

St. Mary's College Dundalk



Code of Behaviour

Ratified by the Board of Management on the 22nd June 2026.

INTRODUCTION

This *Code of Behaviour and Discipline* has been drawn up and developed in line with the 2008 NEWB Guidelines.

What is the Code of Behaviour?

This code is a set of procedures and practices that aims to help students behave well so that they can learn well. The code outlines how students, teachers and parents can work together to create a safe and happy environment. In our College, high standards of behaviour are expected and supported and our students are encouraged to take responsibility for themselves, their learning and their behaviour. Correct behaviour creates a good learning environment and good behavioural outcomes are most likely achieved when the values of the family are aligned with the values and ethos of our College.

Rationale for the Code of Behaviour?

School rules are necessary to:

- Create a positive, caring and respectful atmosphere that encourages and reinforces good behaviour.
- Foster a positive and safe environment for teaching and learning.
- Encourage students to take personal responsibility for their learning and behaviour.
- Build positive relationships of mutual respect and support among students, staff and parents.
- Ensure that St Mary's College's high expectations for the behaviour of all the members of the school community are widely known and understood.

When does the Code of Behaviour apply?

When students enrol in our school, the student and his/her parents or guardians are obligated to read and sign the Code of Behaviour. This means that the student agrees to behave well throughout the school day, including travelling to and from school, while wearing the school uniform and/or on any school-related activity.

Mission Statement

St Mary's College is a Catholic secondary school under the patronage of the Marist Fathers. The primary aim of the College, through its spiritual and humanistic endeavours, is to promote and develop a sense of community where those entrusted to its care can be brought to the fullness of their human potential in accordance with the teachings of the Gospel.

The College, through its academic, pastoral and spiritual undertakings strives to provide for the holistic development and welfare of each of the students in its care.

Student Supports

The first priority of the management and staff of St. Mary's College is that all students are happy and fulfilled during their time with us. There is a comprehensive support system, of personnel and structures, to assist all students who may be experiencing difficulties in either their personal or educational life:

Internal

- Class Teacher
- Resource Teacher
- Additional Educational Needs Team
- Guidance Counsellors
- School Completion Continuation Programme Co-ordinator
- College Chaplains
- Wellbeing Co-ordinator
- Rainbows / Spectrum (Grief Programme) as requested or required
- Student Peer Support / Mentoring (Buddy System)
- Attendance Officer
- Academic Monitors
- Link Meetings
- Year Head
- Student Support Team
- Deputy Principals
- Principal

Code of Behaviour and Discipline

Our primary aim is to work together as staff and students to realise our full potential in a healthy, safe, stimulating and friendly environment where the atmosphere is one of cooperation and challenge, where each member of the college community is treated with mutual respect.

The Code of Behaviour and Discipline covers the following areas:

1. System of Rewards
2. Attendance / Punctuality
3. Uniform /Appearance
4. In the Classroom
5. General
6. Lunchtime and Break-time
7. Outside the College
8. Sanctions
9. Procedure for Suspension
10. Expulsion

1. System of Rewards

Rationale

It is the policy of St. Mary's College to recognise and reward good behaviour. Showing a commitment to school life, displaying a positive attitude and strong work ethic, being kind and respectful are behaviours that may be rewarded in the following ways:

Rewards

- Teachers praise effort and behaviour as part of teaching strategy.
- Positive comments in Student Journal and Compass.
- Telephone calls to Parents / Guardians to mark achievements.
- Recognition and praise for individual and group achievements by staff during interaction with students and PA announcements/Morning reflection/digital screen.
- Acknowledgement and praise for individual and group achievements via termly competitions, which promote positive College values.
- Acknowledgement and praise for individual achievement via newsletters, Compass Chronicles sent to Parents / Guardians.
- Highlighting the positive at Year Group Assemblies.
- Highlighting the positive at Parent Teacher meetings.
- Termly recognition of Marist 'Hidden Heroes'.
- Certificates of Merit awarded to students for outstanding efforts either in or out of class.
- Leadership Certificates awarded to students who show recognisable leadership skills.
- Recognition of individual or group achievements in our College publications and social media.
- Student of the Year - final year student who is deemed to have contributed most to the College.
- Transition Year Awards Night recognises the commitment of students to the spirit and purpose of Transition Year.
- End of Year internal award ceremonies recognise and reward both achievement and effort within year groups.
- Honours Wall to recognise academic achievement in state examinations / 3rd level.
- Prize Night is designed to recognise and reward both achievement and effort in all areas of College life.

