



BALLINROBE COMMUNITY SCHOOL
CODE OF POSITIVE BEHAVIOUR

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Introduction

This policy was formulated in accordance with the requirements of the Education Act 1998, the Education (Welfare) Act 2000 and the National Educational Welfare Board Guidelines (NEWB). The policy is the result of a collaborative process involving staff, Student Council, Parents Association, and Board of Management. This policy should be read in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Suspension and Expulsion Policy
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Acceptable Usage Policy
- Attendance Strategy
- Substance Use Policy
- Educational Outings and out of school trips
- Child Safeguarding Statement and Risk Assessment
- Whole School Guidance Policy
- National Educational Welfare Board Guidelines
- Understanding Behaviours of Concern and Responding to Crisis Situations: Guidelines for Schools in Supporting Students (2024)
- Book Rental Policy

All students are actively encouraged to make a positive impact on the school community through positive behaviour. Praise and reinforcing positive behaviour are seen as a more important in developing and maintaining good relationships with students than negative consequences.

Mission Statement

At Ballinrobe Community School we endeavour to nurture a vibrant community built on respect, inclusion, kindness and spiritual growth. We endeavour to empower every individual to achieve academic and personal excellence.

Acceptance and application of this approach by pupils, parents and teachers creates the ideal environment for the imparting of knowledge, a growth in self-confidence and respect for one another.

Scope of the policy

This policy applies to the students of Ballinrobe Community School and relates to all school activities both during and outside of normal school hours. Such activities include but are not limited to evening study, sporting events, school trips, workshops, visiting guest speakers, student work experience, international school tours etc.

Attendance

Good attendance is essential for students to reach their full potential and actively engage in school life. Ballinrobe Community School's Attendance Strategy provides a comprehensive outline of how the school promotes and supports good attendance.

The school fosters a positive learning environment through pastoral care, extracurricular activities, and biannual attendance drives, rewarding full attendance to encourage student participation.

Attendance is closely monitored using the Compass platform, with tutors, Year Heads, and school management intervening when patterns of absenteeism emerge.

Student absences must be explained by a note on Compass from a parent/guardian. Parents are also requested to inform the Principal if a student will be absent for a prolonged period. Daily text notifications are sent to parents/guardians regarding student absences, and attendance reports are issued with Christmas and Summer reports.

If attendance becomes a concern, parents/guardians will be notified, and excessive absences will be reported to Tusla, The Child and Family Agency, in accordance with the Education Welfare Act 2002, which may lead to legal action.

Parent- Roles and Responsibilities

The support of parents is vital for the emotional and academic welfare of each student. Parents are encouraged to help their children by:

- Ensuring that they attend school regularly, in full school uniform, punctually and with all necessary books/equipment.
- Encouraging their children to strive for (personal) excellence.
- Providing them with a quiet place and the opportunity to study.
- Taking an interest in their daily school life.
- Supporting the authority and discipline of the school, thereby helping their children to achieve maturity, self-discipline and self-control.
- Discouraging them from engaging in outside jobs during the school term since this has such a detrimental effect on the academic progress of all students.
- Ensuring that they are aware of:
 - a. the amount of time their children are spending on social media and that this time is not infringing on their educational and/or on other leisure activities
 - b. the material being accessed is content and age appropriate.
- Keeping in regular contact with the school; contacting the school immediately if anxieties arise in relation to any aspect of a child's life in school.
- Informing the school about any incidents of bullying
- Attending scheduled meetings.

- Explaining absences by a note, which should be done through the school App, or by a phone call.

Student Expectations

1. Treat Everyone with Respect

Expectation: Be kind and respectful to students, teachers, staff and visitors. No bullying, name-calling, hate-based comments, or harassment.

Why: Everyone has the right to feel safe and welcome in school.

2. Follow Staff Instructions

Expectation: Listen to teachers and follow instructions the first time.

Why: It helps lessons run smoothly and keeps everyone safe.

3. Take Part in Your Learning

Expectation: Join in class, do your best, avoid disrupting others, and complete your work.

Why: Your learning matters, and your behaviour affects others too.

4. Come to School on Time and Ready to Learn

Expectation: Be on time, attend regularly, and bring the things you need for class.

Why: Being prepared helps you succeed and prevents delays for others.

5. Wear the School Uniform Properly

Expectation: Wear the full uniform as the school expects, including rules about jewellery and appearance.

Why: It shows pride in the school and keeps things fair for everyone.

6. Follow School Procedures (Signing In/Out & Lateness)

Expectation: If you are late, sign in. If you need to leave early, follow the sign-out rules.

