

Davitt College, Castlebar

CODE OF BEHAVIOUR

A. INTRODUCTION

In accordance with relevant education legislation, i.e. the Education (Welfare) Act, 2000 and the Education Act, 1998 our Code of Behaviour was drawn up in consultation with the Principal, the Teachers, the Board of Management, the Students and the Parents/Guardians of Davitt College. This Code is subject to continuous review to ensure its effectiveness.

This Code of Behaviour outlines our expectations regarding general readiness to learn and behave appropriately. It is addressed to both students and parents. In accordance with section 20 of the Education (Welfare) Act, 2000 parents of children intending to register as students in Davitt College are provided with a copy of the Code of Behaviour prior to the child being registered as a student. In accordance with s. 23 of the Education (Welfare) Act, 2000 parents are required to acknowledge in writing that they have received a copy of this Code of Behaviour and are familiar with its provisions.

Parents/Guardians are expected to make every effort to ensure that their children comply with this Code of Behaviour and are also required to acknowledge this commitment in writing.

Order and discipline ensure effective teaching and learning and thus enable students to reach their full potential. It is the **Policy** of Davitt College to encourage and acknowledge positive behaviour and to develop qualities such as responsibility and leadership, thus preparing students to participate fully as good citizens in society.

Students are given responsibility in the school when appropriate and are involved in the development of the Code of Behaviour through the School Council.

An Assembly for each Year group takes place at the beginning of the school year where the Principal and Deputy Principal address the students and outline the standards and high expectations that are set for student behaviour. Further Assemblies take place at the beginning of each term and more regularly if required.

Every class has a Class Tutor who takes care of the class and fulfils a Pastoral role relating to the class. The school rules are explained clearly to each class at the beginning of the year. A synopsis of the Code of Behaviour and School Rules is included in the Student Journal.

Tutors and Year Heads explain the importance of the Code and the part students have to play in making it work.

Davitt College is characterised by the good relationship that exists between teachers and students and aims to promote a happy school atmosphere.

Parents are encouraged to maintain regular contact with the school through the Student Journal, telephone contact, Parent-Teacher meetings, Open Nights and Partnership Nights. They are also welcome to visit the school on other occasions, **by appointment**, to discuss their child's progress. They can support the school by encouraging good learning behaviour.

Positive behaviour is acknowledged through positive referrals, notes in the Journal, end of term Reports, affirmation of good behaviour through classroom visits by Class Tutors, Year Heads, Deputy Principal and Principal and the Annual Awards Event.

OBJECTIVES

- Davitt College is characterised by high standards in all areas of school life. We aim to uphold our characteristic spirit of good discipline, a strong work ethic, high educational attainment and good relationships.
- We aim to maintain a positive climate where mutual respect and co-operation are fostered throughout the school community and where lapses are treated with constitutional and natural justice.
- We strive for reasonableness at all times in the implementation of rules and sanctions. This Code of Behaviour is implemented in a manner that is consistent and fair to all students.

B. SCHOOL RULES

1. General

- (a) We insist on genuine effort and commitment to schoolwork.
- (b) Students must, at all times and including out of school hours, show courtesy to and **respect all members of school staff**, visitors to the School and their fellow students.
- (c) Students must obey school staff at all times.
- (d) Students must behave in an appropriate manner in school, coming to and from school and on all school outings and occasions. The Code of Behaviour applies to students whether they are on school property and/or engaged in a school activity or not.
- (e) Loitering in toilets, corridors or on the School Grounds is strictly forbidden.

2. Homework

- (a) Homework and revision are essential components of schoolwork.
- (b) The assignment of homework should be recorded by students in their school journal.
- (c) Assigned homework, whether oral or written must be completed to a satisfactory standard.

3. The School Journal

- (a) The School Journal is used as a means of communication between the School and parent/guardian, in addition to the recording of assigned homework by students.
- (b) The School Journal should be signed by a Parent/Guardian each week. Parents/Guardians should also check the School Journal daily and ensure that assigned homework has been completed.
- (c) School Journals should be kept neat and tidy at all times by each student.

