



Elphin Community College - Code of Positive Behaviour



Developed in accordance with the National Education Welfare Board Guidelines, Education Welfare Act 2000, and subsequent legislation November 2025 (Ratified last 17 February 2022)

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Mission Statement of Elphin Community College

Elphin Community College is committed to providing a caring, inclusive and student-centred environment where each individual is supported to reach their full potential academically, personally, and socially. Our vision is to empower students to become confident, responsible, and active members of society.

Rationale:

The Board of Elphin Community College continually reviews the school's Code of Positive Behaviour to ensure that it complies with all legal requirements and good practice as set out by national legislation. It is a requirement under the Education Welfare Act, 2000, Section 23 (1), which refers to the obligation on schools to prepare a Code of Behaviour in respect of the students registered at the school. It details in Section 23(2), that the Code of Behaviour shall specify:

- The standards of behaviour that shall be observed by each student attending the school;
- The measures that shall 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 the school concerned;
- The procedures to be followed in relation to a child's absence from school.

Code of Positive Behaviour

Developed in accordance with the guidelines of the National Education Welfare Board

It is considered that by reading this policy, you have made yourself aware of the school's Code of Positive Behaviour, understand the reasons behind the Code and that you agree with this policy. It is also considered that by agreeing to and signing up to the terms of this policy, you have fulfilled the final criteria for admission into Elphin Community College.

Parents/ Guardians are advised that students who have been accepted and choose to attend Elphin Community College are bound to the terms of this policy and Code.

Elphin Community College believes that its Positive Behaviour Policy/Code of Behaviour is firmly rooted in mutual respect, justice, the common good and concern for health and safety. This policy should be read in conjunction with the Dignity at Work /School and/or Anti-Bullying Policy. An essential element of this is good, open communication between the partners. The school believes that such an approach will be beneficial for students, teachers, management, parents/guardians and the Board of Management alike.

It should also encourage students to take a positive view of co-operation and interdependence into their adult lives. The Positive Behaviour Policy will have due regard for the rights and responsibilities of all the parties concerned within the school.

All students attending Elphin Community College are actively encouraged to make a positive impact on the school community through positive behaviour. In our school, positive Behaviour is considered a form of training that empowers students to make appropriate choices in a supportive environment.

Child Protection

Please refer to the Elphin Community College Child Safeguarding Statement and Risk Assessment, available on request and prominently displayed at the school entrance. Elphin Community College adheres to the procedures outlined in the Children First Guidance (Department of Children and Youth Affairs, 2017).

Code of Behaviour: Definition and Philosophy

The code of behaviour comprises the programmes, practices and procedures which form the school's overall plan for promoting positive behaviour and maintaining a positive learning environment. The code reflects our philosophy of justice and equality and the school's Mission Statement. It seeks to ensure and protect the rights of the school community and those of the individual within it. The Code endeavours to promote mutual respect among staff, students, parents, the Board of Management, and the wider community. Elphin Community College is grateful that parents/guardians have chosen Elphin Community College to entrust their child to its care. We are committed to the holistic development and care of each of our students.

Legal Basis

The code is prepared in accordance with the guidelines issued by the NEWB and in compliance with the Education Welfare Act 2000, the Education Act 1998, the Education (Miscellaneous) Provisions Act 2007, the Equal Status Act 2000, and the Education for Persons with Special Education Needs Act 2004. This Code also implements the provisions of the Education (Admissions to Schools) Act of 2018. The code complies with current legislation as enshrined in the various education acts and Health and Safety legislation, and relevant constitutional and international provisions and conventions.

(See NEWB Developing a code of behaviour: guidelines for schools, pp 7-9).

This policy should be read alongside the following related policies:

- Anti-Bullying Policy (*Bí Cineálta*)
- Mobile Phone and ICT Acceptable Use Policies
- SEN and Inclusion Policy
- Child Safeguarding Statement
- Suspension and Exclusion Policy
- Admissions Policy

Aims of the Code of Positive Behaviour

The whole school review of the code of behaviour endeavours to:

- Set standards of behaviour for all members of the school community, staff, students, parents and the Board of Management.

- Promote a just, caring and secure environment for staff, students and the wider school community.
- Foster an orderly, harmonious school where high expectations of behaviour are evident and supported.
- Enable the school to support the learning of **every student**.
- Encourage and teach students to take personal responsibility for their behaviour for learning.
- Support students to mature into responsible participating citizens.
- Promote positive behaviour for learning.
- Build positive relationships of mutual respect among students, staff and parents.
- Implement effective procedures which allow for the day-to-day running of the school and which meet the demands of current legislation.
- Outline the structure of fair, consistent and agreed sanctions/interventions that will be used in response to negative behaviour.
- Outline the systematic interventions to be used when a student repeatedly misbehaves.
- Promote positive behaviour, personal responsibility and self-discipline.
- Outline how positive behaviour is encouraged.
- Foster a spirit of cooperation and good communication between all partners in the school community.
- Enable the partners to promote a positive image of the school in the wider community.

Reasonable Adjustments & Individual Support Plans

The school makes **reasonable adjustments** so that behaviour expectations are accessible to all students, including those with AEN. Adjustments may include: visual schedules and social narratives; movement/sensory breaks; alternative transition routes/timings; regulated access to quiet spaces; adapted homework; assistive technology for communication; and supervised **time-out** for regulation. Where patterns of behaviour emerge, staff will use **Functional Behaviour Assessment (ABC recording)** to identify needs and agree **Positive Behaviour Support Plans (PBSPs)** with measurable targets. Plans are reviewed regularly with the student (where appropriate), parents/guardians, and relevant staff.

Policy Summary

At Elphin Community College, we have high expectations of our students. To meet those expectations, we believe they should feel safe and happy to work and play at school, free from any adverse effects caused by others' behaviour or attitudes. It is fundamental to our core values that all members of the school community, including students, staff and parents, should behave with due respect for one another, for each other's property, and for the school's good reputation. We actively seek and expect the support of parents in this endeavour, which is why we insist that parents make a commitment to the school from the outset. We expect a genuine commitment from parents/guardians to fully and actively support the school, as necessary, in upholding the Code of Behaviour by encouraging and assisting their child in complying with it. Our aim is for all students to realise their full potential and successfully complete their secondary education with us.

- **Information-sharing:** Relevant information from a student's plan will be shared on a **need-to-know** basis with staff directly supporting the student, in line with GDPR and our Data Protection Policy.
- **Communication:** We prioritise **clear, proactive communication** with parents/guardians for planning meetings, reviews, and any significant incidents.

Special Class & Inclusive Education

Elphin Community College provides a Special Class as part of our inclusive provision. Students in the Special Class are full members of our school community and access learning, social, and co-curricular opportunities in line with their needs, interests, and strengths. We adopt a graduated, needs-led approach to support, working in partnership with parents/guardians, the Student Support Team, NEPS/NCSE advisers, and external professionals as appropriate.

Provision for students in the Special Class includes individualised targets, structured teaching, visual supports, predictable routines, and access to sensory regulation and communication systems where required. Expectations and sanctions are fair and proportionate and take account of each student's learning profile and agreed reasonable adjustments.

School and Classroom Rules

The school and classroom rules translate standards into practical guidance relating to the behaviour expected of students. Rules provide clear boundaries. They describe, in simple terms, how to behave to learn well and develop into mature, responsible individuals.

