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Bord Oideachais agus Oiliúna an Longfoirt agus na hIarmhí
Longford and Westmeath Education and Training Board

Ardscoil Phádraig

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ARDSCOIL PHÁDRAIG

Suspension & Exclusion Policy

2026 - 2027

SEPTEMBER 2026

Mission Statement:

In **Ardscoil Phádraig** our mission is to create a pleasant, caring and secure environment in which the individual student is able to develop his or her full potential through a spirit of partnership with all the stakeholders in education. We strive to develop and maintain a safe, supportive and caring school which seeks to provide the best opportunities for everyone to develop his or her potential.

Rationale:

Access to educational opportunity is the fundamental right of all students. However, should an individual student's serious misbehaviour impinge upon the learning opportunity of his/her peers or affect the Health and Safety of any member of the school community, that individual will be excluded from **Ardscoil Phádraig**, either temporarily through suspension or permanently through exclusion.

The Board of Management of **Ardscoil Phádraig** is guided by the principle that suspension should be a proportionate response to the misbehaviour that is causing concern. It is also guided by the principle that normally all other interventions will have been tried by the staff of the school and will have failed to achieve the desired improvement in the student's behaviour.

Suspension:

As **Ardscoil Phádraig** is under the auspices of Longford and Westmeath Education and Training Board (LWETB), it is LWETB that holds the authority to suspend a student. This authority has been devolved to the Board of Management of **Ardscoil Phádraig** and this is then delegated formally to the Principal. Suspension is defined as requiring the student to absent himself/herself from the school for a specified, limited period of school days and is a proportionate response to a serious misbehaviour that is causing concern. In implementing a decision to suspend, the Principal shall adhere to:

(1) The procedures for suspension as set down in the Code of Positive Behaviour of the school.
(2) Paragraph 11.5 of Developing a Code of Behaviour: Guidelines for Schools.

In the event of the absence of the Principal on approved leave or school business, the authority to suspend is delegated to the Acting Principal subject to the provisions of (1) and (2) above.

Levels of Inappropriate Behaviour:

The school's *"Levels of Inappropriate Behaviour"* describes the nature, intensity and persistence of inappropriate behaviours. **This list is not exhaustive**. This allows staff to locate behaviour on a continuum of seriousness, to notice patterns, to observe changes over time or in different contexts and to develop ways of responding based on this detailed knowledge.

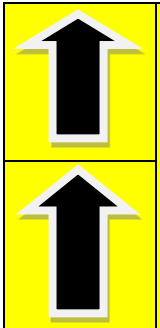
Ardscoil Phádraig staff follow an agreed *"Ladder of Intervention in Response to Inappropriate Behaviour".* This allows for consistency among staff and ensures that all staff follow a planned approach to helping students change their own behaviour.

Levels of Inappropriate Behaviour:

Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
		
• **Disruption of others right to learn**: -Talking out of turn -Making noises -Distracting others • **Disregarding others right to feel safe** -Jostling/pushing others -Obstructing others -Making comments -Showing aggression -Throwing objects • **Not ready for learning** -Late for class -Lack of materials -Not in correct Uniform -Phone visible and/or turned on • **Not responsible for your learning** -No homework -No participation in learning • **Lack of respect for others** -Refusal to follow instructions / answering back / rudeness -Inappropriate use of property without permission -Making comments -Using foul language -Chewing gum -Littering	• Persistently disrupting others right to learn • Persistently disregarding the safety of others • Persistently not ready for learning • Persistently not responsible for own learning • Persistently disrespectful of others • Unauthorised use of mobile phone • Repeated unexplained absences from school • Graffiti on other people's property • Minor damage to work or property • Bringing the school into disrepute through one's actions • **No improvement or worsening of any Level 1 Behaviour despite interventions**	• Severe disregard for others right to feel safe -Verbally abusive towards others -Physically abusive towards others -Fighting -Bullying • Smoking/Vaping on school grounds • Making blatant sexual and/or racist remarks to another • Accessing or recording inappropriate content on a digital device • Absent from class without permission • Refusal to attend class • Leaving school grounds without permission • Serious deliberate damage to school property • Bringing weapon/s or dangerous substance/s to school • Use and/or possession of prohibited substances • **No improvement or worsening of any Level 2 Behaviour despite interventions**