Why: These rules keep everyone safe and ensure the school knows where students are.

7. Use Technology Sensibly

Expectation: Only use your phone or device in class when a teacher gives permission.

Why: It avoids distractions and helps everyone stay focused.

8. Look After the School Environment

Expectation: Treat the building, equipment, and shared spaces with care.

Why: A clean, safe school helps everyone learn and feel proud of their environment.

9. Move Safely Around the School

Expectation: Walk safely in corridors, use stairs properly, and respect shared spaces.

Why: This prevents accidents and keeps the school calm.

10. Be Honest in Your Work

Expectation: Do your own work. Don't cheat or copy.

Why: Being honest helps you learn and keeps things fair.

11. Keep the School Safe

Expectation: Don't fight, bring dangerous items, vape, smoke, or use alcohol/drugs.

Why: These behaviours put people at risk and are never acceptable.

12. Behave Well at School Events and Trips

Expectation: Represent your school positively during outings, sports events, and activities.

Why: You are part of the school community wherever you go.

13. Let Others Learn and Teachers Teach

Expectation: Don't interrupt, distract, or stop others from learning.

Why: Everyone deserves a fair chance to learn.

14. Speak Up if Something Is Wrong

Expectation: Tell a trusted adult if you are worried about your own safety or someone else's.

Why: Reporting concerns helps keep everyone safe.

15. Use of Staff Car Park

Expectation: Students are strictly prohibited from parking vehicles in the designated Staff Car Park at any time.

Why: The Staff Car Park is reserved for staff to ensure they have available parking spaces and to maintain safety on school grounds.

It is to be understood that not every possible school requirement is listed above. The normal standards of decent behaviour are always expected.

Bonus Points System

The school encourages and rewards positive contributions through the bonus points system.

- Bonus points are awarded for:
 - Positive contributions to the school community.
 - Improvement in overall behaviour or effort.
 - Winning awards or showing generosity of spirit.
- Two bonus points cancel one penalty point.
- A reward system is in place to recognize students who accumulate bonus points, reinforcing positive behaviour.

Responding to Behavioural Issues

The choice of responses in relation to breaches of the code of behaviour is at the discretion of the school.

Level 0 – Initial Observation / Note of Concern

Purpose: Early identification, tracking, and supportive intervention.

Typical Staff Involvement: Class teacher.

Actions May Include:

- Note of Concern recorded (not a penalty point)
- Conversation with student to understand context
- Monitoring patterns of behaviour
- Contact with parents (if appropriate)

Level 1 – Low-Level Misbehaviour

Purpose: Address minor or one-off behaviours within the classroom.

Typical Staff Involvement: Class teacher.

Actions May Include:

- Verbal warning
- Teacher–student conversation after class
- Penalty point (after conversation with student)
- Consultation with colleagues to check for patterns
- Phone call home

Level 2 – Persistent or More Disruptive Behaviour

Purpose: Manage ongoing issues or more serious isolated incidents.

Typical Staff Involvement: Year Head.

Actions May Include:

- Increased monitoring
- Community service
- Behaviour contract or targets
- Detention or equivalent
- Parental meeting
- Loss of privileges (sports teams, representing school)
- Restorative meetings

Level 3 – Serious or Harmful Behaviour

Purpose: Ensure safety, uphold school standards, and address major misconduct.

Typical Staff Involvement: Senior school leadership.

Actions May Include:

- Suspension (usually immediate for serious incidents)
- Expulsion (for extreme or repeated harm)
- Referral to external agencies (e.g., where legal issues arise)
- Intensive restorative follow-up

This table shows how each expectation links to the level of response the school may use.

| Behaviour (Linked to Expectations) | Level | Examples of Possible Interventions / Sanctions | Notes |
|---------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Not engaging in work / not completing homework | Level 0 | Note of concern, check-in with teacher, parent contact if needed | Escalated if it is frequent |
| Not showing respect (teasing, rudeness, low-level unkindness) | Level 1 | Warning, restorative chat, note home, penalty point | Hate-based comments = Level 3 |
| Not following instructions | Level 1 → Level 2 if repeated | Warning, penalty point, teacher conversation; if ongoing → Year Head meeting | Persistent refusal may escalate |
| Disrupting learning / stopping others from learning | Level 1 → Level 2 if repeated | Warning, restorative conversation, seating change, penalty point | Escalates when repeated across classes |
| Arriving late without a reason | Level 0 → Level 1 if repeated | Conversation, reminder about procedures, note of concern | Lateness with genuine reasons stays low level. Escalates if deliberate or repeated. |
| Incorrect uniform / ignoring presentation rules | Level 1 | Reminder, conversation, note home, uniform check | Escalates only if ongoing |
| Cheating, plagiarism | Level 1 | Redo work, conversation with teacher, note home | Repeated dishonesty escalates |
| Unsafe movement in corridors / rough behaviour | Level 1 → Level 2 | Warning, restorative action, detention if repeated | Safety concerns may escalate |
| Not signing in or signing out properly | Level 2 | Meeting with Year Head, parental contact | Safeguarding issue—taken seriously |
| Misusing technology / phone after warning | Level 2 | Confiscation, detention, parent contact | Escalates if ongoing |
| Truancy | Level 2 | Meeting with Year Head, parental contact | Safeguarding issue—taken seriously |