Pastoral Framework

School rules and the code of behaviour provide the framework which allows effective teaching, learning and positive social development to take place. Rules inevitably entail sanctions, which are clearly stated. It is equally important that we emphasise the balance between sanctions and our Philosophy of Care, to ensure that oversight of student welfare permeates all interactions between staff and students.

Class Teachers:

Class teachers advise students on how to behave correctly to maximise teaching and learning in the classroom.

Class Tutors:

Class Tutors support the wellbeing and development of their class group, encouraging positive behaviour and attendance, maintaining daily contact with students, and liaising with the Year Head and parents/guardians to ensure consistent support for learning and personal growth.

AEN Roles:

AEN/SEN Co-ordinator (SENCo):

Leads whole-school planning for Additional Educational Needs (AEN), maintains the AEN Register and Student Support Files, co-ordinates Reasonable Accommodations for Certificate Examinations (RACE), and liaises with parents/guardians, Year Heads, Special Class staff, SNAs, and external agencies.

Special Class Teacher(s):

Plans and delivers individualised and small-group programmes aligned to students' priority needs and strengths; co-ordinates targets, visuals, and sensory supports; facilitates **meaningful inclusion** with mainstream classes; and communicates regularly with parents/guardians and the SENCo.

Special Needs Assistants (SNAs):

Provide **care-related** support in line with students' prioritised care needs (primary and secondary), enabling access, safety, communication and regulation; implement teacher-led programmes; and contribute observations to Student Support Files. (Ref: School SNA Allocation & Care Needs profiles.)

Student Support Team (SST):

A multi-disciplinary in-school team (Principal/DP, SENCo, Guidance, Year Head, Special Class teacher, as needed) that meets to plan **supports, reviews, and referrals**, ensuring early intervention and joined-up practice.

Year Heads:

The Year Head encourages good student behaviour and attendance, and liaises with class teachers, tutors, counsellors, parents/guardians, and senior management. Year Heads also monitor academic progress and discuss individual academic difficulties with students, parents/guardians, and teachers, with a view to furthering the student's learning and educational opportunities.

Guidance Counsellor:

The Guidance Counsellor has a supportive role for all students who may be experiencing personal or school-related difficulties, in addition to providing guidance on career opportunities.

Positive Recognition/Promoting Positive Behaviour

In our school we have agreed:

1. To a Reward System:

The school is committed to a policy of recognising, encouraging and rewarding positive behaviour and achievement. It has in place strong school and class routines, with students clear on the boundaries and expectations. Regularly, students are given recognition for

- Outstanding achievements
- Sporting accomplishments

- Extra-curricular success
- Attendance
- Good manners and demeanour
- Consistent high level of effort.

Acknowledgement may take the form of:

- Involvement in positions of responsibility e.g. Committees, Student Council, Prefects, Mentors, representing the school, etc.
- Positive points on VS Ware
- Praise from staff members, privately or publicly
- An affirmative stamp/note in the student Journal/or on VS Ware (At teacher discretion)
- Positive phone call home
- Feedback during parent/teacher meetings
- Feedback during general assembly
- Announcement over the intercom
- Student of the Month – Certificate
- Green Platform Notice Board / Display of students' work
- Articles in local newspapers / Social Media
- Certificate of Merit
- Class-based rewards, e.g.. Movie class, extracurricular activity
- End of Year School Awards Ceremony

Please note that this list is not exhaustive.

It is our school's aim at all times to encourage each student to fulfil his/her educational potential, academically and in every other respect.

2. To have Respect for Others:

This includes:

(a) **Recognising the rights of others, e.g.**

- The right to grow as a responsible person
- The right parents/guardians have to expect good results
- The right the teacher has to do her/his work without having to spend undue time dealing with students' negative behaviours/inattention.
- The right each member of the class has to learn.
- The expectation of school authorities that each student will act reasonably and fairly in and around the school, on their way to and from school and while representing the school on school trips, sporting events etc.

(b) **Behaving in an orderly manner:**

- Students should move quickly and quietly, keeping to the left in single file on the stairs, corridors and doorways.
- Disruptive behaviour in corridors or in class will not be tolerated.
- Disruptive behaviour on the way to and from school will not be tolerated.
- Lockers should be visited before 9.00 a.m. and during breaks only.
- Lockers are out of bounds between classes and during class time.

(c) Not bullying any other person or acting negatively towards any other person:

Bullying, rough conduct, name-calling, isolation or any other form of intimidation of students by other students is totally unacceptable. Any instances of such behaviour will be dealt with as a serious breach of good order, and the Bí Cineálta guidelines will be followed. The use of foul language will not be tolerated.

The school recognises that students with additional needs can be **disproportionately targeted**; preventative teaching, supervision, and swift, sensitive responses apply, in line with **Bí Cineálta**. If you think you are being bullied, talk to a teacher, class tutor, Year Head or a member of the anti-bullying team. Remember that silence is the bully's greatest weapon. You can also report it via our anonymous form:

<https://forms.office.com/e/WTPqPuQww5>

(d) Being a team player:

Student Council: We encourage students to take part in the development of school policies and procedures. Each year, a new council is formed and elected members liaise with class representatives from each year group. Existing members may be given a chance to step down, and new members the opportunity to step up.

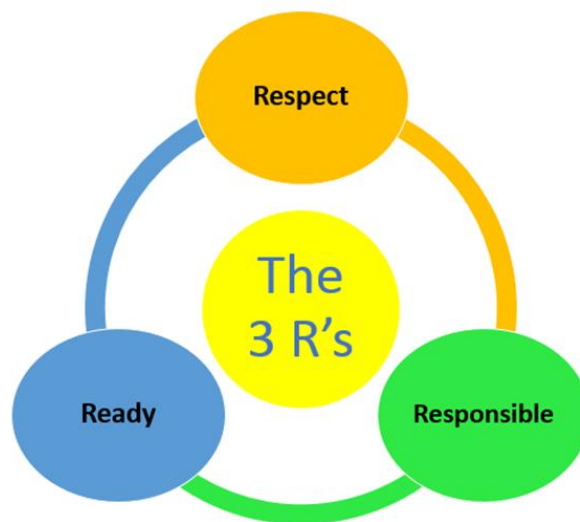
Prefects: All students may have the opportunity to become a prefect. Prefects help in the day-to-day running of the school.

Student Mentors: Members of the student body can join our mentoring programme. Mentors give peer support to junior members of the school community (usually 1st Years). Mentors play a very valuable role in our school community. It is a great honour and privilege to be assigned the role of mentor in Elphin Community College, and students are expected to respect the role designated to them.

The same ladder approach applies to **positive behaviour**. Teachers, Year Heads and management share responsibility for recognising improvement, effort, and engagement at each stage – ensuring that support is as visible as sanction.

Elphin Community College Expectations

To reach our potential we are: Ready, Respectful and Responsible



The standard expected for any matter not specifically outlined below is that all members of the school community will act with decency, respect, and common sense at all times.

1. All students of Elphin Community College ***are expected to attend school every day*** and to be in their designated classroom on time for the start of each class. The school day begins at 9:00 a.m. Any student arriving after this time will be marked late. A warning bell sounds five minutes before the start of class in the morning and after lunch; students should use this time to prepare and ensure they are seated and ready to begin promptly. Students are required to eat only in the designated areas and to spend break and lunch times in the approved communal spaces. All students must remain on the school grounds during these periods. Failure to comply with these expectations may result in an appropriate sanction.