Ladder of Intervention in Response to Inappropriate Behaviour:

	Level 3 Behaviour: Severe disregard for others right to feel safe - Verbally abusive towards others - Physically abusive towards others - Fighting - Bullying Smoking/vaping on school grounds Making blatant sexual and/or racist remarks to another Accessing or recording inappropriate content on a digital machine Absent from class without permission Refusal to attend class Leaving school grounds without permission Serious deliberate damage to school property Bringing weapon/s or dangerous substance/s to college Use and/or possession of prohibited substances **No improvement or worsening of any Level 2 Behaviour despite interventions**	**Management Responses:** (no order pref.) Proposal for Expulsion to BOM Referral to the Board of Management Immediate removal from school Suspension In-house suspension Fine/Damage compensation Problem-solving meeting Behaviour Contract Assign appropriate sanction Recommendations to Management/BOM Refer to SCP programme Refer to further supports (in and out of school) Reduced curriculum Recommended sanctions in line with the behaviours being exhibited	**9** **8**	LEVEL THREE
	Level 2 Behaviour: Persistently disrupting others right to learn Persistently disregarding the safety of others Persistently not ready for learning Persistently not responsible for own learning Persistently disrespectful of others Unauthorised use of mobile phone Repeated unexplained absences from school Graffiti on other people's property Minor damage to work or property Bringing the school into disrepute through one's actions **No improvement or worsening of any Level 1 Behaviour despite interventions**	**Year Head Responses:** (no order pref.) Meeting with Parents & student Red report sheet Assign appropriate sanction Referral to supports (HSCL, SCP, Guidance) Yellow report sheet After-school detention Further contact with home Meeting with student Restorative meeting with teacher Phone-call home 1st time, Removal of phone for 1 school day 2nd time, Removal of phone – parent informed **Recorded on TYRO as Year Head Level 2 referral**	**7** **6** **5**	LEVEL TWO
	Level 1 Behaviour: Disrupting others right to learn Disregarding others right to feel safe Not ready for learning Not responsible for learning Lack of respect for others	**Subject teacher Responses:** (no order pref.) Phone call home in consultation with YH **Year Head informed** Follow up conversation after class Mutual agreement on positive change Record in teachers Journal Move seat Redirect to task	**4** **3**	LEVEL

		Rule Reminder Request phone to be turned off / put away Tactically ignore Proximity Control Expectations reminder Non-verbal reminder	**2** **1**	**ONE**

Procedures for Suspension:

Steps:

In all cases of suspension the Principal, on behalf of the Board of Management of the school, will follow fair procedures by ensuring that the student, and her/his parents/guardians have the right to be heard and the right to impartiality. However it is also noted, that parents/guardians have a moral responsibility to assist their daughter/son to behave according to the "Code of Positive Behaviour". If an incident of serious misbehaviour occurs which warrants that a student be suspended from the school, the following procedures will be followed:

