

# Sacred Heart Secondary School, Westport

## Code of Behaviour and Respect & Disciplinary Procedures for Students

### The School Mission Statement

The school is dedicated to the pursuit of excellence in all areas of education. Our aim is to ensure that every student is enabled to develop and fulfil their own unique potential in line with the school's ethos and outlined in our Mission Statement which is concerned with:

#### *Developing, Caring and Supporting*

- Developing the potential of all students, their moral, academic, social and aesthetic, physical and spiritual education.
- Caring for all members of the school community.
- Developing supporting partnerships between the school, parents/guardians and the local community.

### How our Code was developed

This Code of Behaviour was developed in consultation with students, teachers, parents/guardians and the Board of Management.

Under Section 23 of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000, the Board of Management of each school must prepare and make available a code of behaviour for its students. The Act requires that the school code of behaviour is prepared in accordance with guidelines issued by the Educational Welfare Services (Developing a Code of Behaviour: Guidelines for School) of Child and Family Agency (TUSLA).

The Code must also be read and understood in conjunction with other school policies.

Mission Statement	Bí Cineálta Policy
Special Educational Needs Policy	IT Acceptable Use Policy
Child Protection Policy	Pastoral Care Policy
Staff Anti-Bullying Policy	School Excursions Policy
Substance Use Policy	Health and Safety Policy
School Attendance Policy	Suspension & Expulsion Policies

The Code is underpinned at all times by restorative practices in order to resolve conflict and solve problems in a way that is respectful and fair to everyone, builds relationships and fosters a sense of social responsibility.

### Rationale for the Code

The Code provides a framework for reasonable and responsible behaviour by all members of the school community. The Code applies at all times while a student is in school uniform including the journey to and from school and while attending all school related activities. The Code which is grounded in the Mercy ethos and the school's mission statement is designed to:

- Create a safe and ordered environment where teaching and learning can take place in atmosphere of mutual respect and support free from disruption
- To communicate clear standards of behaviour that promote respect, tolerance and care and that help students to develop into self-disciplined young people
- To ensure the safety of students and all members of the school community both on the school premises and on outings and trips
- To inform students and their parents/guardians of the procedures used by the school to address issues of misbehaviour and the sanctions that will result from misconduct.

## **Promoting Positive Behaviour**

Promoting good behaviour is the main goal of the code. Recognising, encouraging and reinforcing positive behaviour is seen as more important in the school community than emphasis on negative consequences. As far as possible, incidences of misbehaviour are used as teaching opportunities and learning experiences.

Positive behaviour is fostered in the following ways:

- Individual expressions of thanks and appreciation to students
- Verbal praise, encouragement and positive feedback is given to students by management and staff in class, at year group assemblies and via announcements on the PA system and the school's social media platforms to recognise and affirm good behaviour and participation.
- A note of affirmation in student journal for parents/guardians or via the school app.
- Acknowledgement of achievements in school newsletter, notice boards, online and school reports
- Opportunities to participate in competitions and represent the school
- Guidance, counselling and pastoral support is available to all students
- The Student Support Team meets regularly, and appropriate support interventions are put in place for students
- Issues that staff need to be mindful of in relation to individual students are communicated in a discreet and sensitive manner
- A broad range of extracurricular activities are facilitated to support student wellbeing, to enhance their participation in school life and to enable them to develop their talents and interests in a range of areas
- Other events, including the annual Awards Ceremony may be organised from time to time to acknowledge the achievements of students and to commend their good behaviour and initiatives.

## **Roles and responsibilities**

### **A) Parents/Guardians**

In order to ensure that teachers and parents/guardians are working together to help your child in school, parents/guardians are asked to;

- Keep in contact with the school
- Ensure that your son/daughter attends punctually and regularly
- Adhere to attendance procedures
- Ensure your son/daughter comes to school in full school uniform and has all requirements for school
- Regularly check that homework is being recorded in the school journal and is completed.
- Provide written explanation in the event of student lateness or absence via the school app
  - Respond to communications made by a staff member
  - Inform teachers if problems are encountered relating to homework
  - Attend parent /teacher meetings
  - Support activities organised for parents/guardians
  - Work with the school to ensure your son/daughter achieves to their full potential
  - Read the rules of the school and sign the behavioural agreement in the school journal with your son/daughter.