This means:

- Students attend school every day unless absence is absolutely unavoidable.
- Students arrive on time for school, assemblies, and each class throughout the day.
- Students move promptly between classes without delay.
- Parents/guardians must record and explain all absences through the VSware portal.
- If this is not possible, a written note explaining any unavoidable absence must be provided.
- Absent or late notes should be submitted to the Secretary/Year Head/Deputy

Principal/Principal if not already logged on VSware.

- Students should move safely and efficiently between classes, without stopping at lockers or toilets unless permitted. Students who loiter will be subject to sanction.
- Students may not eat or drink in classrooms or corridors. Food and drink, including water, are permitted only in designated canteen areas. Teachers will use discretion in allowing students to drink water in class.

- Some students may follow **adjusted transition routes/timings** or use **visual transition cards** as per their Support Plan; staff will facilitate and supervise these arrangements.

Because:

- It is difficult for students to catch up on learning missed due to absence.
- The school has a duty of care to ensure the safety and wellbeing of all students.
- Arriving late disrupts teaching and learning for others.
- Every student shares responsibility for maintaining a clean, safe environment. In line with our **Green Schools Code**, students are expected to keep all areas litter-free and to minimise waste.
- To reduce our refuse costs and environmental impact, students should avoid bringing unnecessary packaging or single-use plastics to school. Any excess litter or packaging brought in may need to be taken home for disposal.

2. All students of Elphin Community College are **expected to have the official School Journal/Homework Diary** in all classes and to present it to a teacher when requested.

This means:

- Students are expected to place the School Journal/Homework Diary in front of them on their desk at the beginning of each class.
- Students are expected to record homework/assignments in the journal during each class.
- Students are required to maintain their School Journal/Homework Diary in pristine condition to allow for easy inspection by parents/guardians or teachers.
- Replacement cost of lost/defaced journal will be €7

Because:

- Along with our VS Ware system, the School Journal/Homework Diary is the primary method of communication between the school and home.
- It is important to maintain an accurate record of work assigned during the year to aid with revision at the end of each school year.
- School authorities can request access to the Homework Diary at any time.
- Absences from school and/or class will be recorded in students' School Journal/Homework Diary if not already included on VS Ware.

3. All students of Elphin Community College are expected to strive for **academic excellence** (i.e. students will always try to do their best at classwork and at homework).

This means:

- All students are issued with an official School Journal/Homework Diary by the school and are required to have it in class at all times.
- Failure to produce this journal when required to do so by a teacher is a breach of the Code of Behaviour.
- Students are to retain the official School Journal/Homework Diary to record homework.
- Students are to come properly prepared for all subjects, i.e. have all textbooks, copies, pens and any other specialist equipment required.
- Students are required to listen to teachers and concentrate on learning.
- Students must allow teachers to teach and fellow students to learn.
- Students must not disturb the class or the intended learning environment.
- Students are required to complete homework (written and non-written) each night. It must be completed to the highest possible standard or evidence of an adequate and meaningful attempt should be made.
- Students must listen to teachers, obey class procedures and ensure their behaviour never disrupts the learning of others.
- Students are expected to report to the Principal/Deputy Principal/Staff-Room if a class is unsupervised briefly.
- Students must attend every class assigned to them on their timetable. Students must not absent themselves from class without the class teacher's permission.
- Visits to the toilets and lockers, routine messages, etc. shall be restricted to break times and recorded on VS Ware.
- Unauthorised departures from the school within the school hours are regarded as serious transgressions and will be dealt with accordingly.
- Students may only enter classrooms/laboratories/gymnasium/football pitch when instructed to do so by a staff member.
- Students involved in extra-curricular activities must do homework for the classes they have missed. **It is their responsibility to find out what homework was given. If homework is repeatedly not presented, students will lose their privilege to participate in any such extra-curricular activity (For further information – see Homework Policy).**

Because:

- The School Journal/Homework Diary may also be used by teachers to record comments. It may be examined and signed at any time by Year Heads and must be signed weekly by parents/guardians.
- Homework reinforces and backs-up what has been done in class and helps students prepare for exams.
- Disruptive behaviour is unfair to others who are trying to learn.

4. All students of Elphin Community College are expected to be **properly prepared** for each subject and each class.

This means:

- Students have the proper pens, pencils, copies, textbooks, materials, etc. as instructed by their teacher.
- Students have any special equipment needed for particular subjects, e.g. P.E. gear, drawing equipment, etc.

- Students can access lockers only at the following times: (i) before 1st class, (ii) during the 'little break', and (iii) during lunch. At these times, students bring all the materials needed for the 3-4 classes that follow, ensuring they are in class on time.

Because:

- Full and proper participation in class is not possible without the necessary materials.
- A student is often easily distracted if he/she is in class without all the necessary materials.
- Class learning/teaching for others in the class is unfairly disrupted when a student arrives late for class.

5. All students of Elphin Community College are expected to **wear the full school uniform** and to present themselves in accordance with the school Uniform Policy. In the interest of the overall appearance of pupils, as individuals and as a group, the full school uniform is to be worn at all times and at all school functions. This includes occasions such as public and in-house examinations. Students may wear sports gear only during sports activities.

Parents/guardians must ring/email the school to explain any uniform issues which may arise.

Any one of the following will apply where there is any deviation from the wearing of full school uniform as stated in the uniform policy:

- The student will be provided with the correct uniform by the school attendant on the first occasion only, **which they must wear**. If a refusal is given the student will be sent home. Parents/Guardians will be notified via SMS Message.
- For a second-offence the student will have to be collected by a parent/guardian and they may return when they have the full correct uniform.
- In-house suspension will apply, during which the student will follow a study plan for regular timetabled classes.
- The class teacher/Deputy Principal/Principal will record Incorrect Uniform/Footwear on VSWARE.

This means:

- That students wear uniform as designated in the Uniform Policy.
- Students are expected to maintain the school's reputation and high standards by the manner in which they wear their uniform. Their appearance reflects positively on themselves, their families and their school.
- Full uniform should be worn with pride from the time students leave home until they return, and during out of school activities.

Because:

- Members of the public associate students with the school and regard a student as its representative.
- The uniform has been agreed by parents, students and school authorities.
- The uniform ensures all students are treated equally.

6. All students of Elphin Community College are expected to **show courtesy, manners and respect to people** (students, staff, visitors, etc.) at all times and in all places; this includes following instructions from teachers and others in authority. Students are not permitted to congregate or loiter/otherwise at the front of the school or in the carpark at any time.

