

# St. Columba's College Stranorlar



## Code of Behaviour

September 2020

## **This Code of Behaviour Policy should be read in conjunction with the Acceptable Use, Substance Abuse and the Anti-Bullying Policies.**

### **St. Columba's College Mission Statement**

St. Columba's College is a Mercy Catholic Voluntary Secondary School within the Ceist Trust and is committed to 'The pursuit of excellence in a caring environment'.

### **A POSITIVE FOCUS**

Students' achievements, academic or otherwise, are recognised. Rewards will be accessible to all students. Assemblies are used as an opportunity to acknowledge achievements and to foster a sense of community. Examples of students' work and contributions are displayed in the classrooms and around the school. Students are given the opportunity to participate in a wide range of extra-curricular activities, sporting, cultural and other. Good behaviour is rewarded and reinforced in St. Columba's College.

### **CARE OF THE SCHOOL PREMISES**

1. Everyone in the school is responsible for the care of the school premises.
2. The building will be kept clean and tidy.
3. Damage to property must be made good by the student responsible.
4. Graffiti on school property will not be tolerated.
5. **Deliberate misuse of the fire alarm system will not be tolerated.**

### **ACCEPTABLE BEHAVIOUR/SANCTIONS**

#### **General conduct**

Students are expected to show respect for staff and fellow students at all times – both in manners and in language. Each student is entitled to benefit from his/her education in an atmosphere conducive to learning and must not be inhibited by the disruptive behaviour of fellow students. In order to create the best possible teaching and learning environment and to maintain the safety and well-being of all, each student is required to uphold the spirit and the letter of the school's Code of Behaviour, which is underpinned by the full support of every parent/guardian. The School upholds the Equal Status Act promoting equality of opportunity for all and prohibiting discrimination.

For serious misconduct or disrespect, suspension will be considered/imposed. Any behaviour outside school that damages the image of the school, interferes with its workings, is detrimental to other students or undermines school discipline and good order is subject to the school's sanction.

### **BULLYING**

St Columba's is a place where everyone should feel safe. Bullying of any form will not be tolerated. Any student who feels that he/she or any other student is being bullied in any way should speak to their class teacher or any member of staff.

A student who bullies another student will be subject to sanction/suspension.

**Bullying is not acceptable.**

**We don't tolerate it.**

**You shouldn't endure it.**

**Report it!**

**Please refer to the Anti-Bullying Policy.**

### **LEARNING, HOMEWORK AND STUDY**

Learning is the core activity of the school and students are expected to behave positively so as to maximise their learning opportunities. Regular homework is an essential part of the learning process. Students are supported in developing good study habits (Please refer to the St Columba's College homework policy 2018 for more detailed guidelines).

Teaching and learning can best take place effectively in an environment where:

- ◆ Students are attentive and focus on their work throughout the whole of the class
- ◆ There is an atmosphere of co-operation and courtesy
- ◆ Neither teaching nor learning is disrupted by the misbehaviour of any student
- ◆ Students have all the required textbooks, copies, materials and equipment with them in class
- ◆ Students take notes or mark relevant sections of text as instructed by the teacher
- ◆ Students are expected to complete all homework (written, aural, oral, or practical) on time and to the best of their ability
- ◆ If a student cannot meet homework deadlines due to exceptional circumstances, then a note from home should be brought in to the subject teacher.
- ◆ Students absent from class due to extra-curricular activities or an appointment must find out what homework was given in his/her absence and complete this work.
- ◆ Students should not eat or drink during class or supervised study.

### **USE OF STUDENT JOURNAL**

**At the beginning of the school year each student is required to purchase a school journal, which is an important aid to his/her learning and study. The journal also facilitates day-to-day communication between the school and the home. It is an essential and important part of the implementation of our Code of Behaviour.**

- ◆ The journal must be brought to each class each day and have it out on their desk.
- ◆ A student must be able to produce his/her journal when a teacher asks for it.

- ◆ The journal will be used for the recording of:
  - Their class timetable and subject teachers.
  - Any homework given - written, aural, oral or practical.
  - When the homework is due.
  - Any noteworthy school events.
  - Permissions to go to the toilet or to attend the infirmary.

Parents should use the relevant pages of the journal to notify the school about unavoidable appointments, to explain absences or lateness. Parents may also use the parent-teacher communication pages to send a brief message to a teacher.

Teachers may use the journal to send a brief message to a parent/guardian, or to record a positive comment. Teachers may also put a note to parents in the journal as a form of sanction when an infringement of the Code of Behaviour occurs.

Parents/guardians should check the journal on a daily basis and sign any notes from teachers to confirm that they have seen them.