| | | | |
|------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Damaging property, littering, graffiti | Level 2 → Level 3 | Costs to be paid, community service, suspension for serious cases | Intent and severity matter |
| Poor behaviour on trips/events | Level 2 → Level 3 | Loss of privileges, detention, suspension for serious incidents | Includes behaviour while representing the school |
| Fighting, aggression | Level 3 | Suspension, restorative work, support afterwards, expulsion | Once off violent event could lead to expulsion. May involve outside agencies. |
| Vaping, smoking, drugs/alcohol | Level 3 | Suspension, parental meeting, outside support if needed | Always serious |
| Serious bullying / hate-related behaviour | Level 3 | Suspension, formal investigation, restorative process, expulsion | May involve outside agencies. Escalates to expulsion where necessary. |
| Dangerous items or behaviour | Level 3 | Immediate removal from class, suspension, possible external intervention, expulsion | Safety first. Expulsion. |
| Supply or selling drugs/alcohol or other banned substances | Level 3 | Expulsion | Expulsion |

This list is indicative and not exhaustive.

Removal from Class

The school distinguishes clearly between removal from class as a de-escalation strategy and exclusion from class as a sanction.

A student may be removed from class as a short-term de-escalation strategy where behaviour has escalated to the extent that teaching and learning cannot continue effectively. The purpose of removal is to provide time and space for the student to regulate and for learning to resume. This is not a sanction and will be used minimally, only where other classroom strategies have not been effective.

A student removed for de-escalation may be supervised by a teacher, Year Head, or Deputy Principal; however, responsibility for addressing the behaviour remains with the classroom

teacher. The classroom teacher will meet with the student later to discuss the matter in a calm, restorative manner, with a focus on reflection, repairing relationships and supporting positive future behaviour.

Following this discussion, the teacher may, using their professional judgement, determine an appropriate response or sanction in line with the school's behaviour policy.

Detention Policy

General Information

- 🕒 **Detention Time:** Every designated Friday, 2:00 PM – 4:00 PM
- 🕒 **Lunch Break:** 1:25 PM – 2:00 PM (for students and supervising teacher)
- 🎯 **Purpose:** Penalty for students who reach 24 disciplinary points under school regulations
- 👤 **Supervision:** Rotational basis among teaching staff, deputy principals and principal.

📌 Rules & Expectations

- 👤 **Uniform Requirement:**
 - School uniform is mandatory during detention
 - Students not in uniform will be sent home, and it will be considered a “no show”
- 🏠 **Attendance:**
 - Students must attend detention on the assigned Friday
 - Supervising teachers will take the roll during the detention
 - Postponement only allowed in exceptional circumstances, with approval from the Principal or Deputy Principal
 - A student who does not attend detention will be referred to the Principal. Note: Failure to attend detention may result in suspension
- 🚫 **Restricted Movement:**
 - Students may not leave school grounds during detention
 - Leaving the premises will be considered “mitching”

- Disciplinary incidents during detention may result in parents being contacted
- All disciplinary incidents during detention will be noted and referrals made to the Year Head.

- 📌 **Assigned Work:**
 - Students will be given tasks by the supervising teacher
 - Suggested work: Writing out the school's rules and regulations

🔔 **Communication & Administration**

- 📅 **Notification to Parents:**
 - Year Head to inform parents at least **one week in advance** of the scheduled detention

- 📁 **Documentation (Handled by Year Head):**
 - Letter of detention sent to parents
 - Copy of the letter filed in the student's record
 - Letter and explanation provided to the student
 - Deduction of penalty points administered by Year Head

Responding in a Crisis Situation

Guidance in this matter is provided by the Department of Education in their publication: *Understanding Behaviours of Concern and Responding to Crisis Situations: Guidelines for Schools in Supporting Students (2024)*. Ballinrobe Community School recognises how important it is to understand the exceptional and specific conditions when it is safe to use restraint in a crisis situation where there is an imminent risk to a student's safety and/or to the safety of others.