### **B) Students**

Our rules are there to safeguard students' right to learn and teachers' right to teach in a caring, safe and respectful environment. Therefore, we expect:

#### **1. That you have respect for people and for property**

***This means:***

- Being prepared for class, including having all the relevant material required and your device charged and updated as necessary.
- Being respectful, courteous and helpful towards other students, all staff and visitors to the school.
- Respecting the instructions of your teachers
- Bullying in any form is considered a serious breach of the code of behaviour and respect and will be dealt with as deemed appropriate. (See Bí Cineálta Policy)
- Defamation or abuse of staff members or students on social networking sites or any internet site or other medium will be dealt with very seriously and the sanctions of suspension and /or expulsion may be imposed.

- That you don't use offensive or abusive language.
- That you do not record or capture individuals (both fellow students, staff members, guest speakers, etc) on your mobile phone. Any sharing of images, videos, SEC projects etc taken on school grounds is explicitly forbidden and will be considered a serious breach of the code of behaviour.
- That you use the appropriate recycling and litter bins in class, in public areas of the school and in the school grounds;
- That you keep your books in your lockers, not on the floor or in communal areas. Books left in these areas will be put into lost property;
- That you report any accidental damage you may have caused;
- Not using chewing gum in school
- That school buildings, furniture and the property of others must be treated with care. Defacing school property (graffiti etc.) is a serious offence. Deliberate damage to school property must be paid for by the students involved.
- Students bringing bikes, scooters, e-scooters or similar vehicles to school must ensure they are locked at all times. Students are required to dismount from such bikes/scooters/vehicles at the entrance to school grounds. Riding of such bikes, scooters, e-scooters or similar vehicles in the school grounds or between campuses travelling to and from class is forbidden.
- Students are not permitted to drive/park cars on school grounds.
- Toilet cubicles are occupied on an individual basis at any given time.

## **2. That you attend school every day and arrive on time**

### ***This means:***

- That you arrive each day and on time for every class during the day.
- That you move directly between campuses for classes without unnecessary delay or detour.
- That you attend every day unless it is absolutely unavoidable.
- That, in the event of an absence from school, your parent/guardian submits a notification via the school app detailing the date, duration, and reason for the absence.
- If you miss class due to appointments, absences or school activities that you catch up on missed class work and get the homework from a friend.
- Students who absent themselves from a class by staying on the school grounds but failing to attend their scheduled class are deemed to be mitching. Students who do not attend school on a given day without prior parental / guardian consent or who leave the school grounds without a parent / guardian signing them out as per the school requirements are also deemed to be mitching. The sanction for missing class/school without permission will be at the discretion of the Principal.

## **3. That you do your best in class and at your homework**

### ***This means:***

- That you listen to your teachers, follow their instructions and observe classroom expectations of behaviour.
- That you do not disturb the class or the teaching and learning process.
- That you wait quietly for your teacher, have all the books and equipment needed for class.
- That you do your homework each night to the best of your ability. All homework must be recorded in your journal.
- That you get your work signed by your parent/guardian when required by a teacher or Year Head.

#### **4. That you come to school in full uniform, clean and tidy**

***This means:***

- That you adhere to the school's Uniform Policy (see Sacred Heart School Uniform Policy)

#### **5. That you act in a proper manner around the school**

***This means:***

- Walking in an orderly way between rooms and campuses.
- You should avoid loitering in the toilets during the break times or any other times; students from each year group should stay in their own area during breaks other permitted/ assigned areas where school activities are being held.
- Taking your break times in the manner and area specified and obeying the instructions of the teacher on supervision duty.

#### **6. The school forbids the use, sale, purchase, supply and distribution of vapes, cigarettes (including e-cigarettes), alcohol or drugs (including all substances covered by the Misuse of Drugs Act) on the school premises, when representing the school, or when engaged in any school related activities. (See Substance Use Policy)**

***This means:***

- The Public Health (Tobacco) Acts 2002-2004 places a legal obligation on both the school authorities and on students to comply with the legal requirements that prohibit smoking in specified places.
- Students must never attend school, school outings or school related activities under the influence of alcohol or an illegal substance.
- Students who are found in breach of this rule will be subject to the school's sanctions.