2. Attendance / Punctuality

A direct relationship exists between students' daily attendance and academic performance, personal development and good work habits. The College is bound by law

to record a student's attendance and inform The Educational Welfare Board if a student has been suspended for more than six days or if a student has been absent for 20 days.

Rules

- The academic day lasts from 8.50 am to 3.50 pm. Students should be in the College by 8.35am.
- Any student arriving late for morning or afternoon class must go directly to class. The late entry to the class will be time stamped on Compass by the class teacher. Any student who is late for other classes throughout the day will have this recorded by the class teacher on Compass.
- Students must never leave the College premises without first reporting to the Year Head. In the absence of the Year Head, the student may report to another Year Head, the Principal or Deputy Principals to have their note signed / noted on Compass.
- Having been granted permission to leave the student must wait to be signed out and collected. Any breach of this rule is a very serious matter. Under the direction of the Board of Management no student may leave the college without being collected by a parent/guardian. The parents /guardians must counter-sign that they have collected their child.
- A Parent / Guardian must complete a digital note on Compass if:
 - The student is unavoidably late and has a valid reason.
 - The student has been absent from the College the previous day or number of days.
 - The student must leave the College during the day for a legitimate reason. In this instance, the student must inform the Year Head that a note has been posted in advance of the absence and then wait at the appropriate time to be signed out and collected at the office by the parent / guardian.
- Parents / Guardians will be informed if a student is persistently late (either in the morning or internally during the day) without a valid reason. Students who are persistently late will make up this time through a detention.
 - 8 lates = After school detention
 - 15 lates = Saturday morning detention
- The student may also be returned to the care of their parents /guardians if he / she is persistently late without a valid reason for a brief suspension.
- A sick student must notify the class teacher or College authorities before absenting themselves from class. Any unauthorised absence from class will be regarded as truancy and will be dealt with accordingly.
- All students participating in extra-curricular activities must report for roll call at 8.50am and where necessary at 1.50pm.
- Students must not use personal mobiles to contact parents /guardians. The office phone is available to the student to contact home, if required.

- Parents / guardians are requested not to make routine dental, optical or medical appointments during normal College hours.
- Family holidays, that would necessitate a student's absence from the College, must not be arranged outside official academic holiday periods.

3. Uniform / Appearance

The school uniform creates a simple and standardised dress code for all students. It helps each student foster an identity with the College and creates a sense of Marist community. Furthermore, it reduces peer pressure and socioeconomic disparities between students and prepares them for adult working life.

St. Mary's Uniform Policy is as follows:

- Students must be clean and tidy and wear the full, correct uniform coming to the College, when at the College and when returning from the College.
- Full uniform must also be worn on all College related activities unless otherwise instructed.
- All items of uniform should be labelled with student's name.
- Jackets should be placed in lockers / bags when not in use.
- Students who fail to wear full, correct uniform will be offered a replacement item, if available. Alternatively, the parent / guardian may be contacted by the school and requested to provide the correct uniform item. Students may not be admitted to class or attend College activities on that day.

The uniform consists of:

Boys

- Grey trousers.
- Black V-neck College jumper with College crest
- **(Please note: Full P.E. uniform is only to be worn on PE day).**
- White shirt and College tie for relevant year group.
- Official College jacket with College crest/name.
- Students must wear plain black shoes or flat, all-black leather runners. Footwear must have no visible logos, coloured markings, or bubble soles. Boots, canvas shoes, and fabric runners are not permitted.
- Socks/Ankle socks. No pop/invisible socks.

Girls

- College skirt.
- College trouser option is available from Michael Lynch's only.
- Black V-neck College jumper with College crest.
- **(Please note: Full P.E. uniform is only to be worn on PE day).**
- White shirt and College tie for relevant year group.
- Official College jacket with College crest/name.

- Students must wear plain black shoes or flat, all-black leather runners. Footwear must have no visible logos, coloured markings, or bubble soles. Boots, canvas shoes, and fabric runners are not permitted.

P.E. Uniform

- On the day that students are scheduled to have PE, they are permitted to wear their PE Uniform for the full day. **The crested PE half-zip is reserved for PE days only and may not be worn in lieu of the school jumper on non-PE days.**
- Students who do not have the official College PE Uniform on PE day must wear their school uniform for the day and change for PE class.
- College crested tracksuit top, crested t-shirt and crested black tracksuit bottoms.
- Sports runners.
- College jacket only to be worn (if required) for P.E. class.