This means:

- Every individual has the right to be treated with respect, tolerance, understanding and in a just manner.
- Being fair to everyone.
- Students must respect the property of fellow students and teachers.
- Students 'look-out-for' and are supportive of their fellow students and help other students if they need help.
- Students do not engage in nor arrange for others to engage in any form of bullying, intimidation or 'picking-on' other people.
- Students do not arrange for others to bully, intimidate or 'pick-on' other people.
- Students found to be engaging in or condoning bullying or other such disrespectful behaviour towards other students will be dealt with strictly in accordance with the code of positive behaviour sanctions.
- Students do not engage in fighting and will not arrange fights in the school or elsewhere. Any student who engages in fighting will come before the school authorities, as this is a very serious transgression.
- Students are a representative of Elphin Community College at all times before, during and after school while in school uniform and should behave in a manner in accordance with the school's Code of Positive Behaviour.
- When in the school building, students will walk to and from timetabled classes. Students will not engage in unsafe running, jostling, pushing, shoving and will report same to their teachers/school management.
- Students extend courtesy, manners, and respect to all people.
- Students refrain from using bad and inappropriate language in class and on the school grounds. This also includes behaviour downtown and on all bus trips
- Students will refrain from using a different language when English is the medium of communication between the student and teacher at Elphin Community College.
- Students follow the instructions of teachers and others in authority without causing any disruption and never leave class without permission.
- School property is respected.
- If a student absents themselves from the school grounds without permission, a parent/guardian will be called to collect the student due to Health and Safety risks caused by the student being unsupervised. The student may also be given an internal suspension if deemed appropriate.
- The school reserves the right to access CCTV footage in the investigation of any event which warrants such scrutiny/examination. *Any use of CCTV complies with data protection law and the school's Data Protection Policy; footage is accessed only where strictly necessary.*
- All students show politeness, respect and courteous co-operation to all school staff, fellow students, visitors to the school, bus drivers and members of the community at all times.

These guidelines as outlined under paragraph 6 above apply at all times including when you are in class, on the school premises, when on school related activities such

as games, tours, debates, theatre visits, etc. Students are also expected to show courtesy to teachers and fellow students outside of school times to avoid behaviours which may have a negative impact/effect on them when they are in school. If students use bad/inappropriate language in class or anywhere on the school grounds they will be placed on detention. If bad language is directed at a teacher, the immediate sanction of suspension will apply.

Because:

- Every person is at all times entitled to the dignity of being treated with courtesy, manners and respect by other people (students, teachers, etc.).
- The students in a class are being denied their education if/when their teacher is being disrupted.
- Everyone is required to play his/her part in making the school a safe and happy place, free from any fear, misery, hurt and injury which might otherwise be present.

7. All students of Elphin Community College are expected to **respect school property and the property of others** and to treat the property of others with the utmost care and respect.

This means:

- Students refrain from any attempt at destroying, defacing (e.g. graffiti), damaging and/or vandalising school property (buildings, plant, equipment, fittings, materials, shrubs, trees, etc.) or the property of others (clothing, books, equipment, cars. etc.)
- Students refrain from littering any area of the school grounds and its environs.
- Each student/class group must accept responsibility for acting in accordance with the Code of Behaviour. Remember that each student is expected to act in accordance with the Code of Positive Behaviour and that every student is expected to promote truth and honesty when an investigation into an incident is underway. Students who hamper or impede the progress of such investigations shall be subject to sanctions.

Because:

- Improved standards of cleanliness reflect well on the school, its students and its staff.
- It enables everyone to work and to study in a cleaner, healthier and more pleasant environment.
- The cost of replacing and/or repairing property, plants etc. can be a burden on the school and parents/guardians.
- Health and Safety grounds.

8. All students of Elphin Community College are **expected to eat/drink only in designated** areas and only at allocated times.

This means:

- Students eat/drink only in designated areas and only at designated times.
- Students refrain entirely from chewing gum on the school premises and properly dispose of chewing-gum (i.e. in litter bins) as they enter the school building.

- Junk food/unhealthy food and stimulant drink items are prohibited from the grounds of Elphin Community College and if found, will be confiscated. **Refer to Healthy Eating Policy. Unhealthy Food/ Junk Food** may be defined as non-wholesome food or food with a high sugar content and of a low nutritional value.
- Water is the only drink permitted.
- Students are to keep water in their bags/lockers and not on display in classrooms. Carrying drinks throughout the school building is not permitted and is not necessary as adequate water fountains are available throughout the school grounds.
- Plastic bottles are prohibited, in line with our Green Schools' Code. Students are encouraged to purchase reusable water bottles and keep them out of sight at all times. School authorities may confiscate single-use water bottles as necessary, as water spillage may pose a Health & Safety risk on and around the school grounds.
- Where required by a Support Plan, students may have **regulated access** to water/snacks for medical/sensory reasons at staff discretion.

Because:

- Eating/drinking other than in designated areas and at designated times causes disruption and the mess created often damages books, copies, etc., while also creating a Health & Safety issue.
 - When 'stuck' underneath desks, tables, chairs, etc., chewing gum is very unhygienic.
 - Significant additional expense is incurred when cleaning up food, drink and chewing gum if consumed throughout the school building.
 - Soft/stimulant drinks are not suitable for students' health. Drinking water promotes good health and also provides Elphin Community College with an opportunity to encourage a lifestyle that avoids obesity.
 - Excessive drinking of water is not recommended as this leads to frequent use of toilet facilities, which is in breach of this Code of Behaviour. Any student who has a medical condition which necessitates frequent toilet visits should furnish a medical cert to the relevant school authority without delay.
9. All students of Elphin Community College are expected to **observe the law relating to smoking and illicit drugs** and substances. The possession or distribution of mind-altering substances, legal or illegal, while in school or on school outings, is not permitted. The school has a zero tolerance policy in relation to the possession, sale and use of mind-altering substances. It will be considered a serious breach of this Code of Behaviour . It will therefore attract the ultimate sanction of exclusion, if necessary to preserve the school ethos and the Health and Safety of the School community, not to mention upholding the Law of the Land.

This means:

- Students must refrain from smoking, vaping, consuming, possessing, supplying and/or arranging for the supply of cigarettes (including but not limited to e-cigarettes, vaping or similar), alcohol, illegal drugs or other illegal substances within the school and its environs.
- All students must vacate the bathroom facilities swiftly, and there should be no loitering. Loitering in and of itself is sanctionable under the Code of Behaviour.

- Each student/class group must accept responsibility for acting in accordance with the Code of Behaviour. Remember that each student is expected to act in accordance with the Code of Behaviour and to promote truth and honesty when an investigation into an incident is underway. Students who hamper or impede the progress of such investigations shall be subject to sanctions. Time wasting is seen as a serious transgression in our school, placing a severe strain on time and resources and will not be tolerated. Time wasting will be subject to sanctions.

Because:

- Smoking on government property is against the law and therefore Elphin Community College has placed the School Community, Health and Safety above all else and endeavours to educate the student in its broadest sense, which includes, but is not limited to, upholding the Law of the land.
- The school grounds and buildings are a smoke-free zone.
- Smoking runs counter to Health & Safety and moral issues, especially considering the potential for addiction, serious ill-health and death.

10. Elphin Community College operates a **phone-free learning environment** supported by the use of **individual phone pouches**. All students are required to place their mobile phones and smart devices (including smart watches, earphones, iPods, MP3 players, and similar devices) into their designated pouch on arrival each morning. The pouch must remain **locked and unopened** throughout the school day unless a teacher explicitly authorises its use for an approved educational purpose.

While the school recognises that mobile phones can be helpful in emergencies and for communication outside school hours, their presence during the school day can disrupt learning, impact concentration, and compromise privacy through unauthorised photography, recording, or sharing of content.

Students are expected to fully comply with this policy. Any breach of the phone-free procedure – including tampering with, unlocking a phone pouch without permission – will result in a sanction in line with the school’s **Mobile Phone Policy**.

Ref: Elphin Community College Mobile Phone Policy

This means:

- All students must place their mobile phones into their **phone pouch** in front of their class teacher in the first class each morning.
- If a teacher or staff member sees a mobile phone and there is no just reason, it will be confiscated and the student will be placed on morning detention. Parents/Guardians will be notified. The phone will be held in the school office for the remainder of the day. If it happens a second time, a second morning detention will follow, and the parents/guardians will have to come in to sign out the phone. For a third offence, suspension will be issued.