#### **7. Mobile phones, digital recording or playing devices are allowed for use in the school or school grounds only with the permission of a teacher, the Deputy Principal or Principal**

***This means:***

- Mobile Phones should be switched off during the school day and stored in a student's locked locker or as directed by a member of staff.
- If a student is found using a mobile phone or any other digital recording or playing devices on the school campus during school hours without the permission of a teacher/supervisor, they will be asked to turn off their mobile phones before handing over to a teacher/supervisor to be stored in the office for collection

- Image capture without consent can be an affront to student and staff privacy and is prohibited.
- Students are obliged to hand over phones/devices to teacher/supervisor when requested to do so. Failure to do so is deemed to be a serious breach of the school's Code of Behaviour and will be referred to the Deputy Principal.
- The device will be retained in the school office for a first offence. Students can collect their phone at the end of the school day. Subsequent offences will require a parent to come into the school to sign for the phone. The student may contact home via the school phone to inform parents/guardians of the confiscation.
- Persistent offenders may be sanctioned further by Year Heads or have the matter referred to senior management.

## **8. That you use the School Journal as a means of communication between teachers and parents/guardians and as a study/homework record**

### ***This means:***

- It should be only used for school use and not for personal use.
- It is important that the journal should be in the student's possession at every class.
- It should contain a record of all homework.
- Student timetables should be placed into the journal.
- The journal is used for correspondence between home and school. **It can be used to record absences, illnesses, notes regarding good or poor behaviour and performance in class, failure to wear correct uniform etc.**
- The journal should not be defaced or marked in any way. Pages must never be removed from the journal (teachers may remove notes or required pages as the need arises).
- The journal will have to be replaced if it is lost or defaced. The replacement cost of the journal is €10.
- The Year Head may wish to retain journals from time to time.
- The journal should be available for inspection by teachers and parents/guardians.
- The homework journal may be brought by parent to the parent /teacher meetings. It is encouraged that parents/guardians sign the journal weekly in order to monitor their child's progress.
- The journal may be spot checked from time to time by teachers, class advisor, Year Head, Deputy Principal and Principal.

## **9. That you abide by all the regulations in relation to School Attendance/School Absenteeism**

Attendance at school is directly linked with student achievement and progress in school. The law requires that parents/guardians inform the school of the reason for any absence. Schools are obliged to record the reasons for absence. (Education Welfare Act 2000 Section 18). School Attendance Records are kept in accordance with Education Welfare Act 2000, Section 21.4(b). In accordance with the TUSLA guidelines when a student reaches 10 days of absences a letter will be sent to the parents/guardians advising them of this fact. In the event of a student accumulating 20 or more days

of absence this matter must be reported to TUSLA who may investigate the matter further. See the Sacred Heart School Attendance Strategy also.

*This means:*

- That if you are absent from school, your parent/guardian submits an explanation for the attention of the Year Head via the school app
- It is a mandatory requirement for parents/guardians to submit online via the app details of the date and duration of the absence and the reason for the absence on the day of return to school. Medical certificates may be forwarded by the student to the Year Head should they be available.
- That if you are late, students use the digital sign in at the school office before going to class. Failure to digital sign in may result in the student being marked absent for the day and the student being issued with a sanction.
- As far as possible all appointments for dentist, physiotherapy etc. should be scheduled outside of school time as this is a major disruption to the student's education. Time lost in this manner is time the student may find difficult to make up in the future and which may add unnecessary pressure on students in school.
- Parents/guardians who wish their son/daughter to sign out from school for any reason must submit a permission to leave via the school app (prior to 8:30 am where possible) to allow students to leave class. The permission to leave application will be authorised by the Year Head, Deputy Principal or Principal unless in the case of a sudden illness during school time. Parents/guardians must physically present to the school office to complete the digital sign out with their son/daughter. **This may be delegated to the Authorised Person as indicated by parents/guardians.**
- Students who are ill will not be permitted to leave school on their own.
- Students can only be signed out by a parent/guardian or authorised contact.

## **10. That you comply with lunchtime procedures**

*This means:*

Senior Cycle students only may leave the school grounds for lunch break. Should senior cycle students absent themselves from school following a lunch break this privilege will be withdrawn and can only be reinstated at the discretion of the Year Head.

Junior Cycle students remain in school during lunchtime. If parents/guardians of Junior Cycle students wish to allow students home for lunch, this must be communicated in writing at the beginning of each school year.

## **11. That you comply with all relevant school policies**

*This means:*

Students must comply with all other relevant school policies and procedures.