Incorrect Uniform

- Only official school-crested jackets are permitted. Non-uniform jackets must be removed and will be **retained** until collected by a parent or guardian. A temporary school-issued jacket will be provided/offered as a replacement.
- Students who arrive to school in incorrect uniform have two options:
 - Contact a parent from the office to present with the correct uniform.
 - Accept a replacement uniform from the office for the remainder of the day, which students must take home and return to the office washed.

Students should note the following:

- Only one small stud per earlobe is permitted. For health and safety reasons, all other types of earrings, including hoops, T-bars, spikes, gauges, drop or dangling earrings are not permitted.
- No nose-rings, bullrings, septum piercings, tongue or visible body piercings permitted. Students who refuse to remove piercings will be sent home to rectify the matter.
- Students are expected to maintain a natural and appropriate appearance while in school.

The following guidelines apply:

- False eyelashes are not permitted.
- Excessive use of artificial tanning products is not permitted.
- Lip stains are not permitted.
- Artificial nails are not permitted. Nail polish, acrylic nails, gel nails, nail art, decorative attachments and/or brightly coloured or fluorescent nail finishes are not permitted.
- Make-up should be minimal, natural and subtle. For example, a small amount of concealer is acceptable; however, heavy or noticeable make-up is not allowed.

- Visible tattoos are not permitted.
- Wearing of symbols, badges that may be considered offensive, discriminatory or against the ethos of the college to others are not permitted.
- Slits in trousers / skirts or frayed hems are not permitted.
- No high-top cuts / lines in hair or eyebrows / designs – **one** blade minimum.
- For hygiene purposes clean, well-groomed, neat hair is essential and must be of a natural colour. Students may be given a small period of time to resolve the issue. Saturday detentions will be imposed until the issue is resolved. For safety, health and welfare reasons, students with hair that is-long or obscures vision may be asked to tie it up during the course of the school day.
- Boys must be clean-shaven. Boys who are persistently unshaven will be provided with materials to shave in school or may be sent home to rectify the matter.
- Any other items deemed unsuitable.
- The right is reserved to ask students to remove any of the above items at any time.

Practical Classes

For their own safety, health and welfare, students must adhere to all guidance and instruction during practical classes. Protective clothing and goggles must be worn as instructed.

4. In the Classroom

Rules

- Students must enter the classroom quietly in an orderly manner and on time.
- Students must sit in their allotted seat unless requested by a teacher to change.
- Students should take out journal, books and materials for class immediately. Considering the new Junior Cycle book scheme, it is essential that all books are kept in good order, as they will be returned at the completion of Junior Cycle.
- Students should produce homework on time or present a legitimate excuse at the beginning of class.
- Representing the college in extra-curricular activities is a privilege and is not an acceptable excuse for not doing homework. It is the student's responsibility to catch up on work missed. Students who persistently find it difficult to balance both may be withdrawn from the extra-curricular activity.
- Students should participate positively in the work of the class and co-operate fully with the teacher's instructions.
- If a student feels that he / she has been misunderstood he / she should wait until the end of class and politely request the opportunity to discuss the matter.
- Disrespect and defiance to any member of the college community, including the use of inappropriate language, will be viewed as a very serious breach of discipline.

- Any attempt to intimidate or threaten any student, teacher or ancillary staff, be it physically, verbally or by any other means will be viewed as a most serious breach of discipline.
- Small bottles of water are permitted to be used in class, with teacher permission. Energy drinks are not permitted.
- Students must obey the specific rules and regulations governing specialist areas such as Science Laboratories, Audio-visual, Technical Graphics, DCG, Construction Studies, Technology, Art, Computer, Home Economics and P.E. rooms as well as the Gym and playing fields.
- Students must obey fire drill procedures during fire drills and / or fire evacuation. Students must be careful around fire alarms and any setting off (deliberate or otherwise) or tampering with fire alarms will be viewed as a serious offence.

5. General

Rationale

St. Mary's College community consists of over nine hundred individuals. The rules outlined below are intended to create a healthy, safe, orderly and enjoyable environment for all.

Personal Belongings

- Students are responsible for their own belongings and must label clearly each item of personal property and keep them with them or in their lockers.
- The taking or interference with the property of any member of the College community is strictly prohibited and may incur serious sanction.