- An investigation of an allegation of serious misbehaviour will, if judged necessary, be carried out by the Year Head of the student, on behalf of the Principal.
- The Year head must discuss the issue with the Principal, (or her/his delegate), and suspension will only be imposed with her/his authority.
- The student's parents/guardians are contacted by phone, (when possible), and by letter and where appropriate and possible, the student and her/his parents are given an opportunity to respond to the complaint and the possible sanctions.
- If a suspension is to be invoked, then the seriousness and nature of the incidents and the student's discipline record in the school will be taken into consideration.
- A student facing an impending suspension will not be dismissed from the school until arrangements are made for her/his safe return to the care of her/his parents/guardians. However, if such arrangements cannot be made during the school day, the application of a suspension will occur at the end of school day. The student may be internally suspended for the remainder of the school day so as to ensure the occurrence of no further issues.
- A letter detailing the length of the suspension, the reason thereof, any other relevant information; the study plan to be followed; the date of the return to school and their right to appeal will be forwarded to the parents/guardians **(Appendix 1).** Reasonable steps will be taken to ensure that the formal notification, and all relevant information contained within, is made in a manner which can be understood by the student and the parents/guardians. This is essential when parents have difficulty reading or understanding English.
- During any period of suspension, a student is not allowed in the school grounds or building, unless other arrangements have been sanctioned by the Principal for specific interventions, e.g. counselling, exams, etc.
- Following the suspension, the relevant Year Head will document the suspension on **TYRO** and the Principal will document the suspension in the Suspension Book. The cumulative total days of suspension for each suspended student will be calculated beside each new entry and will be available for the relevant Education Welfare Officer.
- Parents are requested to organise a meeting to see the relevant Year Head after a suspension. This is to ensure that an agreed behaviour and reintegration plan can be put in place to ensure no repeat of the issue that led to the suspension.
- On return to school, the student must:
    - Present to the relevant Year Head.

- The Year Head will discuss the incident with the student.
- The returning student will be given the opportunity and support for a fresh start.
- The behaviour and reintegration plan agreed with the parent for the student will be discussed and implemented, where appropriate.
- If no parent presents for a meeting a behaviour and reintegration plan will be discussed and agreed with the student.
- The student may be placed on report for a number of days to help reinforce good behaviour.

Duration:
When the Principal has made the decision to impose a suspension, the duration of the suspension will be determined by the seriousness of the incident and the student's discipline record in the school. The length of suspension may range from 1 day to an upper limit of 5 days for any one case in exceptional circumstances: (in the case of suspensions of more than 3 days; the Principal will liaise with the Chairperson in implementing such a sanction).

- The Principal at each Board meeting, (as Secretary to the Board of Management of **Ardscoil Phádraig**), will inform the Board of any and all incidents of serious misbehaviour which he/she deemed warranted the need for three and up to five days of suspension.
- The Board of Management takes ultimate responsibility for suspensions of significant length and will convene, when possible, should the Principal deem it necessary for the Board to consider imposing a suspension of more than five days.
- For periods of suspension of six (6) days or more, the relevant Director of Schools of LWETB and the relevant Education Welfare Officer will be formally notified.

Cumulative Days:
- As Secretary to the Board of Management, the Principal will notify all parents/guardians when their student's total cumulative suspension days have reached 20. They will be reminded of their rights of appeal and further informed of their right to appeal all suspensions over the 20 cumulative day threshold under Section 29 of the Education Welfare Act, 1998.

Appeals:
- **An appeal must be lodged within seven (7) days from the date that the suspension takes effect. The grounds for the appeal must be made in writing.**
- The Principles of Natural Justice demand that there should always be an appeal to a higher authority.
- Parents/guardians should lodge an appeal, in the first instance, with ***The Secretary, Board of Management, Ardscoil Phádraig***. In the event of such an appeal, the Board of Management will consider the matter and any relevant supporting material the parents/guardians wish to bring to the Board's attention.
- The actual appeal may be heard through a written submission; oral submission at the Board of Management Meeting or through a combination of written submission and oral submission. This is the parent/guardians' decision. If the appeal is through a written submission to the Board of Management; the Principal will take no part in the discussion other than to clarify matters raised in the parents/guardians' appeal at the request of the Chairperson.
- In the event of an oral submission to the Board of Management; the Principal of the school and the parents/guardians or the student her/his self if he/she is over eighteen (18) will state their case to the Board in each other's presence. Each party is allowed to question directly the evidence of the other party in the presence of the Board. The

Principal and parents/guardian/student will leave the Meeting so the Board of Management can deliberate in private. Following the meeting, the parent/guardians will be notified of the Board of Management's decision. If the appeal is in relation to a suspension which has brought the current number of suspension days above twenty (20), the parents, or a student aged over 18 years, may appeal the suspension under section 29 of the Education Act 1998 to LWETB. All information in relation to this appeal will be provided in writing to the parents/guardians or the student her/his self if he/she is over eighteen.