### **C) Staff:**

School staff, including supervisors and ancillary staff, are responsible for the implementation of the Code of Behaviour. Staff have legitimate authority to instruct students in relation to behaviour that is falling below expectations as laid out in this document. This authority extends to the classroom, on school grounds, movement from Altamont Street to the main site, on any school trip/event/activity and whenever a student is in the school uniform.

### **D) Individual Teachers:**

Teachers are responsible for maintaining a productive classroom environment and implementing the Code of Behaviour. Teachers will inform the relevant year head on any concerning behaviour and action taken.

When behavioural incidents occur teachers should enter a clear factual description of the behavioural incident under the student's profile on VShare.

Minor incidents of indiscipline, including but not limited to hindering other pupils' learning (e.g. through talking or disruption of class), having incorrect materials for class, late arrival to class, incomplete or un-presented homework and incorrect uniform, will be dealt with by the teacher.

Late arrivals for class should be noted through the attendance section of VShare.

Sanctions available to teachers include reprimanding a pupil, reasoning with him/her, changing seating arrangements/working groups, drawing up a student contract, use of journal for note home to parents/guardians or phone call home, limited assignment of additional class or homework. Sanctions should be recorded on the Behaviour tab of VShare and flagged to year head.

A teacher may also refer a student to the Student Support Team if concerned about their behaviour.

Incidents regarded by a teacher as persistent, reoccurring or of a serious nature will be reported in writing and assigned to the Year Head using the VShare Behaviour Tab, outlining details of the incident and any action taken by the teacher.

### **E) Year Heads:**

The Year Head is responsible for all aspects of behaviour for a year group and have the authority to issue sanctions up to and including a Friday detention. Sanction available to year heads include those listed above and imposing loss of privilege, assign extra tasks/clean up duty, impose lunch time and Friday detention, contact parents/guardians by phone/letter/email/app to arrange a meeting, contract/agreement and placing a student On Report.

### **F) Deputy Principal:**

Pupils with reoccurring Code of Behaviour infringements may be referred to the Deputy Principal. The Deputy Principal may convene a meeting with the student, their Year Head and their parent/guardian to address issues. Further sanctions may be imposed on the student.

### **G) Principal:**

The Principal may intervene in disciplinary matters at any point of the process. The Principal has the discretion to formally suspend a pupil. Suspensions require the student to absent themselves from

the school for a specific, limited period of school days. During the period of suspension, the student retains their place in the school.

## Disciplinary Procedures for Students

Our Code of Behaviour has always run in conjunction with our Student Support System that is intended to support all students through their years in the school.

The everyday school rules and expectation are outlined from point 1-11 above and apply to the following:

- In school classes and activities.
- Moving from campus to campus during the school day
- Out of school activities/ trips and outings
- School buses
- Students in town during the normal school day/times
- Online activities that directly relates to school.

**While the ladder of referral within the Code of Behaviour and Respect is usually as follows, there may be circumstances where the sequence of this ladder may not be followed.**



**Members of the Student Support Team may be involved in the resolution process at any stage in consultation with year head.**

However, from time to time it is necessary to invoke the school disciplinary procedures.

In order to help parents/guardians and students understand how this is operated the following outline of the Disciplinary Procedures is enclosed.

### Minor breaches of discipline (dealt with by Teachers)

**Minor breaches of discipline include:**

- a) Hindering other pupils learning e.g. by talking or disruption of class.
- b) Failure to study or do homework properly.
- c) Not having correct books or copies.
- d) Arriving late for class.

## **Major breaches of discipline (dealt with by Year Head, Deputy Principal / Principal)**

### **Major breaches of discipline include:**

- a) Where a student leaves the school premises without permission (mitching).
- b) Persistent disorderly or uncooperative behaviour i.e. where procedures outlined above have been followed and the parents/guardians contacted by the Year Head without any appreciable improvement in behaviour.
- c) Refusing to comply with teacher's instructions.

## **Gross Misbehaviour (dealt with by Deputy Principal/Principal)**

### **Gross misbehaviour includes:**

- a) Bullying of another student.
- b) Assaulting, intimidating and bullying a student/member of staff.
- c) Vandalising school or personal property. A student who damages property is required to make reparation or pay for damaged property.
- d) Persistent mitching, more than one occasion.
- e) Abusive, obscene or foul language to a teacher.
- f) Theft of school or personal property.
- g) Where a student is guilty of persistent misbehaviour and is persisting with poor behaviour despite intervention.
- h) Possession or use of alcohol or illegal substances.

