Suspension and Expulsion Policy

St. Paul's Community College is a state school run by the Education Training Board of Ireland (ETBI). Our school is run under the ethos of the ETB and the core values underpinning its characteristic spirit. St Paul's is a state, co-educational, multidenominational school underpinned by the core values of the Ethos of excellence in Education, Care, Equality, Community and Respect.

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Introduction

St. Paul's Community College is a multi-denominational, co-educational school providing an inclusive learning environment for all.

We recognise and respect each student as an individual, embracing a variety of learning and teaching styles and aspiring to encourage each student's unique skills and talents.

St. Paul's Community College encourages the involvement of parents through home school contacts and through the involvement in the development and growth of the Parent's Council.

This policy relates to sanctions that the school management may adopt when dealing with serious breaches of the Code of Positive Behaviour.

This policy was drawn up in consultation with all the school partners- the Board of Management, teaching staff, parents, and students.

The policy has been developed in line with the ethos and core values of WWETB – Excellence in Education, Care, Equality, Community and Respect. The school has at its core, the care and wellbeing of every student and the provision of a safe and secure learning environment for all members of the school community.

Rationale

In St. Paul's Community College, all students have the right to learn in an orderly and caring environment. Our Code of Behaviour sets out the expectations of student behaviour. All students and staff have the right to be treated fairly and with dignity in an environment free from disruption, intimidation, harassment, and discrimination.

There will be cases of unacceptable behaviour where it will be in the best interests of the school community or the student involved, that students be removed from classes or the school for a period of time or completely. Suspension or expulsion are the options available

to the principal in these situations.

SUSPENSION POLICY

Suspension allows the student time to reflect on his/her behaviour, to acknowledge and accept responsibility for the behaviour, which led to the suspension and to accept responsibility for changing his/her behaviour to meet the school's expectations in the future. It also allows time for school personnel to plan an appropriate support for the student to assist with successful re-entry.

It is most effective when it highlights the parents'/guardians' responsibility for taking an active role in partnership with the school, to work with parents/guardians with a view to assisting a suspended student to re-join the community as quickly as possible.

The Board of Management delegates the power to suspend pupils to the Principal or the Deputy Principal in his/her absence for up to five days. The Board of Management may suspend a student for a longer period of time.

The Education Welfare Officer will be informed if the duration of the suspension exceeds 6 days.

A student can be suspended when other sanctions/interventions have failed or for serious misconduct. In some circumstances, it may be necessary to impose and immediate suspension. A student may also be suspended for misconduct during state examinations.

Grounds for suspension include:

- The student's behaviour has a detrimental effect on the education/welfare of other students.
- The student is involved in persistent misbehaviour
- The student is involved in a serious incident of misbehaviour
- The student is responsible for serious damage to property
- The student poses a threat to Health and Safety
- The student is involved in a serious once off incident of misconduct.

This list is not exhaustive.

Examples of such behaviour could include:

- A threat of violence against a member of the school community
- Actual violence or assault against a member of the school community
- Gross defiance
- Verbal Abuse to a member of the school community
- A display of intimidation or harassment or discrimination or racism to a member of the school community either face-to-face or online.

Prior to Suspension

The Principal/Deputy Principal will:

- Ensure the student is given the opportunity to give a detailed account of the event/incident.
- Ensure sanctions and pastoral interventions under the Code of Behaviour have been applied.
- Ensure a discussion has occurred with the student regarding the suspension and the specific misbehaviours which the school considers unacceptable.
- Ensure a report is recorded and copied for the student file.

Procedure for Suspension:

- An investigation into the event/incident will be carried out by Year Head or Deputy Principal or Principal. A written report will be given to the principal.
- Parents/Guardians or student if over 18 years, are informed of the suspension and given details of the event/incident. The importance of parental roles and responsibilities in resolving the matter is outlined.
- Parents/Guardians will be asked to collect their son/daughter from the school. If this is not possible the student will be supervised until the end of the school day. If the student is over 18, they will be asked to leave the school premises.
- A letter to parents/guardians or student if over 18 years, with formal notification of the suspension will be sent home. This will include the period of the suspension, reason for the suspension and the arrangements for returning to school. In certain circumstances, a certain study programme may be outlined.
- A meeting between parents/guardians or student if over 18 years, and Principal/Deputy Principal/Year Head must take place before the student returns to school.
- The student will be put on Report for the first 5 school days after his/her return to school. This report card must be signed by Principal/Deputy Principal and Parent/Guardian daily. Failure to do so could result in further suspension.
- When the student returns from suspension, the student will be supported for a fresh start.

Appeals

Section 29 of the Education Act, 1998 provides for an appeal where a board of management, or a person acting on behalf of the board of management (normally the school Principal) suspends a student for a period or periods totalling not less than 20 days in a school year.