4. Attendance and Punctuality

i. Attendance

- (a) The School Timetable is as follows:
- (i) First Class starts at 9.00 a.m.
 - (ii) Lunch from 1.20 p.m. to 2.00 p.m.
 - (iii) Last class finishes at 4.00 p.m. on Monday & Tuesday and 3.20 p.m. on Wednesday, Thursday & Friday.
- (b) Students are required to be in attendance at the School on every school day. The law now requires that Parents/Guardians inform the school if a student is absent from school and the reason for the absence. This also applies to absence for part of a school day. This should be done in writing or by telephone.
- (c) The School records the fact of absence and the reasons given for absence by students. It notifies the N.E.W.B. of same in accordance with s. 18 of the Education (Welfare) Act, 2000. Official roll call is taken during the first class in the morning and the first class after lunch break. Each individual subject teacher also takes a roll call.
- (d) Parents/Guardians are requested to telephone the school to notify daily absences.
- (e) Unexplained absence, whether from a scheduled class or from the School, is a serious breach of this Code of Behaviour.
- (f) Students returning from an absence must present an explanation for their absence, signed by a Parent/Guardian, at roll call on the next day of attendance.
- (g) If a child is absent for more than 20 days, the school is obliged to notify the National Education Welfare Board.
- (h) Where a student's attendance record gives cause for concern Parents/Guardians will be invited to review same with the School authorities.
- (i) First and Second Year students may not normally leave the School Grounds during school hours. **First and Second Year Students who wish to go home at lunch break must submit a written request signed by a Parent/Guardian at the beginning of the school year.**
- (j) Students wishing to leave the School Grounds during school hours otherwise than at lunch break must present a signed request to their Tutor or Year Head from a Parent/Guardian. The Year Head will then issue a 'permission slip' to the student, to be presented at Reception. Students leaving school in accordance with this procedure will 'sign-out' at reception, and 'sign-in' on their return to school, if they return on the day in question. **The School does not accept liability for students who are permitted to leave the School Grounds in accordance with this procedure for the period during which the Student is absent from school, i.e. the period between the time at which the Student**

signs the appropriate Record Book on leaving the School Grounds and the time at which the Student signs the appropriate Record Book on arriving back to the School.

- (k) Failure to comply with the above procedure for leaving the School Grounds during school hours otherwise than at lunch break is a serious breach of this Code of Behaviour.
- (l) **Good attendance is recognised at the annual awards presentation** and attendance in general may be addressed in school reports and references.

ii. Punctuality

- (a) Students must be punctual. Late arrival is a breach of this Code of Behaviour.
- (b) Students arriving late must report to the School Office and sign the Late Book.
- (c) Students arriving late may not be admitted to class until they have signed the Late Book.
- (d) If a student arrives at a class after the time at which that class is scheduled to start, the student will be regarded as late, irrespective of what time the student arrived on the school grounds.
- (e) Students may be required to present a written explanation for lateness, signed by a Parent/Guardian. The School reserves the right not to permit students to attend class until this explanation is furnished.

iii. General – Attendance & Punctuality

- (a) The School opens at **8.00 a.m.** and closes at **4.30 p.m.**

The School does not accept liability for students arriving at the School Grounds before the School opens or remaining on the School Grounds after the School closes unless such students are participating in an official school activity.

5. The School grounds

- (a) Littering on the School grounds is a breach of this Code of Behaviour
- (b) Students are not permitted on the School Grounds except when attending school or an activity organised by the School. Students otherwise on the School Grounds are trespassers within the meaning of the Occupiers Liability Act 1995 and are in breach of this Code of Behaviour.
- (c) Motor-vehicles must be used in a safe manner on the School Grounds. Failure to drive safely may result in the person concerned being prohibited from using a motor-vehicle on the School Grounds, in addition to other sanctions, which may be imposed in accordance with this Code of Behaviour.

6. School Uniform and Dress Code

i. Uniform

- (a) Students must wear the complete School Uniform at all times during school hours and official school functions. Students may not be allowed to attend class until they are in full uniform.
- (b) Parents will be notified in advance of 'non-uniform' days or occasions on which students are not required to wear the School Uniform.
- (c) The School Uniform is outlined in the General Information.