**This list is not exhaustive and may be added to as required**

## **Sanctions**

In addressing behavioural incident that may occur the following sanction may be applied:

### **On Report**

The student may be put “On Report” by the Year Head if there are ongoing or repeated incidents of poor behaviour. The Year Head will notify parents/guardians that their son/daughter is going on report and the reasons why.

The student must take full responsibility to present the report book to the teacher at beginning of class and collect it at the end of class. The student must present the report to the Year Head at an agreed time during the school day. Unsatisfactory completion of the “on report” period or failure to comply with the “on report” sanction will result in an escalation of the issue to the attention of senior management. “On report” duration and frequency may be changed at the discretion of the Year Head and in consultation with the Principal.

### **Lunchtime Detention**

A student may be placed on lunchtime detention by their Year Head for behaviour which falls below the standard outlined in this code. Detention takes place at lunchtime from 1:20 to 1:50. Students are expected to bring their lunch with them and follow the instructions of the supervisor in completing assigned work. Students who fail to report for lunchtime detention will face an escalation of sanctions as a consequence at the discretion of senior management. In exceptional circumstances detention may be deferred, but only with the prior consent of the Deputy Principal/Principal.

### **Friday Detention**

A student may be placed on Friday detention at the discretion of their Year Head or a member of senior management. Friday detention takes place from 1:30pm to 3pm. Students are expected to bring their lunch, books and/or suitable schoolwork with them. Failure to bring suitable work for the duration of the detention period may result in students being refused entry and the detention being rescheduled. Failure to attend or late attendance at a Friday detention may lead to additional sanctions being applied. In exceptional circumstances detention may be deferred, but only with the prior consent of the Deputy Principal/Principal.

### **In School/ In house Suspension**

A student may be placed on an in school or in house suspension at the discretion of senior management. An in school/in house suspension is deemed to be appropriate where a student has a number of offences and their behaviour has not improved or if the student has significantly breached the code of behaviour in a singular incident. A student placed on an in school/in house suspension will be given an alternate timetable for the school day away from their peers. This maybe for a half or full school day at the discretion of senior management. Students will be prescribed work for the duration of the in school/in house suspension. Failure to attend for an in house suspension will be deemed a major breach of the code of behaviour and will be referred to the Principal for further action. In exceptional circumstances an in school/in house suspension may be deferred, but only with the prior consent of the Deputy Principal/Principal.

## **Formal Suspension**

This sanction is issued by the Principal in accordance with the school's Suspension Policy. The Principal has authority to suspend a student in accordance with the school's Suspension Policy, the principles of fair procedures and the procedures approved by the Board of Management. Parents/Guardians can appeal this decision (please see suspension Policy)

## **Suspension (see SHS Suspension Policy)**

Suspension gives students time to reflect on their behaviour, to acknowledge responsibility for the behaviour which led to the suspension and to accept responsibility for changing their behaviour to meet the school's expectations in the future.

Sacred Heart School is required by law to follow fair procedures when proposing to suspend a student. The principles of fair procedures (the right to be heard and the right to impartiality) govern the process of suspension.

## **Expulsion (see SHS Expulsion Policy)**

Exclusion from school is considered a very serious matter and the decision to exclude is not taken lightly. Only extreme cases of unacceptable and inappropriate behaviour will warrant consideration of expulsion.

The principles of fair procedures (the right to be heard and the right to impartiality) govern the process of expulsion.

The list of behaviours and sanctions above is not exhaustive. A behaviour / event not specified above may be dealt with as the Principal deems appropriate at the time. The sanction(s) for such behaviour is also at the discretion of the Principal.

Under Section 28 of the *Education Act 1998* the parent/guardian of a student or, in the case of a student who has reached the age of 18 years, the student may appeal to the board against a decision of a teacher or other member of staff of the school.

If a student accumulates 20 days or more of suspensions in any school year the parents/guardians, or a student aged over eighteen years, may appeal the suspension under Section 29 of the *Education Act 1998* to the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Skills. A parent, or a student aged over eighteen years, may appeal a decision to expel to the Secretary General of the DES. (*Education Act 1998* section 29). An appeal may also be brought by TUSLA on behalf of a student.

***This Policy was ratified by the Board of Management:***

Chairperson: Mary Mullarkey

Mary Mullarkey

Date: 17<sup>th</sup> June 2026

Acting Principal: Kevin Malone

Kevin Malone

Date: 17<sup>th</sup> June 2026