Uniform Policy

Full school uniform to be worn by students at all times. No other option is acceptable and students not in school uniform may be sent to the library and not allowed into class.

Date ratified: 11th June 2026

A student in partial uniform may be given a uniform pass by the Principal or one of the Deputy Principal's and allowed to class for that day. A note is necessary explaining why the full uniform is not worn. Penalty points will accrue if no note is given.

Any student not in full school uniform will not be allowed to represent the school at an event or be present in school pictures.

Boys Junior:

- Maroon & Grey V-Neck Jumper with Crest
- Grey School Pants
- Grey School Shirt/Grey T-Shirt

Boys Senior:

- Black & Grey V-Neck Jumper with Crest
- Grey School Pants
- Grey School Shirt/Grey T-Shirt

Girls Junior:

- Maroon & Grey V-Neck Jumper with Crest
- Grey School Skirt (Grey School Pants Optional, Jogging/Leisure Pants are not allowed)
- Grey School Blouse/Grey T- Shirt

Girls Senior:

- Black & Grey V-Neck Jumper with Crest
- Grey School Skirt (Grey School Pants Optional, Jogging/Leisure Pants are not allowed)
- Grey School Blouse /Grey T-Shirt

A plain black jacket is compulsory for all students. **The jacket must not have:**

- Coloured strips
- Large branding, logos or names
- No fur on the hood

P.E. Gear:

1st, 2nd and 3rd Years - PE kit consists of blue school PE sweatshirt, plain polo shirt/T-shirt, tracksuit pants, shorts or leggings and sports trainers. (as a good hygiene practice these should not be the same shoes worn to class).

Date ratified: 11th June 2026

TY/5th/6th Years - Sweatshirt/Hoodie, polo-shirt/T-shirt/jersey, tracksuit pants, shorts or leggings and sports trainers. (as a good hygiene practice these should not be the same shoes worn to class).

Students without appropriate kit will be given penalty points.

The school reserves the sole right to specify what jewellery and accessories are worn by students.

Anti-Bullying Policy

The school has adopted the Bi Cinealta Anti-Bullying Procedures.

- If a student engages in bullying behavior and does not stop after interventions and warnings, sanctions will be applied through the Code of Behaviour.
- Depending on the severity, consequences may include:
 - Friday afternoon detention
 - Suspension
- The school also provides pastoral supports, restorative practices, and interventions where appropriate.

For further clarification please refer to the full Antibullying (Bi Cinealta) Policy.

Use of Digital Technology and Online Conduct

Ballinrobe Community School promotes the responsible and safe use of digital technology to enhance learning. All students, staff, and members of the school community must adhere to the school's Acceptable Use Policy (AUP) when accessing the internet, social media, email, and personal devices. Internet use is a privilege that requires respect for privacy, intellectual property, and the reputation of the school.

Cyberbullying, unauthorized recording, inappropriate online behaviour, and accessing or sharing harmful content are strictly prohibited and subject to disciplinary action. The school monitors digital activity and enforces content filtering to ensure a safe online environment. Misuse of technology may result in sanctions, including withdrawal of access, detention, suspension, or expulsion in severe cases.

For further clarification on the responsible use of digital technology and the consequences of breaches, refer to the full Acceptable Use Policy.

The school has a strict policy regarding mobile devices.

- If a student uses a mobile device inappropriately, it will be confiscated and handed into the school office.
- A parent or guardian must collect the device:

Date ratified: 11th June 2026

- After 4:00 p.m. Monday-Thursday
- After 1:25 p.m. on Friday
- For further details, refer to the Acceptable Use Policy.

Substance Misuse Policy

The school has a detailed Substance Misuse Policy, which falls under the Code of Positive Behaviour.

- Students found in violation of this policy will face sanctions, which may include:
 - Suspension
 - Expulsion (in serious cases, in line with NEWB guidelines)

SUSPENSION AND EXPULSION POLICY AND PROCEDURES

1. Legal framework

1.1 Ballinrobe Community School acknowledges it's duty to publish their policy concerning admission and participation in the school, including the policy of the school relating to the expulsion and suspension of students pursuant to Section 15 (d) of the Education Act 1998 and Section 23 of the Education Welfare Act 2000. The Code of Behaviour in Ballinrobe Community School specifies:

- The standards of behaviour that shall be observed by each student attending the school
- The measures that may be taken when a student fails or refuses to observe those standards
- The procedures to be followed before a student may be suspended or expelled from a school
- The grounds for removing a suspension imposed in relation to a student
- The procedures to be followed relating to notification of a child's absence from school.

