacht na hÉireann: Constitution of Ireland (1939, as amended) Stationery Office, Dublin.
European Convention on Human Rights (1950) Council of Europe (http://www.coe.int)
UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989) United Nations (http://www2.ohchr.org/english/law/pdf/crc.pdf)
Government of Ireland, *Education Act 1998*, Stationery Office, Dublin.
Government of Ireland, *Education (Welfare) Act 2000*, Stationery Office, Dublin.
Government of Ireland, *Education (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2007*, Stationery Office, Dublin.
Government of Ireland, *Education of Persons with Special Needs Act, 2004*, Stationery Office, Dublin.
Government of Ireland, *Vocational Education Act 1930*, Stationery Office, Dublin.
Government of Ireland, *Vocational Education (Amendment) Act 2001*, Stationery Office, Dublin.
Government of Ireland, *Non-Fatal Offences against the Person Act 1997*, Stationery Office, Dublin.
Government of Ireland, *Disability Act 2005*, Stationery Office, Dublin.
Government of Ireland, *Equality Act 2004*, Stationery Office, Dublin.
Government of Ireland, *Equal Status Act 2000*, Stationery Office, Dublin.
Government of Ireland, *Ombudsman for Children Act 2002*, Stationery Office, Dublin.
Government of Ireland, *Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005*, Stationery Office, Dublin.
Government of Ireland, *Data Protection Act, 1988*, Stationery Office, Dublin.
Government of Ireland, *Data Protection (Amendment) Act, 2003*, Stationery Office, Dublin.
Government of Ireland, *Age of Majority Act, 1985*, Stationery Office, Dublin.

Circular 20/90: *Guidelines towards a positive policy for school behaviour and discipline, and a suggested code of behaviour and discipline for national schools.*
Circular M33/91: *Guidelines towards a positive policy for school behaviour and discipline: A suggested school code of behaviour and discipline for post-primary schools.*
Articles of Management for Catholic Secondary Schools (1998)

Code of Behaviour

The Board of Management reviewed this policy in September 2026 and ratified the policy on the 16th September 2026.

It will be reviewed in September 2027.

Signed: _____ Date: 16/09/26
Chairperson, Board of Management

Signed: _____ Date: 16/09/26
Principal/Secretary to the Board of Management

Notification regarding the board of management's annual review of the school's Code of Behaviour Policy

The Board of Management of St. Mel's College confirms that the board of management's annual review of the school's Code of Behaviour Policy and its implementation was completed at the board of management meeting of 16th September 2026.

Signed: _____
(Chairperson of Board of management)

Date: 16/09/26

Signed: _____
(Principal)

Date: 16/09/26