Respect

Respect is a cornerstone of the ethos of St. Mary's College, and to that end:

- Students must show due respect to everyone in, or visiting, the College, including teaching and ancillary staff.
- Following the principles of Bí Cineálta, if a student feels that he/she is being bullied or is aware of other students who are being bullied, they should bring the matter immediately to the attention of a parent/guardian, a teacher, the Assistant Year Head, Year Head, Deputy Principals, Principal, or Chairperson of the Board of Management.
- Inappropriate physical contact between students is unacceptable during the course of the academic day or College related activities.
- Deliberately communicating in another language to the exclusion of others or for abusive reasons is unacceptable and will be dealt with by College management. Similarly, non-verbal communication using signals or gestures, which are intended to be abusive or rude, is unacceptable and will incur sanctions.

Safety and Health

- Students must not run on corridors or on passages around the College.
- Students should avoid loud and unruly behaviour and walk on the left hand side at all times.
- For safety, health and welfare reasons, only one student is permitted in a toilet cubicle or individual toilet at any one time. Students sharing of such facilities may incur serious sanction.
- Students must not leave bags in doorways, stairwells or within confined areas.
- Smoking / vaping is forbidden in the College campus and on any College outing or activity.
- Alcoholic drink and drugs are banned and any breach will be viewed as extremely serious.
- Any student who is involved in the taking, possession, supplying or procuring of drugs or other illegal substances either on the College premises, during events/activities, coming to and returning home from College, or while in the College uniform will be dealt with in accordance with the College's Substance Use policy.
- E-scooters, skateboards are prohibited on the College campus and may not be stored onsite. For safety, health and welfare reasons they should not be used as a means of transport to and from school.
- The College car-park space is limited and is for the use of teaching and ancillary staff only. Student parking is not permitted.

College Environment

- Students should take pride in the College and its environment. Students should contribute positively to the environment and not litter, but use the appropriate bins provided.
- Drinking or eating is prohibited around the College except in designated areas.
- Chewing gum is prohibited in all areas of the College campus.
- Graffiti will not be tolerated. Intentional defacing or damaging College property is a serious breach. Parents/Guardians will be required to pay for the costs incurred by the College and student may face serious sanction, up to and including expulsion.
- If a student breaks or damages any part of the College property, even by accident, they should report it immediately to any staff member.

Personal Devices

- To safeguard and nurture the wellbeing of students, staff and guests, personal devices such as Phones, music and any other electronic devices are not allowed in our College and may not be used during the school day. If you feel it is necessary for your child to bring his/her phone to College, please understand that it must not be switched on or visible during the school day.

- Phones may not be visible or switched on until students leave school at the end of the academic day. Phones may not be turned on or used until students have **exited** the school building at the end of the school day. Please be assured that in case of emergency, or for any other important reason, you can ring the school office and we will pass the message to your child. Similarly, if a student needs to contact home, he/she may do so via the College office. Any student using their own phone to ring home during the school day will face sanction, including the confiscation of the phone.
- Headphones and earpods must be removed when the student enters the building and may only be accessed again having left the building at the end of the school day. Similar to phone use, students listening to a device, via headphones, will have the device confiscated for three school days.
- Smartwatches may only be used as timekeeping devices during the school day. Students are strictly prohibited from using smartwatches to communicate, access apps, or connect with mobile phones. Bluetooth must be turned off during school hours to prevent device pairing or data transfer.
- Students who request permission to temporarily leave class must leave their mobile phone on the teacher's desk until they return.
- Mobile phones will be confiscated immediately by the staff member and the phone is subsequently given to Principal or Deputy Principals.
1st Offence: 3 days removal, any further offences: 5 days removal. Failure to hand up a phone immediately or a request from a parent/guardian for an immediate return, will lead to the alternative sanction of a one-day suspension and Saturday detention.
- The misuse of any technological equipment will warrant its confiscation. Students using mobile phones/technology in such a manner as to bring the name of the College into disrepute is in direct breach of the College's Acceptable Use Policy and sanctions will apply.
- Sanctions may apply to students who choose to wear the college uniform while posting private, non-school related activities on social media platforms, which go against the ethos of the College or may bring the good name of the College into disrepute.

ICT

The use of ICT is promoted in the College and is understood to play a valuable role in our students' education. The introduction of 1:1 digital devices in senior cycle represents a considered development designed to enhance teaching and learning. Digital devices will be used purposefully, only where they add clear value, including supporting organisation, facilitating assessment, improving access to resources, and enabling effective feedback.