ii. Appearance

- (a) Students must be neat and tidy in appearance. This also applies if students are given permission not to wear school uniform (e.g. non-uniform days, school tours or other extra-curricular activities connected with the school).
- (b) The following specific provisions apply to student's appearance:
 - Hair must be neat and tidy. **'Extreme' Hairstyles** are not permitted. An 'extreme' hairstyle may be a hairstyle which is excessively long, excessively short or coloured/dyed inappropriately. Health & Safety regulations must be complied with.
 - Inappropriate piercings are not permitted – as decided by Management. Health & Safety regulations must be complied with.
 - Visible tattoos are not permitted

iii. General – School Uniform & Appearance

- (a) Failure to comply with the above rules concerning the School Uniform and students' appearance is a breach of this Code of Behaviour.
- (b) The School reserves the right to decide whether any aspect of a student's appearance is in non-compliance with this Code of Behaviour.
- (c) Students who do not comply with the above rules concerning students' appearance **may be suspended** until the rules are observed to the School's satisfaction.

7. Property

i. General

- (a) Each student is responsible for his or her own property. Student's property should be clearly marked with name and contact details.
- (b) Interference of any kind with another person's property including property belonging to the School is a serious breach of this Code of Behaviour. Interference includes but is not limited to theft.
- (c) Students should not bring valuable or irreplaceable items or large sums of money to school except where absolutely necessary. The School does not accept liability for property or money lost, stolen or damaged while on the School Grounds.
- (d) Parents/Guardians may be required by the School to pay for the repair or replacement of property damaged by students.
- (e) Deliberate damage to property or vandalism is a serious breach of this Code of Behaviour, whether occurring on school grounds and during school hours or not. Parents/Guardians of students responsible will be required to pay for the repair or replacement of property damaged deliberately or vandalised as appropriate in addition to other sanctions, which may be imposed on students in accordance with this Code of Behaviour.
- (f) Stealing is a serious breach of this Code of Behaviour, whether the incident of theft occurs on school grounds and during school hours or not. Parents/Guardians of students responsible will be required to pay for the replacement of stolen property in addition to other sanctions, which may be imposed on students in accordance with this Code of Behaviour.
- (g) Incidents of vandalism and theft may be reported to the Garda Síochána.
- (h) **Chewing gum is not allowed in the School** and will be confiscated if brought to school, in addition to any other sanctions, which may be imposed on students concerned in accordance with this Code of Behaviour.
- (i) **Fizzy drinks and high energy drinks are not allowed in the school.**
- (j) The use of mobile telephones is prohibited in the School buildings between the hours of 9:00am to 3:45pm. Mobile telephones used in breach of this rule will be confiscated and returned by the Principal/Deputy Principal, in person, to a Parent/Guardian of the student concerned.

ii. Lockers

(a) Students will have access to their lockers during the following times:

- Before the first class in the morning.
- During morning break.
- During lunch break.
- Evenings
- At other times, with permission of staff.

(b) Students should report damaged lockers immediately. Failure to do so will result in the student concerned being held responsible for the damage.

(c) Students are responsible for all items left in their locker whether such items belong to the student or not.

(d) In the interests of maintaining safety and discipline in the School, students may be required to open and empty their locker in accordance with the following procedure:

- i. The student will be requested to **open and empty the locker** in the presence of the Principal/Deputy Principal, another adult nominated by the Principal/Deputy Principal and, if the student requests, another member of school staff or a student nominated by the student whose locker is to be opened and emptied.
- ii. If the student **agrees**, the locker will be opened by the Student and its contents examined in the presence of the student and the other persons described above.
- iii. If the student **refuses** to permit the locker to be opened Parents/Guardians of the student concerned will be contacted and asked to come to the School.
- iv. On arriving at the School **Parents/Guardians** will be requested to **consent** to the student's locker being opened and emptied in the presence of the Principal/Deputy Principal, another adult nominated by the Principal/Deputy Principal, the Parents/Guardians and the student.
- v. If **Parents/Guardians consent** to the procedure described above, the locker will be opened and its contents examined in the presence of Principal/Deputy Principal, Parents/Guardians and the student concerned.
- vi. If **Parents/Guardians refuse** to permit the locker to be opened or are unable to attend the School as described above the School may contact the Garda Síochána.