1.2. Ballinrobe Community School affirms that its Code of Behaviour is prepared in accordance with the Guidelines issued by the Education Welfare Board 2008. The Code of Behaviour addresses:

- The standards of behaviour expected in the school
- The plan for promoting good behaviour
- The ways in which a school responds to unacceptable behaviour
- The plan for implementing the code of behaviour
- School procedures for the use of suspension and expulsion

1.3 Ballinrobe Community School recognises the Right to Appeal pursuant to Section 29 of the Education Act.

1.4 In regard to informing the Education Welfare Board, Ballinrobe Community School affirms its statutory obligation pursuant to section 21 (4)(a) of the Education Welfare Act.

1.5 Ballinrobe Community School affirms that data collected in relation to students and parents is in compliance with the Data Protection Acts 1988 to 2018.

2 Suspensions

2.1 The Board of Management of *Ballinrobe Community School* holds the authority to suspend a student.

2.2 The Board of Management of *Ballinrobe Community School* may delegate this authority to the Principal of the school.

2.3 Ballinrobe Community School recognises that suspension is only one strategy within the code of Behaviour in response to inappropriate behaviour.

2.4. Ballinrobe Community School recognises that when all other strategies have been exhausted, suspension affords 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. Ballinrobe Community School works closely with parents to assist a suspended student to rejoin the school community successfully.

2.5. Ballinrobe Community School acknowledges that suspension should be a proportionate response to the behaviour that is causing concern. 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.)

2.6 Ballinrobe Community School affirms that all suspensions must be notified to the Board of Management of Ballinrobe Community School.

2.7 Ballinrobe Community School affirms that the Education Welfare Services of the Child and Family (Tusla) should be Informed of suspensions in the following circumstances:

- Where the period of suspension is for 6 or more consecutive school days.
- Where the aggregate number of days on which a student has been suspended /absent in any school year is 20 or more days.

2.8. Ballinrobe Community School affirms that suspension may occur after the following factors have been considered:

- The nature and seriousness of the behaviour
- The impact and context of the behaviour

- The interventions tried to date
- That all discipline options under the Ballinrobe Community School Code of Behaviour have been applied and documented
- That all actions /decisions taken are recorded and all correspondence copied.
- Discussion has occurred with the student and parent(s) regarding the specific behaviour which the school considers unacceptable, and which may lead to suspension.

2.9. The Board of Management of Ballinrobe Community School affirms that students attending Ballinrobe Community School may be suspended as follows pending investigation and /or discussion with parents. The following 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 behaviour that is contrary to the terms of the Equal Status Act 2000
- For sexual harassment and/or the possession/supply /use of pornographic material.

2.10 Ballinrobe Community School acknowledges that a single incident of serious misconduct may be grounds for suspension. Such grounds may include where the continued presence of the student in the school at the time would represent a serious threat to the safety or welfare of students, staff of the school or any other person.

2.11 A student may be suspended during a state examination and such suspension should normally be approved by the Board of Management of Ballinrobe Community School. This type of suspension should only be used where there is:

- A threat to good order in the conduct of the examination
- A threat to the safety or welfare of other students and personnel
- A threat to the right of the other students to do their exam in a calm atmosphere.

2.12. The Board of Management of Ballinrobe Community School may decide as part of the school's policy on sanctions and following consultation process with the Principal, parents, teachers and students, that particular named

behaviour incur suspension as a sanction. This does not remove the duty to follow due process and fair procedures in each case.

3 Inappropriate use of Suspension

- Rolling suspension. A student should not be suspended again shortly after they return to Ballinrobe Community School unless they engage in serious misbehaviour that warrants suspension, that fair procedures are observed in full and the standard applied to judging the behaviour is the same as that standard applied to the behaviour of any other student.
- Informal / unacknowledged suspension. Exclusion of a student for part of the school day as a sanction is a suspension.
- Open-ended suspension. Students should not be suspended for an indefinite period. Any such suspension would be regarded as a defacto expulsion.

3 **Procedures in respect of Suspension.**

3.10 Ballinrobe Community School is required to follow fair procedures when proposing to suspend a student. The school should observe the following procedures

3.10.1 The student and parent(s) should be informed about the complaint

3.10.2 The student and parent(s) should be given the opportunity to respond

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

3.11 A student should not be suspended for more than 3 days except in exceptional circumstances. The Board of Management of Ballinrobe Community School should provide guidance to the Principal concerning the kinds of circumstances under which suspensions of longer than 3 days might be approved. If a suspension of longer than 3 days is being proposed the matter should be referred to the Board of Management for consideration and approval. However the Board of Management of Ballinrobe Community School may wish to authorise the Principal, with the approval of the Chairperson of the Board of Management, to impose a suspension of up to 5 days in circumstances where a meeting of the Board cannot be convened in a timely fashion. Such authorisation must be

recorded in the minutes of meeting of the Board of Management and reviewed on an annual basis.