- No photographs, video or audio recordings may be made without the explicit permission of a member of the teaching staff, and no images should be posted online without the written consent and approval of all parties/students involved.
- Mobile phones/tablets/social media or any other such devices/media **must not** be used to defame any member of the school community and/or outside personnel/visitors/visiting school members.
- The school should never be brought into disrepute by any method of communication outlined above or, indeed, by any other method.
- Photographs or audio/video recordings must not be made of another person in school, its environs and/or at any school event without prior permission.
- Any student who has reason to believe that a video or picture that may have been taken of them outside of school, that has been circulating in school, must have some evidence of the photograph or video when reporting it to school management.
- Anything happening outside school is a matter for the Gardaí. If in school, parents/guardians must be cognisant that it will **also** be reported to Gardaí as it is a criminal offence
- When reporting it to school management, parents/guardians should also take steps to report inappropriate social media usage to the Gardaí.
- Students may not borrow another person's mobile telephone and use it.
- Students are **not allowed** to contact parents/guardians or other people **using their own or another person's mobile phone** or device (without the consent of the principal/deputy principal/assistant principal. In case of an emergency, parents/guardians can be contacted through the school office at all times.
- Parents should not expect communication with the student, nor should they communicate with their child during the course of the school day. If contact with home is necessary, the phone in the school office is always available to students/parents/guardians.

Assistive Technology & Medical Devices (Phone Pouch policy)

- **Assistive Technology & Medical Devices – Exemptions:**
Approved **assistive communication devices (AAC)** and **medical devices** (e.g., glucose monitors/linked phones) are **exempt** from the phone-pouch requirement when listed in the student's Support Plan and agreed with the SENCo and Principal/DP.
- Devices are used **for their designated purpose only** and, where possible, with camera/notifications restricted.
- Staff supervising the student are informed of the agreed protocol; a discreet identifier may be affixed to the pouch/device.
- Misuse will be addressed supportively and, if necessary, through the Code.

Because:

- Mobile phones cause disruption.
- Mobile phones can be used for intimidating, bullying or demeaning other people.
- The school telephone can be used for urgent communication with parents/guardians and is the only mode of communication permissible.
- It is illegal to photograph/record any individual without the express permission of that individual.

- Upon enrolment and signing up to the Admission Policy, parents/ guardians accept the tenets of our school's ICT Acceptable Use and Mobile Phone Policy. A copy of each will be left in the Main Office.

General Procedures in Elphin Community College

Toilet Procedures

Students are requested to use the toilets before and after school and during break times. During class time, the following will apply:

- Students should ask the teacher for permission to go to the toilet in emergency cases only.
- The class teacher will record the Toilet Request on VShare.
- Teachers should not allow access to the toilets while other students from their class are there.
- Excessive use of this procedure will not be permitted.
- Students who require frequent access to toilet facilities during class time are requested to furnish the school authorities with a medical certificate to this effect. This should happen as soon as the medical issue is diagnosed so as to alleviate confusion.
- Where a toileting/intimate care plan is required, it will be agreed in writing with parents/guardians, aligned to our **Intimate Care & Toileting Protocol**, and implemented by designated staff in a safe, respectful manner.

Health, Safety & Risk

Individual Risk Assessments & Evacuation:

Where required, students have **Individual Risk Assessments** and **Personal Emergency Evacuation Plans (PEEPs)**. Staff are briefed on roles, routes, and supports to ensure safety in drills and emergencies.

Administration of Medication:

Where medication may need to be stored/used in school, this is managed under the school's **Administration of Medication Policy**, with written parent/guardian consent and staff training as necessary.

After School Procedures

Each day after school, all students should leave the school premises immediately. Only students directly supervised by a staff member (e.g., those involved in games, extra classes, or evening study) should be on the school premises after classes cease.

Between School and Home:

The conduct of pupils on their way to and from the school is as important as that within the school. Students are reminded to behave in a mannerly way on the road and on the bus. Wearing seatbelts on all buses is a legal requirement. Only students waiting on school buses should remain at the school gate after school. These students should do so in a safe manner. Parents need to realise that it is not the school's responsibility if students misbehave while off school grounds and outside

the environs of the school day, and beyond the remit of normal school supervision. The school reserves the right to impose in-house sanctions if a pupil's activities outside the school have a detrimental effect on the pupil's behaviour or academic performance in school or indeed on the well-being of any other pupil in this school, which includes, but is not limited to, bringing into disrepute the school's reputation.

PE:

All students are obliged to attend all physical education classes. This is an integral part of our Wellbeing programme. Students with medical conditions which prohibit such involvement must provide a medical certificate. Students failing to participate (no gear etc.) will have sanctions imposed. Repeated instances of such behaviour will fall under the remit of the Code of Positive Behaviour and will be considered a breach of good order. *Reasonable adjustments (e.g., alternative activities, graded participation, visual rules) will be provided in line with individual needs and safety.*

Our Philosophy of Care

The basic objectives of our school are to foster the intellectual, social, spiritual, moral, athletic, cultural and physical development of each student. Each student is seen as an individual whose talents should be realised to the full. Each year group has a Year Head. The Year Head has the overall responsibility for discipline, monitoring academic progress, absences, lateness, disciplinary problems and the overall personal development of each student. Many support structures have been put in place to encourage, support and motivate students, such as the Student Support Team, extra tuition, extra-curricular activities, mentors, etc.

Conduct During Examinations (In-House and State):

Students must sit in the assigned seat during examinations. Students who are talking or are deemed to be cheating will have their paper cancelled and will not have it graded. The Year Head will call parents, and sanctions may be imposed. **The school will decide the sanction where the exam is school-based. The State Examinations Commission will determine sanctions relating to the State Exams.**

- ✓ *RACE arrangements (e.g., reader/scribe/waiver/AT/separate centre) will be facilitated per SEC approval and school procedures.*

Sickness:

Students should not come to school if they are sick. To avoid confusion, strict procedures must be adhered to:

- Students who feel ill may only report to Reception/Office with the express permission of the class teacher, and/or accompanied by a staff member.
- The school will try to contact parents and ask them to arrange to take the student home. Parents may nominate a person/persons who will take responsibility for their son/daughter if he/she is ill and they are not available.
- If the student's condition gives cause for anxiety, he/she may be brought to a doctor, or a doctor may be called to the school. If a doctor is unavailable, the school may call an ambulance.
- Medical expenses are the responsibility of parents.

- In keeping with modern accepted practice and advice, no medication will be dispensed to students by school staff.
- Students are not permitted to give prescribed/unprescribed medication to other students.

Attendance:

- Students are required to attend school each day. In the case of unexplained absences, the Year Head will contact parents/guardians. Before the first class on the day of return from an absence, a letter from a parent/guardian with the dates and reason for absence is to be given to the Year Head during morning assembly. This letter will be kept on file. If a student misses twenty school days in one year, the Educational Welfare Officer will be informed.
- If a student has to leave school at some stage during the day, the PARENT/GUARDIAN MUST sign out the student at the Principal's Office.
- Students are not allowed to leave the school for any reason throughout the day without permission. Unauthorised departures from school during school hours are regarded as serious transgressions, and a student found in breach of this rule may be suspended and/or expelled at the discretion of the school board. Students must attend all classes throughout the school day. Unauthorised absences will not be tolerated.
- Where transport or medical appointments impact punctuality/attendance for Special Class students, parents/guardians should notify the Year Head/SENCo so that supports and **non-penalising** recording can apply.