- vii. Failure to comply with a request to open a locker and empty its contents in accordance with the procedure described above is a **serious breach of this Code of Behaviour** by the student concerned.
- viii. Where it is **not practical** to operate this procedure (i.e. where the student concerned is absent from school) the Principal/Deputy Principal accompanied by another member of school staff may open a locker and examine its contents. Prior to doing so the Principal/Deputy Principal will make reasonable efforts to contact the student concerned and his/her Parents/Guardians in order to enable them to attend the School should they so wish, in which case the normal procedure described above will apply.

iii. Stolen property & dangerous items/substances

- (a) A dangerous item/substance is any item/substance which could cause harm or damage to a person or to property possession of which item/substance is not necessary for a school sanctioned activity.
- (b) Where the School has reasonable grounds for believing that a student has in his/her possession stolen property or a dangerous item/substance the procedure described above in relation to lockers will be applied as regards the student's person and property, i.e. the student will first be requested to voluntarily disclose contents of pockets/schoolbags in the presence of witnesses, failing which Parents/Guardians will be contacted etc.
- (c) Under no circumstances will school staff attempt to effect a search of a student's person.
- (d) Possession of a dangerous item/substance is a serious breach of this Code of Behaviour, whether the item/substance is brought onto the School Grounds or not.

8. Bullying

- (a) Bullying in any form is a serious breach of this Code of Behaviour.
- Refer to Anti-Bullying Policy.

9. Substance use

- (a) Smoking is forbidden on the School Grounds. Smoking on the School Grounds at any time is a serious breach of this Code of Behaviour.
- (b) The School has a zero-tolerance approach to incidents of substance abuse. Possession, use or distribution of harmful or illegal substances including alcohol and tobacco will not be tolerated at *any* time and under *any* circumstances and may lead to suspension or expulsion in accordance with this Code of Behaviour. This applies whether students are on school property and/or engaged in a school activity or not.

- (c) The School has a comprehensive Substance Use Policy in place. It is the responsibility of all students and their Parents/Guardians to familiarise themselves with the provisions of the Substance Use Policy.

C. DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURE

- (a) Where the Code of Behaviour has been breached the following strategies will apply:-

1. Classroom Teacher will deal with minor breaches of school rules, usually a verbal reprimand or punishment exercise.
2. Misbehaviour may merit a Referral – Teacher should give the Referral to the Class Tutor. The Class Tutor will then speak to the student and may use one or more of the sanctions listed at 1 above or may put the student on one day Lunch Time Detention after consulting the Year Head. Teacher in charge of Detention to be informed by Tutor and Detention Form to be filed in student's file.
3. Further Referrals may result in student being put on three days Lunch Time Detention by the Year Head. Teacher in charge of Detention to be informed by Year Head and Detention Form to be filed in student's file.
4. Any further Referrals – Year Head will deal with student. Sanctions may include: -
Reprimand.
Letter of Apology to be written by student.
Notification to Parents.
Removal from class and placed under the care of a Senior Staff member.
Loss of privileges e.g. withdrawal from school events.
Student may be placed On Report at the discretion of the Year Head to monitor behaviour/attendance.
Referral to Counsellor or Pastoral Care team
5. Any further Referrals or very serious breaches of School Rules will be dealt with by Disciplinary Committee comprising of: -
Caremaster/Caremistress, Year Head and/or Tutor, Principal.

Sanctions may include: -
Letter to Parents/Guardians.
Meeting with Parents/Guardians (*in school in accordance with section 5(d) below*)
Suspension.
Referral to Principal with written file.
Referral to Board of Management.

Immediate suspension may be incurred for certain offences as set out in the Suspensions Policy and Procedures.

- (b) Teachers or Year Heads may also refer students to members of the Pastoral Care Team for help and advice.
- (c) Written records and/or incident report forms as appropriate will be kept in relation to breaches of the Code and measures taken in response to same.
- (d) Where a student's behaviour warrants it: -

Parents/Guardians will be requested to come to the school to meet with the Disciplinary Committee comprised of the appropriate Year Head/Tutor, Care Master/Care Mistress, Principal. Parents/Guardians will be given as much notification in advance of this meeting as is reasonably possible. Teaching staff who have had dealings with the student concerned may also be requested to attend this meeting.

- i. School Management will notify Parents/Guardians of their concerns.
- ii. The sanctions described above at (a) may be implemented at any stage in this process.

D. DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURE - SUSPENSION

Please refer to Suspensions Policy and Procedures for full details.

E DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURE – EXPULSION

Please refer to Expulsion Policy and Procedures.

This Policy was approved by Board of Management on 24/10/2016.

CLR Blanche H. Jones