3.12 The Board of Management of Ballinrobe Community School 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 20 days for more. Any such suspension is subject to appeal under section 29 of the Education Act 1998.

4 Implementing the suspension

4.1 The Principal of Ballinrobe Community School should notify the Parent(s) and the student in writing of the decision to suspend. The letter will 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.
- The provision for an appeal to the Board of Management.
- The provision for an appeal to the Department of Education, in the case of a suspension which would bring the days suspended in one academic over 20 days.

4.2 In the case where Parents do not agree to meet with the Principal, written notice will serve as notice to impose a suspension.

4.3 A suspension may be removed if the Board of Management of Ballinrobe Community School decides to remove the suspension for any reason.

4.4 An appeal may be made by the parent of the student concerned, or by the student concerned where the student has reached the age of 18 years to the Board of Management. This appeal must be sent to the Secretary of the Board of Management in writing, outlining the reason for the appeal. The student will serve the suspension even if an appeal has been requested.

5 Section 29 Appeal against Suspension

- 5.1 Where the total number of days for which the student has been suspended in the current school year reaches 20 days, the parent(s) or a student aged over 18 years, may appeal the suspension under Section 29 of the Education Act 1998 to the Minister for Education.
- 5.2 An appeal may be made by the parent of the student concerned, or by the student concerned where the student has reached the age of 18 years. In accordance with section 26 of the Education (Welfare) Act, 2000, the Child and Family Agency (Tusla) may appoint a person, independent of that Agency, to appeal a decision of a board of management or person acting on behalf of the board of management to permanently exclude a student from a school.
- 5.3 An appeal must be made within **42 calendar days** from the date of the decision of the board of management or a person acting on behalf of the board of management.
- 5.4 Appeals must be made in writing on the Section 29 Appeal Form and submitted to the Section 29 Appeals Administration Unit which has been established within the Department of Education to provide administrative support to enable appeals committees perform their functions. The Section 29 Appeal Form may be downloaded from the Department's website or obtained directly from the Section 29 Appeals Administration Unit. Contact details for the Unit are available on the Department's website www.education.ie.

6 Expulsion

- 6.1 The Board of Management of Ballinrobe Community School has the authority to expel a student.
- 6.2 Expulsion should be a proportionate response to the student's behaviour. Ballinrobe Community School acknowledges that expulsion of a student is a very serious step and one that should only be taken by the Board of Management of Ballinrobe Community School in extreme cases of unacceptable behaviour.
- 6.3 The Board of Management of Ballinrobe Community School affirms that Ballinrobe Community School needs to have taken significant steps to address the misbehaviour and to avoid expulsion.

Such measures may include:

- Meeting with parents and students to try and find ways of helping the student to change their behaviour.
- Making sure that the student understands the possible consequences of their behaviour should it persist
- Ensuring that all possible options have been tried.
- Seeking the assistance of relevant support agencies, e.g. Child and Family Agency (Tusla) Education Welfare Services, HSE Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services. National Behavioural Support Service JLO, NEPS, NCSE.

6.4 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 the safety and welfare of others.
- The student is responsible for serious damage to property.

6.5 Before expulsion is considered, school authorities must satisfy themselves that all possibilities have been exhausted for changing the student's behaviour.

6.6 'Automatic Expulsion'

The Board of Management of Ballinrobe Community School may decide in consultation with the Principal, parents, teachers and students that particular named behaviours would result in 'Automatic' expulsion. This does not remove the duty to follow due process and fair procedure.

6.7 Expulsion for first or once-off offence

There may be exceptional circumstances where the Board of Management of Ballinrobe Community School decides 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 of Behaviour could include:

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

7 Factors to Consider before proposing to expel a student

7.1 The Board of Management of Ballinrobe Community School should take the following factors into consideration before considering expelling a student:

- The nature and seriousness of the behaviour
- The context of the behaviour
- The impact of the behaviour
- The interventions already tried to change the student's behaviour
- Whether expulsion is a proportionate response
- The possible impact of expulsion

7.2 Expulsion would not be appropriate for the following:

- 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.

8 Procedures in respect of expulsion

8.1 A detailed investigation will be carried out under the direction of the Principal. The Principal should ensure that no party who has had any involvement with the circumstances of the case is part of the investigation.