- Students are not permitted to use websites or other sites, which would be deemed inappropriate. Such sites include those with inappropriate material, social networking sites, mobile phone sites, texting/image texting sites or apps, video sites or gambling sites.
- Identity theft / or pretending to be another member of the College community (online or otherwise) is viewed as a serious breach of the Code of Behaviour.
- All members of the college community have the right to dignity in the workplace and a safeguarded personal life. Students who create or participate in platforms (e.g. meme accounts) or share such content, which inappropriately maligns any member of the College community or others, may incur serious sanction.
- Students are strictly prohibited from creating, managing, or contributing to social media accounts or online content that uses, references, or implies the school's name, identity, or association without prior permission from school management.
- Any attempt to hack, hijack, or otherwise gain unauthorised access to the school's network, systems, or data will be treated as a serious breach of the Code of Behaviour and will be referred to the Board of Management for disciplinary action.
- Students must always adhere to the school's Acceptable Use Policy when using digital devices and online services. Any breach of the Acceptable Use Policy will be treated as a breach of the school's Code of Behaviour and will be addressed accordingly.

Journal

- The student journal is an important means of communication between teachers and Parents/ Guardians. Notes regarding permissions and homework must be entered in it and signed by Parents/Guardians weekly. Year teams monitor the journal on a weekly basis and it is imperative that parents sign the journal each week.
- Students must have their journal with them every day and with them in every class. It is designed to help them organise their work, manage their time and review their progress. Failure to produce the journal in class may incur a sanction. Using the journal for anything other than school related matters is prohibited. Students are not allowed to remove or alter any comment placed in the journal by a member of staff nor misuse another student's journal. Misuse of the journal will result in sanction and may lead to its confiscation, in which case the student must replace it at their own expense.
- If a student loses their journal they must report it to the Year Head. If it is not found the student will have to purchase a new one.
- Students must present their journal to staff when requested. Deliberate refusal to do so will result in a school sanction.

Lockers & School Bags

- Students must put all items of value into lockers. The College cannot take responsibility for items of value that are left in public areas of the College.
- Students are only permitted to use the locker assigned to them.
- Students are permitted to go to their lockers at the following times only:
 - Before class begins in the mornings.
 - Break time.
 - The first and last 10 minutes of lunchtime.
 - At the end of the academic day.
- The Board of Management reserves the right to inspect lockers/school bags at any time by any member of the senior leadership team.
- Lockers must be completely emptied and cleaned at the end of the school year. The College will not be responsible for any items that have not been removed from lockers at the end of the school year.

Lunchtime and Break-time

- Students must adhere to the instructions of the teacher / supervisor during breaks and especially when accessing canteen facilities.
- Students must queue in an orderly fashion at the College Canteen. Loud or unruly behaviour will not be tolerated.
- Students may access the playing fields and must be visible at all times. Students have no permission to be in the environs of the polytunnels, or the designated out of bounds area at the back of the school, from the polytunnels to the front gate.
- To ensure student safety and maintain proper supervision during school hours, the walkway surrounding the football fields is designated for walking only. Loitering on the walkway, particularly behind the mound or in areas that are out of sight is strictly prohibited.
- To respect the environment, we encourage students to be mindful of a clean school and ensure all litter is placed in the appropriate bins.

6. Homework

Homework is regarded as an extension of classwork and as a preparation for the next day's work. It is also seen as a way of measuring a student's progress. Students are expected to do all homework assigned each day by the teacher and to revise the work that is done in class to the best of their ability. *Homework* includes written homework, learning homework and revision.

- Following the DEY guidelines, it is expected that the minimum amount of time spent at homework is as follows:
 - First Year: 1.5 hours
 - Second Year: 2 hours

- Third Year: 2.5 to 3 hours
- Fifth Year: 3 hours plus
- Sixth Year: 3 - 4 hours
- All work set by teachers must be written into the School Journal by the student. Failure to complete assigned homework may result in disciplinary action. If for some reason the assigned homework is not done or completed, a note in the journal from a parent explaining why is required.
- TEAMS / Office 365 platforms allow greater opportunity for students and teachers to communicate regarding learning and teaching. Students may access homework and assignments on these platforms, when instructed by the teacher. To safeguard the work-life balance, no communication between student and teacher should take place after 6.00pm, unless by prior arrangement.
- With the increased focus on student independent learning, it is important that students recognise their responsibilities and adhere strictly to all guidelines around the submission of project, CBAs and examination work.
- The College will support the students' efforts at homework through regular monitoring and assessment of the quality of homework presented. A study skills seminar will be offered annually to each year group to shape good attitudes and habits in relation to homework and study.
- Parents/guardians are expected to foster and encourage a positive attitude in their child to homework and study through regular supervision of homework completion and monitoring of the student journal.