Extra-Curricular Activities

All students are encouraged to participate in some area of extra-curricular activities. However, students and particularly examination students, are discouraged from taking on too many activities. If a student misses class because of an extra-curricular activity the onus is on the student to find out what homework has been given and to complete same.

Students representing the school or involved in extra-curricular activity must wear the school uniform and their behaviour should reflect the high standards of the school. Students may only attend school activities at venues away from the school either by the mode of transport provided by the school or with their parents.

Misuse of Fireworks/Possession of Weapons/Damage:

- Incidents involving the above constitute matters which come within the remit of the Firearms and Offensive Weapons Act 1990 and are matters which will not be dealt with by the school, save for to report the incident to the Gardaí, who will apply the sanctions as set out by law. It cannot be expressed strongly enough, the seriousness of this area so we at Elphin Community College remind Parents to impress this on their children as it could have life-long consequences
- Bangers and fireworks are not permitted in the school or school grounds. Students caught in possession of fireworks will receive an automatic suspension of three days. Students selling or supplying bangers or fireworks will be suspended and the incident reported to the Gardaí. Findings in a Garda Investigation may lead to further sanctions in school.
- If an incident happens and students are in possession of information, students are expected to assist in the investigation of the incident. Silence is not acceptable.

- Students are not permitted to bring any kind of knife or dangerous implement to school.
- Possession of same will result in automatic suspension.

Breaches of the Code of Positive Behaviour and the resulting sanctions in Elphin Community College

In applying interventions or sanctions, staff consider whether the behaviour may be **linked to an identified need or disability** and whether **reasonable adjustments** and appropriate supports have been tried. Behaviour is understood as **communication**; where relevant, the response will prioritise **teaching replacement skills**, regulation, and restoring relationships. Escalation to suspension/exclusion will not occur **solely based on a disability-related presentation when** reasonable supports have not yet been implemented and reviewed, except in **serious risk** situations.

All breaches of the Code of Behaviour will be thoroughly investigated, with the basic tenets of natural justice being applied. A recording system will be in place, and all parties to the dispute will have an opportunity to explain their position. Several sanctions will be in place and appropriate and proportionate. The purpose of the sanction(s) is to bring about rehabilitation, and this will be explained to students. Each situation is different, and therefore discretion is an important consideration.

Disciplinary Structures

Individual Subject Teachers will deal with minor misdemeanours in class.

- Each teacher has the responsibility for the creation of a positive learning atmosphere in his/her classroom and to set high expectations.
- Each teacher has the responsibility for the maintenance of discipline within his/her class and shares, with other teachers, non-teaching staff, students and parents a shared responsibility for good order within the school and school grounds.
- Teachers should make every effort to solve any low-level discipline problems themselves as they arise.
- Each teacher has the responsibility to implement the Code of Positive Behaviour and to record all examples and occasions of positive behaviour. Each teacher:
 - ✓ Has the responsibility to record accurate and factual incidents of breaches of the Code of Positive Behaviour on VS Ware and Attendance Data.
 - ✓ Has the responsibility to refer a student who persistently breaches the Code of Positive Behaviour to the relevant Year Head and/or Deputy Principal.
 - ✓ Has the responsibility to impose fair sanctions for breaches of the Code of Positive Behaviour.
 - ✓ Has the responsibility to communicate with parents regarding students' progress, work and behaviour.
 - ✓ Has the responsibility to participate in reviews of the Code of Positive Behaviour.
 - ✓ Has the responsibility to model the school's standard of behaviour in their dealings with students, each other, other staff and parents/guardians.
 - ✓ Has the responsibility to affirm and acknowledge good and/or improving behaviour of students on an ongoing basis on VS Ware.

- Although Parental Access to VSWare is available, an additional Parental Advisory Letter may be issued after two instances of misbehaviour, or indeed at any stage where there is teacher concern. The PAL document is available in the staff room and teachers will complete and leave into the school office to be posted. Teachers are asked to keep a record of PAL letters sent, photocopy same and bring to the attention of the relevant Year Head.
- Three issues of misbehaviour recorded on VSware are to be brought to the attention of Year Heads.
- The Year Head will meet with any pupil referred to him/her.
- Guidance Counsellor: With students who appear to have consistent difficulties, or if a student is perceived to be acting "out of character", it may be identified that a more pastoral care approach is necessitated (The intervention of the Guidance Counsellor may be called upon here).
- The Deputy Principal will meet a student who has failed to follow the directions of the Year Head.
- **Internal Suspensions:** The purpose of an internal suspension is to allow for a student to reflect on their actions, to catch up on work missed by removing themselves from class and the possibility to speak to relevant teachers/management to help resolve the situation. Internal suspensions may also be used in other situations if deemed appropriate and/or on Health & Safety grounds.
- The Principal may suspend the student for a definite period of time. Parents will be contacted before the suspension takes place.

Disciplinary Measures to be taken:

1. Advice from the teacher
2. Warning from the teacher
3. Classroom management of the issue by the teacher.
4. After three such incidences of misbehaviour, the behaviour is recorded on VS Ware.
5. At any stage, the Parental Advisory Letter may be sent to indicate teacher concern.
6. Withdrawal of privileges (to include Student Report Card/ withdrawal from extracurricular activities/downtown privileges, if applicable/ community service in the school/extra written work at lunch) may be sanctioned at any stage after Step 4.
7. On report, with Support Card and the comments communicated to parents and signed daily.
8. Detention at lunch time. N.B. Lunchtime detention is for the duration of the break and will necessitate the bringing of a packed lunch. The teacher giving the detention will supervise the detention. Twenty-four hours' notice is required.
9. Referral to Year Head and Guidance Counsellor/other intervention where appropriate.
10. Referral to the Deputy Principal, Principal and Guidance Counsellor.
11. Parents informed by telephone or letter.
12. Parents/Guardians are asked to come to the school to discuss those issues concerning their child. At the discretion of the School Authorities this can happen at any time, depending on the seriousness of the incident.
13. A Behaviour Contract may be drawn up at any time, at the discretion of the school authorities.

14. Suspension for a given number of days
15. Expulsion. It is the policy of this school that students will be asked to provide a written account of either their own or somebody else's actions.

Summary of Disciplinary Procedures

Elphin Community College will endeavour to ensure that, in applying any sanction, the duty of care to the student is maintained. Sanctions and rewards are necessary to ensure that the school rules are adhered to, thereby creating a safe, positive environment for both teaching and learning. Positive behaviour is actively encouraged, and sanctions and rewards will be used to support this learning process. Sanctions will be appropriate to the student's age, developmental stage, and cultural background. The significance of communication is recognised as is the importance of parental support for maintaining positive student behaviour.

Serious breaches of discipline may bypass some or all of these steps.