8.2 The Principal should inform the student and his/her parents about the specific details of the alleged breach of behaviour, how it will be investigated and that it could result in expulsion. The Principal must ensure that the student and parents are given every opportunity to respond to the complaint of serious misbehaviour. The Principal should communicate this in writing to ensure that parents have a permanent record of having been informed.

8.3 A meeting should be arranged between the student and their parents and the Principal of Ballinrobe Community School before a sanction is imposed.

8.4 Should a student and their parent(s) fail to attend a meeting the Principal should write advising:

- the seriousness of the matter
- the importance of attending a re-scheduled meeting
- Failing that, the duty of the school authorities to make a decision to respond to the inappropriate behaviour
- Record all correspondence

8.5 Where the Principal of Ballinrobe Community School forms a view, based on the investigation of the alleged misbehaviour, that expulsion may be warranted, the Principal shall make a recommendation to the Board to consider expulsion.

8.6 The Principal should:

- Inform the student and parents in writing that the Board of Management is being asked to consider expulsion.
- Ensure that parents have written records of (a) the allegation, (b) the investigation, (c) written notice of the grounds on which the Board of Management is being asked to consider expulsion.
- Provide the Board with the same comprehensive records as are given to the student and the parents.
- Notify the parents in good time of the date of the hearing with the Board of management and invite them to that hearing.
- Advise the parents that they can make a written and oral submission to the Board of Management.
- Ensure parents are given enough notice to allow them to prepare for the meeting.

8.7 It is the responsibility of the Board of Management of Ballinrobe Community School to review the initial investigation and satisfy itself that the investigation was properly conducted in line with fair procedures.

8.8 The Board of Management should undertake its own review of documentation and all circumstances of the case.

8.9 The Board of Management should ensure that no party who has had any involvement with the circumstances of the case is part of the Board's deliberations.

8.10 Where the Board of Management of Ballinrobe Community School decides to expel a student it must hold a hearing and this meeting should be properly conducted in accordance with Board procedures.

8.11 Parents may be accompanied at the Board hearing but, as this is a lay forum; legal representation is not the normal practice, however it may be allowed due to the potentially serious consequences for the student. The Board Secretary should be informed in writing who shall be attending this meeting at least two days prior to the meeting taking place.

8.12 At the start of the meeting the Chairperson shall enquire whether any member has an objective bias in respect of the matter being considered by the Board. Where the Board is satisfied that an objective bias exists, the member(s) involved shall withdraw from the meeting.

8.13 At the hearing the Principal and the parents, or a student aged 18 or over, put their case to the Board in each other's presence and will be available to answer questions from Board Members. Each party should be allowed question the evidence of the

other party. Questions should be directed through the Chairperson at the end of each presentation.

- 8.14 Once the Principal and the Parents have made their cases, they will withdraw from the meeting.
- 8.15 Should the Board require the professional advice of the Principal, the Principal may be invited to return to the meeting briefly for that purpose. While the Principal is present, there will be no discussion on the merits of the particular case being considered.
- 8.16 In the conduct of the hearing the Board must take care to ensure they are and are seen to be impartial as between the Principal and the student. Parents may wish to be accompanied at hearings and the Board should facilitate this in line with good practice and Board procedures.
- 8.17 When both sides have been heard the Board should ensure that the Principal and Parents are not present for the Board's deliberations.
- 8.18 In hearing and considering a proposed expulsion the Board shall have regard to:
- (a) the nature, scale and persistence of any behaviour alleged to have given rise to, or contributed to, the decision made by or on behalf of the Board,
 - (b) the reasonableness of any efforts made by the school to enable the student to whom the appeal relates (the 'student concerned') to participate in and benefit from education,
 - (c) the educational interests of the student concerned and the desirability of enabling the student as far as practicable to participate in and benefit from education with his or her peers,
 - (d) the educational interests of, and the effective provision of education for, other students of the school and the maintenance of a classroom and school environment which is supportive of learning among the students of the school and ensures continuity of instruction provided to students in any classroom concerned and the school,
 - (e) the safety, health and welfare of teachers, students and staff of the school,
 - (f) the code of behaviour under section 23 of the Education (Welfare) Act of 2000 and other relevant policies of the school and —
 - (i) in the case of that code of behaviour, the extent to which it is in compliance with that section 23 and any guidelines issued under subsection (3) of that section, and
 - (ii) in the case of those other policies, the extent to which each of them is implemented, promotes equality of access to and participation in education and is in compliance with —
 - (I) any enactment that imposes duties on schools or their boards,
 - (II) any relevant guidelines or policies of the Minister,
 - (g) the duties on schools or their boards imposed by or under any enactment,
 - (h) guidelines issued pursuant to section 22(7) of the Act of 2000, and (i) such other matters as the Board considers relevant.