7. Outside College

The Board of Management stresses that any behaviour by a student of St. Mary's College which takes place off the College premises and outside the academic day but which impacts in a serious and negative way on other members of the College community is covered by the Code of Behaviour and comes within the remit of the Board of Management. The Board's remit may extend to such behaviours including:

- Intimidation, verbal attacks, threatening or bullying of others (online or in-person) or likely to cause fear of College for this person.
- Interference with the property of any member of the College community, management or staff of the College.
- Involvement in the use, procurement or distribution/sale of illegal substances.
- Involvement in activities that bring the College into disrepute.

Suspension & Expulsion Policy

8.1 Rationale

Through its Code of Behaviour, and in line with the Mission Statement, St. Mary's College (the "College") aims to create a calm and ordered atmosphere in a caring and supportive working environment based on respect for self and respect for others. When a student fails to observe the Code of Behaviour it may result in the student incurring sanctions including suspension or expulsion where warranted. This policy outlines the College's approach to suspension and expulsion and has been formulated taking due consideration of the rights and responsibilities inherent in the Education Act 1998, Education Welfare Act 2000, Equal Status Act 2000, ESPEN Act 2004 and National Education Welfare Board Guidelines on Code of Behaviour 2008.

The College may apply a range of sanctions appropriate to the circumstances and seriousness of each individual case. These are tiered in nature to ensure a just and equitable approach that respects the dignity of all involved and depends on the seriousness of the breach of discipline in question. These include:

- A verbal warning
- Additional appropriate written work
- A note home to Parents / Guardians in the Student Journal
- A phone call to Parents / Guardians
- Lunchtime detention
- Evening detention
- Saturday morning detention
- The student may be put on report
- Internal suspension
- Removal from College trip or extra-curricular activity [to be decided by a member of senior management in consultation with the teacher]
- Suspension
- Expulsion

The College has a referral system in place to address issues of on-going misbehaviour. Teachers will initially deal with disciplinary issues themselves within their own classroom. If this fails to resolve matters then the issue will be referred from the teacher to the Year Head to the Deputy Principals/Principal. However, incidents of a serious nature may be referred directly to the Principal or Deputy Principals.

Possible Interventions/Supports:

The College has a range of interventions in place to support behaviour. The intervention(s) used will be appropriate to each case and include:

- Meeting with student and Year Head to explore the circumstances of the incidents), giving the student an opportunity to be heard
- Contact with Class Teacher
- Phone contact with Parents/Guardians
- Student meeting with an assigned Link Teacher / Assistant Year Head
- Detention
- Temporary removal from a class by Year Head/SMT
- In school suspension
- Meeting with Parents/ Guardians and student with a view to moving forward
- Student placed “On Report” for a period of time
- Positive Support Contract / Behaviour Plan
- Referral to school chaplain / counsellor
- Referral to Student Support Team
- Referral to appropriate support services in and/or out of school

8.2. Procedure for Suspension.

In certain cases of unacceptable behaviour it may be in the best interests of the college community and/or the student involved to remove the student from school or from class for a period of time. The Principal may impose a suspension of up to 3 days (up to 5 days following consultation with the Chairperson of the Board of Management). Alternatively, in cases where the student has seriously and/or persistently misbehaved the Principal may refer the matter to the Board of Management who would meet within a reasonable period of time. In such an event the student, subject to good order and safety, health and welfare concerns, will remain at home until the Board of Management reaches a final decision. The Board of Management’s decision will be communicated to the Parents / Guardians and student by post and Compass email.

The Principal/Deputy Principals/Board of Management exercise this authority in a fair and non-discriminatory manner having regard to their responsibility to the whole school community and to the principles of natural justice. Procedures followed will include two essential parts:

- The right to be heard; and
- The right to impartiality

It is the intention of the school that suspension allows students the time, under the supervision of their Parent/Guardians, to reflect on their unacceptable behaviour, to accept responsibility for their behaviour that led to the suspension and to change their future behaviour to meet the expectations of the school.