- ◆ Students are expected to keep their journal in a respectable condition at all times, use it to record school related business only and may not use it to record personal comments or messages.
- ◆ Notes and comments by parents or teachers in the journal must not be interfered with or altered in any way by a student.
- ◆ Lost journals or those containing non-school-related/personal messages must be replaced by the student.
- ◆ The class teacher and/or Principal or Deputy Principal may examine the journal from time to time to ensure that it is being used correctly and effectively.

## **ATTENDANCE, PUNCTUALITY and ABSENCES**

Regular attendance and punctuality are vital to maximize learning. Absence from school should be **for genuine reasons only**. Parents are strongly urged, insofar as possible, to make routine medical and dental appointments for their son/daughter outside school hours.

Each new student is issued with a swipe card. There is a cost of €10 per new card per student. Current students should use their existing cards. **New students will be advised in September re. the payment for and issue of the cards.** Parents and students are reminded that the record of attendance is generated from the swipe card system. Students are required to swipe in to help ensure that their attendance record is accurate.

- ◆ The school is obliged to record a reason for every absence. Section 18 of the Education Welfare Act 2000, states: -
  - “where a child is absent from the school.....during part of a school day, or for a school day or more than a school day, **the parent** of such child, **shall** in accordance with procedures specified in the Code of Behaviour....**notify the Principal** of the school of **the reasons for the child's absence.**”*

The following procedures will operate in St. Columba's College.

**A NOTE** from parents to the Deputy Principal is required:

- (i) **In advance** for permission to leave school to attend the doctor, dentist, or for other appointments. The student will be expected to return to school as soon as possible after an appointment. Notes received **after** a student has left school without permission **will not be accepted**. Students leaving school without advance permission **will be deemed to be mitching** and will be subject to sanction.

**Please note** if you wish your son/daughter to leave school early for an appointment etc. they must present a note in the morning to the Deputy Principal. In the event of a note **NOT** being presented, parents must collect the student **in person and sign a release form**. **This procedure will be implemented very strictly in the interests of health & safety**. It is not possible to release students at short notice as student's names cannot be called out over the intercom during class time.

- (ii) To explain absenteeism for a day or days, a written explanation should be given to Year Head giving the reason for the student's absence on return to school.

**These notes must have the name of the student, the class, date and telephone number and the signature of the parent or guardian.**

- ◆ In relation to absences in the afternoon, **parents should inform the Deputy Principal in advance in writing**. In the event of a student becoming ill at lunchtime, and not returning to school, once again, parents should contact the Deputy-Principal as soon as possible.
- ◆ **If a student becomes ill during the school day he/she should inform the Principal or Deputy Principal who will make contact with the parent/guardian to make any necessary arrangements.**

*Part-time work, study for tests, term-time holidays, attendance at concerts/ graduation dances, etc. are not acceptable reasons for absence*

The Education (Welfare) Act 2000 stipulates that the name of a student, who is absent in aggregate for 20 days or more during the school year or whose pattern of attendance is irregular, should be sent to the local Educational Welfare Officer. It is the responsibility of parents to ensure that their son/daughter attends school regularly

- ◆ The names of students who are late for class in the morning or afternoon or at any time during the day will be recorded. After four late comings parents will be informed. Two further late comings will result in a Saturday morning detention. Each subsequent two late-comings will result in further Saturday detention. Persistent offenders will be subject to further sanction at the discretion of the Principal/Deputy Principal.
- ◆ **Students should go to lockers/toilets before 9.05a.m., at break time, at lunchtime and at 4.05 only.**

- ◆ A student may not absent himself/herself from class without the consent of the teacher of that class. The student should request this permission in person. **Any student leaving class for any reason must have their journal signed by the teacher and countersigned by the Deputy Principal / Principal.**
- ◆ To enable the school to exercise its duty of care to our students, students are required to arrive punctually for Morning Assembly at 9.00 a.m. and thereafter for each class during the day.
- ◆ Any student arriving after 9.05 a.m. must report to the Deputy Principal's office before going to class.
- ◆ **Parents will be contacted by the school if there are any concerns about attendance or punctuality.**

## **UNIFORM and GENERAL APPEARANCE**

**At all times St. Columba's College's students are expected to wear their uniform with pride.**

- ◆ All students are expected to wear the full school uniform as detailed in the school prospectus and on the school website. Uniform must be worn for all school activities including after school study and when representing the school unless otherwise directed by the Principal/Deputy.
- ◆ Students should see to it each night that their uniform is in a fit condition to be worn to school the next day. **PE gear is not an acceptable alternative.**
- ◆ In exceptional circumstances, parents should contact the Deputy Principal in person, or by telephone, **in advance of the school day.** Names of students who are not in full uniform will be noted and they will be advised to comply with the school rules relating to uniform.
- ◆ Students who subsequently fail to comply with these rules will be asked to stay at home until such time as they do comply.