- The practicalities of school life mean that having a formal appeal to the Board of Management on short suspensions imposed by the Principal may be inappropriate, very time-consuming, and render the suspension meaningless. It is possible that a suspension may already be served before the appeal is actually heard. If the appeal is successful the suspension will be removed from the student's file/record.
- It may also be appropriate to formalise a meeting before the suspension is actually imposed, perhaps comprising of the Principal, Deputy Principal, the parents and other relevant in-school personnel in an attempt to resolve matters and / or to explain the reasons for the long suspension.
- All appeals will be heard as soon as is practically possible.

Grounds for Removing a Suspension:

Section 23 (2) d of the Education Welfare Act 2000 requires the school to publish the grounds for removing a suspension. **This implies that a system is in place for review / appeal of a suspension.**

Grounds may include:

- Successful appeal to the Board of Management.
- Successful appeal under Section 29 of the Education Act.
- New circumstances come to light.

Review:

The Board of Management of **Ardscoil Phádraig** will review the use of suspension at regular intervals to ensure that it is consistent with school policy. The Board of Management will also examine patterns of use to identify circumstances that might be influencing behaviour/s in the school and to ensure that the utilisation of suspension continues to be appropriate and effective. In all circumstances, as authorised by the Board of Management, the Principal is solely responsible for the day–to–day safe environment of the school and the discipline of its students. In her/his absence, this responsibility is delegated to the Deputy Principal and, in the occurrence of both their absences, to members of the Assistant Principals Team who will be assigned the responsibility of "Acting-Up" in the event of this occurrence.

Exclusion:

A student is expelled from school when the Board of Management makes a decision to permanently exclude him/her from the school, having complied with Section 24 of the Education Welfare Act, 2000. Exclusion of any student is known by the school to be the most severe sanction available against any student.

- In very rare circumstances, it is envisaged that exclusion may be sought by the Principal based on a single occurrence of serious misbehaviour, which will invoke an **"Automatic Exclusion".**
- Where the constitutional rights of the majority of students is being denied by the continuous serious misbehaviour of an individual student.
- Extreme breaches of the school's Code of Positive Behaviour and other policies.

Automatic Exclusion:

- Physical attack.
- Sexual attack.
- Serious threat of violence to a member of the school community.
- Supply of illegal drugs to other students of the school community.
- An extremely vexatious allegation against a member of the school community.

Any allegation of (the above) serious misbehaviour/s, deemed by the Principal to be of a criminal nature, will always be referred to the Gardaí.

Procedures:

- Where a preliminary assessment of the facts confirms a serious misbehaviour that could warrant an exclusion, then a detailed investigation will be carried out under the direction of the Principal of **Ardscoil Phádraig**.
- The Principal will inform the student's parents/guardians of the alleged serious misbehaviour and invite them to a meeting to respond to the complaint.
- Should the parents/guardians fail to attend the meeting, an alternative meeting will be rescheduled and notified to the parents.
- Should the Principal be of the view following the investigation and meeting that expulsion is warranted, and no Board of Management meeting is pending, the Principal will then convene an "Emergency Meeting of the Board of Management" to consider expulsion.
- The student may be suspended from the school until the Board of Management meeting can be convened.
- The members of the Board of Management and the parents/guardians, (**the latter by registered post at least three working days prior to the meeting**), will receive a written detailed account of the serious misbehaviours of the student and all interventions and assistance given by the school to the student and her/his parents/guardians in an effort to enable her/him to participate into the day–to–day life of the school. This account will also include a report by the Principal and any other relevant members of the staff of the school, who have attempted to address the serious misbehaviours of the student.
- The student and her/his parents/guardians will be invited by the Secretary to the Board to attend the Board of Management meeting. The parents may wish to have someone accompany them and this will be facilitated. The Secretary to the Board will inform the parents/guardians of this and offer to meet them to advise them on how to proceed.
- Prior to any emergency meeting by the Board for a hearing of exclusion, the Principal, (on their behalf), will inform the appropriate Director of Schools of LWETB and the Education Welfare Officer of the impending meeting.
- At the Board of Management meeting the Principal of the school and the parents/guardians or the student her/his self if he/she is over eighteen (18) years of age will state their case to the Board in each other's presence. Each party is allowed to question directly the evidence of the other party in the presence of the Board. Parents/guardians and/or student may also make a case for lessening the sanction. The Board must ensure that they are impartial, and are perceived to be so, between the Principal and student.
- After both parties have been heard, the Principal of the school the student and her/his parents/guardians and another, (if present), leave the meeting to allow the Board to make its deliberations in private.
- If the Board of Management is of the opinion that the student should be expelled from **Ardscoil Phádraig**, the Board must inform the parents/guardians of the student, the