In the event that the Principal exercises his/her authority to suspend a student for a fixed duration, the following procedures will be used:

- The student and Parents/ Guardian will be informed of the precise grounds that gave rise to a potential suspension and will be given an opportunity to respond before a suspension decision is formalised.
- In cases where the suspension is to take effect immediately, such as in the interests of safety, health and welfare, Parents/ Guardians will be informed by telephone, with written follow up.
- Students will not be sent home during a school day unless collected by a Parent/Guardian or some other suitable arrangement is made. All suspension decisions include a formal letter of notification that will include:
 - Notice of the suspension
 - Effective date of the suspension
 - Duration of the suspension
 - Procedure on return to school
 - Reasons for the suspension
 - A statement that the student is under the care and responsibility of Parents/ Guardians while suspended
 - Confirmation of the parent's right of appeal against the suspension

Examples of circumstances under which suspension may be imposed, but are not limited to, are:

- Cases where the safety, health and welfare of the student or of others in the school community could be a risk it may be necessary to suspend a student with immediate effect pending an investigation and the following of due procedures.
- Repeated less serious breaches of the Code of Behaviour that have not been rectified by other interventions and disciplinary measures short of suspension.
- The use of inappropriate language, abusive or threatening behaviour or language towards staff, students or other members of the school community.
- Persistent disruption of learning and teaching.
- Repeated refusal to comply with teacher instruction / college procedures.
- Instances of bullying as per school Bí Cineálta Policy.
- Vaping / Smoking on school premises or at school events, tours or school related activities.
- The possession of alcohol or any illegal substance on school premises or at school events, tours or school related activities.
- Any interference with school security or fire alarm systems.
- Being involved in a physical fight on the school premises or anywhere in uniform.
- Failure to attend detention.
- Truancy i.e. unauthorised absence from school or classes.
- Theft or interference with the property of others.
- Damaging school property.
- Inappropriate use of camera/recording facilities on a mobile phone or personal device.
- Spreading of malicious or false rumours / information.

- Posting on social media platforms, which goes against the ethos of the College or may bring the good name of the College into disrepute.
- A threat to the good order and/or safety of others in the conduct of school or state examinations.
- A serious breach of the Code of Behaviour that indicates that the student should be removed from the school.

Appeal

The College will offer the opportunity to appeal the decision to suspend a student. A suspension imposed by the Principal may be appealed to the Board of Management. In this event, the suspension stands until the Board of Management makes a decision to revoke it. Where the total number of days for which the student is suspended reaches twenty days in the current school year, the parents may appeal the suspension under Section 29 of the Education Act 1998 as amended by the Education (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2007. At the time when the parents are being formally notified of such a suspension, they should be told about their right to appeal to the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Science and should be given information about how to appeal. See Circular letter M48/01 Appeal Procedures. Under Section 29 of the Education Act, 1998 at the Department of Education and Science website at www.education.ie for full details.

Any suspension in excess of 6 days (cumulative) will be notified to the Educational Welfare Officer (EWO).

9. Expulsion.

9.1 Rationale.

Expulsion is the ultimate sanction imposed by the College on a student and as such will only be exercised by the Board of Management in cases of extreme indiscipline. Expulsion will be considered in cases where the indiscipline of a student is so pervasive that teaching and learning become extremely difficult and where school authorities have tried a series of other interventions and believe they have exhausted all possibilities of changing the student's behaviour. Such cases include but are not limited to:

- If the behaviour of the student is repeatedly preventing teaching and learning from taking place on an ongoing basis.
- If the student's behaviour, despite supports, is uncontrollable or grossly defiant to school leadership or other staff members is not amenable to any form of school discipline or authority.
- If the behaviour of the student is such that other members of the College community are intimidated or threatened by the student's continued presence in the College.
- If the behaviour of the student poses a threat to the safety, health and welfare of any member of the College community.

- If the behaviour of the student is such that it brings the good name and reputation of the College into disrepute.
- When guarantees of reasonable behaviour following repeated suspensions are not forthcoming or being met, notwithstanding the implementation of supports / interventions.

9.2 Expulsion for First Offence.

There may be exceptional circumstances where the Board of Management forms the opinion that a student should be expelled for a first offence. The kinds of behaviour that will result in a proposal to expel on the basis of a single breach of the Code of Behaviour include but are not limited to:

- A serious threat of violence against a member of the school community.
- A serious act of violence, serious physical assault or sexual assault.
- A student who is involved in the taking of drugs or other illegal substances on the way to and from the college, on college premises, while representing the college, on college related events or in college uniform.
- A student who is involved in the possession, supplying or procuring of drugs or drug paraphernalia in or out of school.
- The unauthorised and/or inappropriate photographing, videoing, recording, sharing of self, a staff member or other members of the college community, inside or outside of school, and/or uploading the material to the internet.
- The creating of offensive, abusive or malicious material or the sharing of such material with others or posting on social media / other ICT platforms.
- Spreading of malicious or unsubstantiated rumours or allegations, which are of an egregious nature and intended to denigrate the good character of another.
- Identity theft / “Deep Fakes” or pretending to be another member of the College community.
- Sexual harassment.
- Significant theft or damage to college property or the property of members of the college community.
- Any unauthorised access to the school’s network, which compromises school systems, data or personal information.
- A serious one-off offence, which brings the good name and reputation of the college into disrepute.