9 Board of Management deliberations and actions following the hearing

- 9.1 Having heard from all the parties involved it is the responsibility of the Board to decide whether or not the allegation is substantiated and if expulsion is the appropriate sanction.
- 9.2 When 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 Education Welfare Officer in writing of its opinion and the reasons for this opinion pursuant to section 24 91) of the Education Welfare Act 2000. The Board should refer to the Child and Family Agency (Tusla) Education Welfare Services reporting procedures for proposed expulsions.
- 9.3 The student cannot be expelled before the passage of 20 school days from the date on which the EWO receives this written notification.
- 9.4 The Board of Management should inform the parents in writing about its conclusions and where expulsion is proposed the parents should be informed that the Board of Management will inform the Education Welfare Officer.

10 Consultations arranged by the Educational Welfare Officer

- 10.1 Within 20 days of receipt of a notification from a Board of Management the EWO will make all reasonable attempts to hold individual consultations with the Principal, the parent and the student. The EWO will convene a meeting of those parties. These consultations will focus on alternative educational arrangements for the student.
- 10.2 Pending the consultations in 12.1 the Board of Management may consider it appropriate to suspend a student during this time. This should only be considered where the continued presence of the student during this time would seriously disrupt the learning of others or represent a risk to the safety and health of students or staff.

11 Confirmation of the decision to expel

11.1 When the 20 day period following notice to the EWO has elapsed and 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. The Board of Management may delegate authority to the Chairperson and Secretary to review this decision of expulsion after the twenty days has expired.

11.2 Parents should be notified immediately that the expulsion will now proceed. Parents and the student must be informed of their right to appeal to the Minister for Education.

12 Section 29 Appeal against Expulsion

12.1 The parent(s) or a student aged over 18 years, may appeal the expulsion under Section 29 of the Education Act 1998.

12.2 Parents and the student should be informed about their right to appeal to the Minister for Education.

12.3 An appeal may be made by the parent of the student concerned, or by the student concerned where the student has reached the age of 18 years. In accordance with section 26 of the Education (Welfare) Act, 2000, the Child and Family Agency (Tusla) may appoint a person, independent of that Agency, to appeal a decision of a board of management or person acting on behalf of the board of management to permanently exclude a student from a school.

12.4 An appeal must be made within **42 calendar days** from the date of the decision of the board of management or a person acting on behalf of the board of management.

12.5 Appeals must be made in writing on the **Section 29 Appeal Form** and submitted to the Section 29 Appeals Administration Unit which has been established within the Department of Education to provide administrative support to enable appeals committees perform their functions. The Section 29 Appeal Form may be downloaded from the Department's website or obtained directly from the Section 29 Appeals Administration Unit. Contact details for the Unit are available on the Department's website www.education.ie.

13 Review of use of Expulsion

13.1 The Board of Management of Ballinrobe Community School should review the use of expulsion in the school at regular intervals.

14 Implementation and Review of Policy

14.1 The Principal and Board of Management of Ballinrobe Community School will responsible for the implementation of this policy.

14.2 This policy shall be reviewed periodically, in light of emerging legislation and circulated Guidelines from the Department of Education.

This policy was ratified by the Ballinrobe Community School Board of Management on 11th June 2026

Definitions under the Education Act, 1998

“**parent**” includes a foster parent, a guardian appointed under the Guardianship of Children Acts, 1964 to 1997, or other person acting in *loco parentis* who has a child in his or her care subject to any statutory power or order of a court and, in the case of a child who has been adopted under the Adoption Acts, 1952 to 1998, or, where the child has been adopted outside the State, means the adopter or adopters or the surviving adopter;

“**Principal**” means a person appointed under *section 23*;

“**school**” means an establishment which—

(a) provides primary education to its students and which may also provide early childhood education, or

(b) provides post-primary education to its students and which may also provide courses in adult, continuing or vocational education or vocational training, but does not include a school or institution established in accordance with the Children Acts, 1908 to 1989, or a school or institution established or maintained by a health board in accordance with the Health Acts, 1947 to 1996, or the Child Care Act, 1991;

Date ratified: 11th June 2026

“**student**”, in relation to a school, means a person enrolled at the school and in relation to a centre for education, means a person registered as a student in that centre;

Implementation and Review

- This Code of Behaviour is reviewed regularly to ensure it remains effective and aligned with best practices.
- Parents, students, and staff are encouraged to provide feedback during policy reviews.