Steps 1 – 3: Early Classroom Management

- **Step 1:** Class teachers record behaviour for breach of school rules, and students may receive a teacher-imposed sanction, e.g. extra relevant work, cleaning duty, litter duty. After the third occasion of minor behavioural disturbance, the student's behaviour will be recorded on VS Ware. Parental access is granted on our VS Ware system. The teacher may issue a Parental Advisory Letter at this stage, or at any stage leading up to it.
- **Step 2:** After a third negative comment is recorded on VS Ware, the Year Head will speak with the student. Parents/guardians may also be informed.
- **Step 3 :** If the issue persists, the Year Head contacts parents/guardians informing them of the situation. Student meets with further intervention, if necessary, including referral to a Guidance Counsellor and/or other agency. If the student continues to receive records of behavioural issues, he/she is put on Report.
- The report card must be presented to the teacher at the beginning of the lesson and collected and signed by the teacher at the end of the lesson.
- The student will return the completed report card on a daily basis to either the Year Head, Deputy Principal or Principal at the end of each school day to be reviewed and signed. This report card will then be signed by the parent/guardian on completion.
- This support step is for a minimum of two weeks.

Steps 4 – 5: Formal Monitoring and Detention

- **Step 4:** If a student has attained 20 discipline points, the student sits out a detention. This will take place on a Friday from 1:20 pm to 2:20 pm. The student will be issued with extra work. They will not be allowed to complete homework or study during this detention. **Failure to attend detention will result in an automatic one-day suspension.**
- **Step 5:** It is the policy of this school to have a Discipline Committee to help implement the code of discipline procedure. This is done through cooperation with ancillary staff, teachers, the principal, and the Board of Management, in accordance with the guidelines laid down in the Code of Positive Behaviour. When the Principal deems it necessary, a student will be brought before the Discipline Committee, which will, as a body, impress upon the student how unacceptable his/her misbehaviour is becoming and encourage him/her to change his/her ways. Before a second report/detention is issued, the student will

meet with members of the Discipline Committee. The Discipline Committee will outline which sanctions and/or punishments are deemed necessary, examine their effectiveness, and have the power to amend them to improve the overall value of the Code of Positive Behaviour. It will do this in consultation with the Principal, staff and Board of Management. At all times, there will be five members on the Discipline Committee: the Principal, the Deputy Principal, an Assistant Principal I, an Assistant Principal II and another teacher. The parents/guardians may also be invited in for a meeting with this committee and/or the Year Head.

- It will remain at the discretion of the Discipline Committee/ Year Heads and Senior Management as to the appropriate consequence for a student's misbehaviour.
- If deemed severe enough, a student may be automatically placed in detention, report, or to appear before the Discipline Committee. This shall remain at the discretion of the Year Heads and Senior Management.
- **Step 6:** If the student has to be put back on report or continues to collect records of behavioural issues, there will be a meeting arranged with some or all of the following: Principal, Deputy Principal, Year Head and a Parent/Guardian. The school may request the attendance of both parents/guardians. A student Behaviour Support plan will be mutually agreed upon by all parties. Each subject teacher will complete a full report on the student, which will be discussed at the meeting. A possible outcome of this meeting may be the suspension of the student.
- **Step 7 Incidents of serious misconduct or misbehaviour may lead to suspension and/or exclusion. Please refer to the school's suspension and exclusion policy.**

General Procedures in relation to Suspension and Exclusion

1. Any breach of classroom discipline will, in the first instance, be dealt with by the classroom teacher. The classroom teacher may counsel, reprimand or impose a sanction on the student as appropriate. Sanctions include: a relevant written punishment exercise, contact with parents, and detention at breaktime.
2. Where the behaviour is repeated or is of a more serious nature, the class teacher will refer to the Year Head.
3. Where the above procedures have been followed and there is persistent low-level disruption or misconduct; where there is a once-off incident of a very serious nature – intimidation, bullying, foul language, damage to property, harassment, refusal to obey reasonable instructions or disruption to the educational process; where students have failed to comply with the sanctions outlined above or where there are other considerations which merit it, the matter may be referred to the Deputy Principal or Principal. The Deputy Principal or Principal will investigate the matter. Following investigation, sanctions may be applied ~ these may include counselling the student, reprimand, detention, issuing a Report Card, contacting parents, inviting parents to visit the school, formal written warning to parents, a recommendation for suspension or

other sanction. Where a student is placed in detention, 24 24-hour notice is given to the student.

4. Where an investigation is carried out, a brief note will be maintained by the person carrying it out. When any student is interviewed about alleged or suspected wrongdoing by others or themselves, a short note of the interview will be taken; students may be asked to make a written statement about their knowledge of the incident.
5. Where there is persistent low-level disruption or misconduct and the student has failed to respond to the strategies followed so far, where there is a once-off incident of a severe nature, where students have failed to comply with the sanctions outlined above or where there are other considerations which merit it, the matter may be referred to the Principal. The Principal will review the matter and will, if necessary, engage in further investigation. Following review and/or investigation one or more of the sanctions outlined in paragraph 3 above may be applied. The principal may suspend a student from the school for up to 6 days. The principal will report on discipline matters to the Board of Management where appropriate.
6. Decisions to suspend a student for a period of more than six days will be considered by the Board of Management. A decision to expel a student rests with the Board of Management in conjunction with the ETB. Where it is decided to expel a student, or where the cumulative number of days on suspension for a particular student exceeds twenty in one school year, parents will be informed of their right to appeal the decision to the ETB and subsequently (if necessary) to the Department of Education and Skills under Section 29 of the Education Act.
7. The National Education Welfare Board will be informed of any suspension of six days or more and of any expulsion. The NEWB shall also be informed if any suspension gives rise to a situation where a student's total absences for the school year exceed 20 days. Appeals may be made to the Department of Education and Skills in the case of an expulsion or where the cumulative total number of days on suspension for a student exceeds twenty in any one year.

Procedures to be followed in the event of a Suspension

1. The matter will be very serious: either a pattern of persistent misconduct or a serious once-off incident.
2. The issue will be fully investigated by the principal, deputy, or a person with delegated responsibility, other than the offended party. Witnesses to the event(s) may be interviewed. A written record of the investigation will be kept.
3. The student against whom the complaint is made will be allowed to present their side of the story. The student will be asked to give an account in writing.
4. The parents (or guardians) will be allowed to present their case. Where a suspension is being considered a student may be required to stay at home until their parents/guardians visit the school.

5. Parents will normally be advised in writing of a decision to suspend. The letter will include the following
 - Notification of the decision & reason(s) for same
 - The effective date and duration of the suspension
 - A clear statement that the student is under the care of the parents/guardians for the duration of the suspension
 - Expectations of a student while on suspension
 - Requirements and Procedures for the formal re-introduction of the student into the school
 - If the NEWB has been informed, this should be stated
 - Rights of appeal e.g. Section 29 Appeal if applicable. If consideration is being given to expulsion as a sanction in this instance, the letter must state this unambiguously.
6. The Principal may suspend a student for up to six days. All suspensions will be reported to the Board of Management at their next ordinary meeting.
7. Suspensions for a period longer than six days will normally be considered by the Board of Management, except in the case of very a disruptive pupil who has already been suspended. In this case the Board may delegate authority to suspend such a pupil for up to two weeks to the principal. Prior to a decision being made to suspend a pupil parents will be given an opportunity to make their case to the Board or Principal.
8. Where the Board of Management suspends a student, and the cumulative number of days suspension for that student exceeds twenty in any one school year, parents will be informed of their right to appeal the decision to the ETB and subsequently (if necessary) to the Department of Education and Skills.
9. Where a proposal to suspend is before the Board of Management and a student is involved in a further serious disciplinary incident that student may be required to stay at home or suspended for a period up to three days, until the matter is decided upon by the Board of Management, whichever is the earlier. In that event the Board will take the further incident into account in reaching its decision.
10. Grounds for removing a suspension: Following a suspension, the parents/guardians (or student over 18 years) may seek a meeting with the Principal to discuss the matter further. Where the school is satisfied that new circumstances have come to light bearing on the matter, the decision to suspend may be reviewed (by those who made the decision) and an alternative sanction imposed if deemed appropriate.