relevant Chief Executive and Director of Schools of LWETB, and the Education Welfare Officer in writing of its conclusions.

- Furthermore, following the conclusions of the Board of Management of **Ardscoil Phádraig** to exclude a student, the student may be suspended from the school on Health and Safety grounds and/or because the presence of the student will seriously disrupt the learning of her/his peers, for the following twenty (20) school days of the received notification by the Education Welfare Officer, and/or until the "Right of Appeal" has been heard by LWETB.
- The parents/guardians of that student will be informed of **their right to appeal.** The Secretary to the Board will issue them guidance on attaining a "Section 29 Appeals Form" and how to proceed. Should students and their parents/guardians need further clarification re: "Section 29 Appeals", this information should be sought from the Educational Welfare Officer and/or LWETB.
- Where the twenty (20) day period has elapsed and where the Board of Management of **Ardscoil Phádraig** remains of the view that the student should be expelled from the school, the Board will formally confirm the decision to expel. The Board of Management of the school will delegate to the Chairperson and the Principal the above task.
- The Parents/guardians, and Educational Welfare Officer, will be notified immediately that the expulsion will now proceed. The parents/guardians will be further informed in writing of subsequent appeals procedures that are available to them.

Review:

As with suspension, the Board of Management will review the use of expulsion in the school at regular intervals to ensure that its use is consistent with school policies, that patterns of use are examined to identify causes that may be influencing behaviour in the school, and to guarantee that exclusion is used appropriately.

Implementation:

This policy will be implemented by the Board of Management of **Ardscoil Phádraig**. Attendance at **Ardscoil Phádraig** is conditional upon acceptance. The Board of Management have the right to make the final decision regarding the interpretation and application of the code.

Ratification and Review:

This policy was accepted and ratified by the Board of Management of **Ardscoil Phádraig** on _____.

This policy will be made available to all school personnel, published on the school website and provided to the Parents Association. A copy of this policy will be made available to the Department of Education and Skills and to Longford and Westmeath Education and Training Board (LWETB) if requested.

The Code of Positive Behaviour is subject to regular review and update. Attendance at **Ardscoil Phádraig** is conditional upon acceptance of the Code of Positive Behaviour.

This policy and its implementation will be reviewed by the Board of Management on a regular basis.

Signed: _____
(Chairperson; Board of Management)

Signed: _____
(Principal & Secretary; Board of Management)

Appendix 1 = Ardscoil Phádraig Suspension Template

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Bord Oideachais agus Oiliúna an Longfoirt agus na hIarmhí
Longford and Westmeath Education and Training Board

Name: _____ **Year:** _____

Date of Suspension: _____ **Returning on:** _____

Number of days suspended: _____ **Cumulative:** _____

Reason for suspension: _____

_____

_____

_____

Other relevant information: _____

_____

The school advises that students' study at home when suspended. They should follow their normal class timetable for that day and study each subject accordingly.

You have the right to appeal this decision to the Board of Management within seven (7) days from the date the suspension takes effect. If you wish to appeal please write to *The Secretary, Board of Management,* ***Ardscoil Phádraig*** stating the grounds for appeal. In the meantime, can you please contact the school Secretary to organise a meeting to see the Year Head to discuss this matter so that a behaviour plan is put in place to ensure there is no repeat of this behaviour moving forward.

Yours faithfully

_____

Rosemary Johnston