9.2 Expulsion Procedures.

When an expulsion is being considered:

- A detailed investigation, in line with fair procedures, will be carried out under the direction of the Principal. Student and Parents/ Guardians will be informed of the alleged misbehaviour and given every opportunity to respond to the complaint before a decision is made and before a sanction is imposed. Parents/ Guardians

will be informed that the Principal will refer the matter to the Board of Management who will consider sanctions up to and including expulsion.

- Parents / Guardians will be notified by letter, Compass email and / or by registered post that the matter has been referred to the Board and of the sanctions the Board will consider, up to and including expulsion.
- Parents / Guardians will be invited to attend the Board meeting. The student may also attend. It is up to the Principal to arrange the time of the meeting.
- If Parents / Guardians decline to attend the meeting they will be invited to make a written submission.
- Principal will meet with Parents / Guardians prior to the Board meeting and explain procedure.
- Principal will inform Parents / Guardians of his / her intended statement.
- Written version of Principal's statement will be made available to Parents/Guardians and board members prior to Board of Management meeting.
- During the hearing, the Principal and the Parents/Guardians (or the student if over 18) will put their case to the Board in each other's presence. Each party will be allowed to question the evidence of the other party directly. After both sides have been heard, the Board will ensure that the Principal, Parents/Guardians and student are not present for the Board's deliberations.
- Where the Board of Management, having considered all the facts of the case, is of the opinion that the student should be expelled, the Board will notify the Educational Welfare Officer in writing of its opinion, and the reasons for its decision. The Board will inform the Parent/Guardians in writing about its conclusions, the next steps in the process, and that the Education Welfare Officer has been informed. The student will remain suspended during this time if the Board forms the opinion that the student's presence in the College will seriously disrupt good order, the learning of others, or represent a threat to the safety of other students or staff.
- The Principal will make all reasonable efforts to take part in the consultation meeting arranged by the Educational Welfare Officer within the 20 days after the notification of the intention to expel. The Principal may assist, with the agreement of the parent/guardian and without prejudice to the case, in sourcing another school for the student.
- Where the 20 day period following notification to the Education Welfare Officer has elapsed, and where the Board of Management remains of the opinion that the student should be expelled, the Board of Management will formally confirm the decision to expel. Parents/guardians will be notified immediately that the expulsion will now proceed.
- Parents / Guardians will be informed of their right to appeal to the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Skills under Section 29 of the Education Act 1998. Permanent exclusion may be appealed by a parent /

guardian. Any such appeal must be lodged within 42 calendar days of the decision of the Board of Management.

- The National Educational Welfare Board will be notified of the Board of Management's decision to expel.

The College reserves the right to review and amend this policy from time to time entirely at its discretion.

Signed: Morcella Ó Con hain

Chairperson, Board of Management, St. Mary's College.

Date: 22nd June 2026

Draft Parents / Guardians / Student Agreement



(Please sign and return to the College)

We / I have read the Code of Behaviour of the College and undertake to support it to the best of our / my ability.

We / I have read and agree to other school policies, in particular the Acceptable Use, Substance Use and Bí Cineálta Policies (available on the College's website).

We / I also understand that from time to time the College will need to update this Code of Behaviour and other policies. We / I accept that it is our / my responsibility to remain informed of these changes communicated by the College.

Signed:

Parent / Guardian: _____

Parent / Guardian: _____

Student: _____ **Class:** _____

Date: _____

A student may not attend the College if the Code of Behaviour is not signed.

College Contacts

Principal:	Mr. Alan Craven
Deputy Principals:	Ms. Pippa Brady Mr. Donal Hegarty Ms. Anita White
Guidance Counsellors:	Ms. Lynn McArdle Ms. Anita Morgan Ms. Anne Mulligan Mr. Stephen Martin Mr Shane McDonnell
Programme Coordinator:	Mr. Daniel Murphy
College Chaplains:	Fr. Paddy Muckian SM Ms. Briege Kelly
College Secretary:	Ms. Patricia Begley
College Phone number:	042 9339977
College email address:	_____office@maristdundalk.ie
College Web address:	_____www.maristdundalk.ie