Procedures to be followed in the event that expulsion is being considered

1. The matter will be very serious: either a pattern of persistent misconduct or a serious once-off incident.
2. The issue will be fully investigated by the principal or deputy or a person with delegated responsibility, other than the offended party. Witnesses

to the event(s) may be interviewed. A written record of the investigation will be kept.

3. The student against whom the complaint is made will be given an opportunity to present their side of the story. The student will be asked to give an account in writing.
4. The parents/guardians will be given an opportunity to present their case. Where an expulsion is being considered a student may be required to stay at home until the matter is referred to the Board of Management and ETB.
5. An emergency meeting of the Board of Management and ETB, with a single item agenda will be called, as soon as practicable and normally within 6 school days to determine the issue, A minimum of three days notice will be given to parents in such a case.
6. At the start of the meeting the Chairperson shall enquire whether any member has a conflict of interest in respect of the matter being considered by the Board. Where the Board is satisfied that a conflict of interest exists, the member(s) involved shall withdraw from the meeting at the same time as the parents (or guardians), student (if over 18 and representing himself or herself) and the principal.
7. Written documentation will be supplied to parents and Board Members with the notice of the Board meeting. Such documentation will include
 - The details of the allegation against the student
 - A copy of the case to be presented against the student at the Board hearing
 - A copy of any supporting documentation that may be used by the school in support of its case. A clear statement that expulsion is being considered as a sanction in this instance.
 - An invitation to make a written submission and/or to be present and heard at the hearing.
 - Expectations of the student (while on suspension pending a hearing).
 - A statement that the NEWB has been informed, this should be stated.
 - Rights of appeal e.g. Section 29 Appeal.
8. Parents may be accompanied at the Board hearing but, as this is a lay forum, legal representation is not the normal practice.
9. The principal will present the case against the student and will be available to answer questions from parents and Board Members,
10. The parents/guardians (or student over 18) will present their case and will be and will be available to answer questions from parents and Board Members.
11. Once the principal and the parents have made their cases they will withdraw from the meeting.
12. 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.
13. When considering an expulsion or a long-term suspension the Board will ensure that the following factors are given due consideration:

- the seriousness of the misbehaviour
 - the likelihood of a recurrence
 - the impact the misbehaviour is having on the learning of others
 - the safety of students and teachers in the school
 - the degree to which the behaviour was in violation of written school rule(s) and the relative importance of the rule(s)
 - whether the incident was perpetrated by the individual on his/her own or whether as part of a group; if as part of a group, the extent to which the individual is responsible for the misbehaviour
 - the extent to which parental, peer or other pressure may have contributed to the misbehaviour
 - the frequency of misbehaviour from the student
 - the cumulative discipline record of the student
 - what other sanctions have been tried and the level of success of such sanctions
 - the responses of the student and his/her parents or guardians to any previous misbehaviour
 - the academic, attendance and extra-curricular record of the student
 - the age of the student
 - whether the student is of school-leaving age
 - whether the student is due to sit for any State Examinations in the near future
14. The Board will reach its decision and will record the reasons for deciding as it does.
15. Where the Board of Management and ETB decides to expel a student, the parents/guardians (and/or a student over 18) the student and will be informed by letter delivered by registered post. The letter will include the following;
- Notice of the decision to expel and the effective date of the expulsion (this shall not be before the passing of 20 school days following the receipt by an educational welfare officer of the notification to expel).
 - The reasons for the expulsion.
 - Their right to appeal the decision under Section 29 of the Education Act and information about the Appeal process including the titles, phone number(s) and addresses of the relevant authorities and that the student will remain out of the school until the outcome of an Appeal (if any) is known.
 - A statement the National Education Welfare Board (NEWB) has been informed.
 - A clear statement that the student is under the care of the parents/guardians for the period of 20 days required by the Education Welfare Officer of the NEWB to examine alternative provision for the student.
 - Expectations of the student while under the care of his/her parents/guardians.

The following Ladder of Referral outlines the progressive, structured process used in Elphin Community College to support positive behaviour and respond appropriately to misbehaviour.

	Stage Responsibility	Key Focus	Possible Outcomes
1	Teacher	Classroom correction & restorative strategies	Warning, discussion, PAL letter
2	Year Head	Formal monitoring & support	Meeting, detention, reflection
3	Deputy Principal	Escalated intervention	Supervised withdrawal, behaviour contract
4	Principal	Final review & oversight	Suspension consideration
5	BoM / GRETB	Statutory sanction	Suspension / Exclusion

Ladder of Referral

Stage 1 – Classroom Level: Teacher Intervention

All teachers share responsibility for maintaining positive discipline and good order in their classrooms, on the school grounds, and during school activities. Teachers are encouraged to use restorative, respectful, and proportionate strategies to promote positive behaviour before recording incidents on VSware.

Sanctions should always support learning, reflection, and personal growth – never humiliation or degradation. Approaches that focus on restoring relationships, reinforcing expectations, and encouraging accountability are in keeping with the ethos of Elphin Community College.

The Parental Advisory Letter may be used at any time prior to the third recorded incident on VSware.

Stage 2 - Year Head Level: Formal Monitoring and Support

When three instances of misbehaviour have been recorded on VSware, the issue is referred to the Year Head for formal intervention.

The Year Head meets the student and, where necessary, parents/guardians to discuss the pattern of behaviour and agree a restorative plan and/or sanction. The purpose is to help the student recognise the impact of their actions, take responsibility, and re-engage positively with school expectations.

If a student fails to attend detention while present in school, the matter is escalated to the Deputy Principal or Principal, who may impose a suspension.

Stage 3 - Deputy Principal Level: Escalated Intervention

The Deputy Principal oversees school-wide discipline and may implement any sanction from earlier stages or introduce additional supports.

Where required, the Deputy Principal may temporarily remove a student from class for a short, supervised reflection period to allow time to calm and reset before reintegration. This is always planned, recorded, and communicated to the Year Head. Teachers may not exclude a student or leave them unsupervised; doing so breaches Health & Safety regulations and the school's duty of care.

Stage 4 – Principal Level: Review and Oversight

The Principal ensures that all disciplinary decisions are consistent, proportionate, and procedurally fair. Referral to this stage occurs only after all reasonable interventions have been exhausted, or immediately in cases of serious concern. The Principal reviews all previous actions, meets the student (and parents where appropriate), and determines next steps, which may include suspension.

Stage 5 – Suspension/Exclusion: Formal Sanction

Suspension or exclusion is considered only when all other interventions have been tried and proven unsuccessful, or in cases of serious or gross misconduct.

All decisions adhere to the *Education Welfare Act (2000)* and the principles of natural justice.

Only the Board of Management, acting with GRETB and in line with statutory procedures, can decide on exclusion.

Parents/guardians, or students aged 18 or over, have the right to appeal such a decision under *Section 29 of the Education Act (1998)*.

I agree that the school rules are acceptable and will support the school in upholding the standards set therein:

Parent/Guardian's signature:

Date:

Emergency contact details:

Student's Signature:

Date:

Signed: _____
Chairperson

Date: 17/02/2022

Signed: _____
Principal/Secretary

Date: 17/02/2022