An appeal may not be made if the period or periods of suspension are less than 20 days in a school year.

Ratified on 15th February 2022

Expulsion Policy

The is the ultimate sanction imposed by the school and is exercised by the Board of Management in extreme cases of indiscipline.

Grounds for Expulsion:

- The student's behaviour is a persistent and ongoing cause of significant disruption to the learning of others or to the process of learning, teaching and assessment.
- The students continued presence in the school constitutes a real and significant threat to health and safety of themselves and others.
- The student is responsible for serious damage to school property.
- The student is responsible for a serious threat of bullying, or racism, or intimidation, and/or harassment towards a member of the school community either in person or online.

There may be exceptional circumstances where the Board of Management forms the opinion that a student should be permanently exclude for a first offence. Examples of such serious beaches of the Code of Behaviour are:

- A serious threat of violence against another student or member of staff
- Actual violence or physical assault
- Possession of illegal drugs.
- Supply and/or the sale of illegal drugs to other students in the school
- Sexual assault
- Possession of a weapon

This list is not exhaustive.

Prior to Expulsion

The principal will:

- Ensure all discipline options under the Code of Behaviour have been applied and documented.
- Ensure all appropriate support personnel – internal and external- have been involved and used to support the student.
- Ensure all other procedures, referrals, supports have been exhausted.
- Ensure that discussions/meetings have occurred with the student and parent/guardian or student if over 18 years, regarding specific misbehaviours which the school considers unacceptable and which may lead to expulsion. This may not be possible if the expulsion is being considered for a one-off incident/event.

- Provide formal verbal and written warning at appropriate times detailing these behaviours, as well as clear expectations of what was required of the student in the future.
- Record all actions taken
- Copy all correspondence.
- Create a summary of the student's file.
- Inform the parent/guardian or student if over the age of 18, that they are making a recommendation to the Board of Management to permanently exclude the student. Give them a copy of the summary of the student's file.
- Give the Parent/Guardian or student if over 18, an opportunity to present any reasons that they consider valid, for why the principal should not bring a recommendation to expel to the Board of Management.

The student is suspended while the principal considers the course of action.

Procedure for Expulsion:

Where the Principal recommends that the Board of Management should give consideration to expelling a student, the principal will:

- Inform the parents/guardians and the student if over 18 years, that the Board of Management has been asked to consider expulsion.
- Ensure that parents/guardians or student if over 18 years, have copies of correspondence, records of the student's behaviour, records of allegations against the student, records of the investigation and written notice of the grounds of which the Board of Management is being asked to consider expulsion.

The Board will undertake its own review of all documentation and the circumstances of the case. The Board of Management will hold a hearing where the principal and the parents/guardians or student if over 18 years, put their case before the Board in each other's presence. The student may attend if the parents/guardians wish for him/her to do so.

In advance of the hearing the Board will:

- Notify the parents/guardians or student if over 18 years of the details of the hearing by the Board and invite them to that meeting.
- Advise the parents/guardians or student if over 18 years, that they can make a written submission to the Board of Management.
- Ensure that the parents/guardians or student if over 18 years, have enough notice to allow them to prepare for the Board meeting.
- Ensure, in as much as is possible, that the parents/guardian and student if over 18 years, understands the purpose and process of the hearing.

After both sides have been heard, the Board of Management should ensure that the Principal and parents/guardians and student if over 18 years, are not present for the Board's deliberations.

The Board may conclude that:

- The sanction of expulsion is not warranted.
- Another sanction or intervention should be considered.
- Expulsion is warranted.

The Board will inform the parents in writing about its conclusions.

If the Board is of the opinion that the student should be expelled the following procedure will be put in place:

- The Board of Management will notify TUSLA and the Education Welfare Officer (EWO) of its intention to expel the student.
- The parents/guardians or student if over 18 years, will be told that the Board will inform the Education Welfare Officer (EWO) of its opinion. The parents/guardians and student if over 18 years, will be advised to participate in the EWO consultation process.
- The student cannot be expelled before the passing of 20 school days concludes from which the EWO receives this notification.
- The EWO will consult with the principal, the parents/guardian or student if over 18 years.
- The Board may consider it appropriate that a student should be suspended during this time.
- When the 20 days have elapsed a meeting of the Board of Management will be convened to consider if the Board intends to confirm its intention to expel.

Following the EWO's consultations, the Board may decide, to proceed to expel the student. The decision to expel and the reasons for it, will be notified to the parent/guardians or student if over 18 years. The letter will include information about the right to appeal the decision to expel.

Appeals

The parents/guardians or student if over 18 years, may appeal the decision of the Board of Management to the Department of Education under Section 29 of the 1998 Education Act.