

Suspensions Policy and Procedures

Mission Statement

Davitt College aims to provide a caring community which, in partnership with parents / guardians, caters for the educational, emotional, physical and spiritual development of its students and facilitates them in reaching their full potential.

Davitt College Board of Management formally delegated the authority to suspend to the Principal.

This policy and its procedures are approved by the Board of Management having been developed in consultation with all the educational partners i.e. parents, students, staff and the wider community. The policy has been developed in line with the NEWB Guidelines and in consultation with the NBSS.

What does suspension mean in Davitt College:-

“Suspension is defined as requiring the student to absent himself/herself from the school for a specified period of school days.”

The grounds for suspension:-

In Davitt College, we recognise suspension as a proportionate response to the behaviour that is causing concern.

Normally a range of other interventions will have been tried before a decision to suspend is made.

A decision to suspend requires serious grounds such as

- The student’s behaviour has had a seriously detrimental effect on the education of other students.
- The student’s continued presence in the school at this time constitutes a threat to safety
- The student is responsible for serious damage to property.
- Any serious incident of misconduct such as the use or possession of illicit drugs.
- Breach of Davitt College Acceptable Use Policy (AUP).

The reasons for suspension in Davitt College are clearly defined.

Suspensions can provide a respite for staff and the student. A suspension will give the student time to reflect on the link between their actions and its consequences. A period of suspension will also give staff time to plan ways of helping the student to change unacceptable behaviour. Therefore in Davitt College, suspension may form part of a Behaviour Management Plan, thus enabling the school to set goals with the student and their parents, allow staff an opportunity to plan other interventions and to impress on the student and their parents the seriousness of the behaviour.

Forms of Suspensions in Davitt College.

Suspensions can be in one of two forms (1) a suspension which is imposed as an ultimate sanction after a series of interventions involving student, parents, and staff. (2) immediate suspension as a result of a serious misbehaviour.

Procedures in Respect of Suspension.

(1) Immediate suspension:- a preliminary investigation must be conducted to establish the case for the imposition of the suspension. The formal investigation should immediately follow the imposition of the suspension. Having due regard for our duty of care, once parents have been notified the student may be sent home from school.

Suspension can only take place after consultation with the **Principal** or his/her representative.

Parents must be informed in writing of the reason for the suspension and the period of the suspension. Parents in the suspension letter are informed of their right to appeal the suspension and the procedures to be followed in respect of making that appeal.

(2) While it is possible for the Principal or his/her representative to suspend immediately in some exceptional cases, normally suspension will be linked to the Code of Behaviour. Copies of the Code of Behaviour were given to, and explained to each student and their parent(s)/guardian(s) on enrolment.

Suspension normally occurs only after (a) all disciplinary options under the Code of Behaviour have been applied and documented and (b) when all appropriate support services within the school have been either offered or involved. (c) when discussion with the parent(s)/guardian(s) relating to specific misbehaviours has taken place.

The following procedures will be followed.

Suspension will take place after consultation with and under the authority of the Principal.

Parent must be informed in writing of the reason for the suspension and the length of suspension must be made clear. Parents will be made aware of their right to appeal the suspension.

A record of all actions taken and correspondence must be kept.

Immediate Suspension:- The Principal may suspend a student immediately in some circumstances including:

- fighting or aggressive behaviour or threatening physical or verbal behaviour towards any member of staff and/or any student.
- Where the Principal considers that the student's behaviour is a threat to the safety, welfare and/or property of other members of the school community,
- Behaviour that disrupts the teaching and learning of other students,
- Acts of violence towards any person whether occurring on school property and/or during a school activity or not,
- Interference with another person's property including property belonging to the School
- Interference with emergency equipment, i.e. fire alarms, fire extinguishers etc.,
- Breaches of the School's zero tolerance policy regarding substance abuse, whether occurring on school property and/or during a school activity or not,
- Bullying,
- Possession of a dangerous item/substance
- Behaviour described as a serious breach of the Davitt College Code of Behaviour in the Davitt College Code of Behaviour,
- Leaving the school grounds without permission
- Breach of the Acceptable Use Policy (AUP).

In accordance with the National Educational Welfare Board, a student will not normally be suspended for poor academic performance, poor attendance or lateness and minor breaches of the Code of Behaviour.

The period of suspension:- The Principal may suspend a student from school for a period of up to five school days depending on the severity of the misbehaviour.

The Board of Management shall place a ceiling of ten days on any one period of suspension imposed. The Board of Management shall formally review any proposal to suspend a student where the suspension would bring the number of days for which the student has been suspended in the current year to twenty days or more.

If a student during the course of any one academic year reaches an accumulated total of six days suspension the Principal will notify the Education and Welfare officer of this in writing.

After the suspension ends:- A period of suspension ends on the date given in the letter of notification to the parents about the suspension. On return to school the student must meet with the Principal/Deputy Principal before returning to class. The student will be given the opportunity and support for a fresh start and the same standard of behaviour will

be expected from the returning student as all the others. Support will be offered to the student in the re-integration process.

Appeals

Where the total number of days for which the student has been suspended in the current school year reaches twenty days, the parents, or a student aged over 18 years, may appeal a decision to suspend in the first instance to Mayo, Sligo & Leitrim E.T.B. Where an appeal to the E.T.B. is concluded, the parents, or a student over 18 years, may appeal to the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Skills (Education Act 1998 section 29). An appeal may also be brought by the NEWB on behalf of the student

Review of suspension policy. To ensure that the Suspensions Policy in Davitt College is consistent with other school policies, natural justice and changes in education, this policy will be reviewed on a two yearly basis.

This policy was approved by the Board of Management on:

Signed: *Mr. Blackie Gavin*
Chairperson of the Board of Management

Date: 9th May 2017