**In the interests of health and safety runners or fabric shoes may not be worn. Students may be refused entry to class if they do not comply with uniform regulation.**

- ◆ For health and safety reasons shoes must be plain black and low-heeled. Students are not permitted to wear clogs, platforms, sling backs, sandals, canvas shoes, runners or boots of any kind.
- ◆ If for medical reasons alternative footwear needs to be worn, a note from parents/guardian to that effect must be brought and countersigned by the Principal/Deputy Principal. **When a student is allowed to wear runners for medical reasons he/she must wear skirt/trousers as usual, not tracksuit bottoms.**
- ◆ Students may wear one pair of small earrings and one small ring. No other jewelry or badges may be worn.  
Students may not wear facial studs or other piercings for Health and Safety reasons. Discretion maybe used in certain circumstances by the Principal/Deputy Principal.

**Students should mark their name clearly on all uniform items.**

## MOBILE PHONES, DIGITAL MEDIA PLAYERS, CAMERAS AND OTHER ELECTRONIC DEVICES

The use of Mobile phones is banned from the school buildings/grounds at all times during the school day (including break times, and lunchtime) and all school activities and school events. **Any student wishing to contact home may do so through the Principal or Deputy Principal.** A breach of this regulation will warrant confiscation, and retention of the phone by the Principal or Deputy Principal until written communication is received from the parent/guardian of the student to the Principal or Deputy-Principal requesting the return of the phone and giving an undertaking that the student will adhere to the school rules regarding mobile phones. A repeated breach of this rule may lead to suspension. Regrettably mobile phones can become a medium for bullying. This is a serious offence and is in breach of the College Code of Behaviour.

The school's policy regarding online teaching & learning and the appropriate behavior that students must adopt can be found in the St. Columba's Remote Learning Policy

In certain classroom situations, and for the purpose of an approved educational activity, a teacher may allow students to use their mobile devices for a portion of the class period. Phones must be switched off again at the end of the activity.

The use of media players and the wearing of head-phones within the school are not permitted. Such equipment will be confiscated and the same procedures as in the case of mobile phones will apply to the return of this equipment to students. (Earphones may be permitted in computer rooms where the subject material e.g. Music requires their use)

The taking of photographs without the express permission of the subject and the inappropriate distribution, broadcasting and publishing of photographs will be subject to sanction at the discretion of the Principal/Deputy Principal.

**Please refer to the Anti-Bullying Policy, Data Protection Policy and The Acceptable Use Policy.**

### PHONECALLS

1. As stated above the use of mobile phones on the school premises is not permitted. Any student in breach of this rule will have his/her mobile phone temporarily confiscated.
2. Parents/guardians should not ring or text their son/daughter when an urgent message needs to be conveyed to him/her as this will result in a sanction being imposed on the student. Likewise, students may not use their mobile phone to contact a parent **for any purpose** during school hours. In exceptional circumstances for the convenience of parents and students any urgent message will always be conveyed through the school office.
3. In exceptional circumstances students may contact parents/guardians through the Principal/Deputy Principal's Office.

### THE ENVIRONMENT

Students must at all times show respect for school buildings, furniture, fittings and equipment as well as for the property of other individuals. The following must be observed:

- ◆ No hot take-away food or "to-go" drinks are allowed in school.
- ◆ Students must eat their lunches in the school canteen.

- ◆ **No eating or drinking is permitted in the hallways, corridors, toilets, stairs or any specialist area such as labs, practical rooms, computer suites etc.**
- ◆ Students may not have food or drinks on their desks during class.
- ◆ School books and equipment, when not in use, must be kept in school bags or in the student's locker and not piled on/under desks or on top of lockers.
- ◆ Chewing-gum, which has the potential to cause considerable damage to clothing, furniture and floor surfaces, is not allowed in school.

## SAFETY

**The health, safety and well-being of every member of the school community are of paramount importance at all times.**

- ◆ Parents should not bring cars into the school grounds in the morning, at lunchtime or at 4.05p.m. as this adds to traffic congestion and increases the risk of an accident occurring.
- ◆ We further recommend that, for Health and Safety reasons, **students are not be allowed to bring cars, motorbikes or scooters to school for Health and Safety reasons.**
- ◆ Students who absent themselves without permission from school for a day, part of a day or even for one class, are deemed to be **mitching** and will be subject to the sanctions of the school.
- ◆ Students involved in horseplay, boisterous behaviour and activities likely to cause injuries or accidents will be subject to sanction.
- ◆ **Fighting is strictly prohibited at any time during the school day or on the journey to or from school. It places the safety of students at risk. Fighting will result in a minimum of 3 days suspension.**
- ◆ Students must not run on the stairs or corridors.
- ◆ Students must comply fully with safety procedures and instructions in subjects, which have specific safety requirements.
- ◆ No items should be placed on, under, behind or near a radiator.
- ◆ No items should be placed on top of the locker units as this is a safety hazard.
- ◆ Doorways and passageways must be kept clear of all obstacles.
- ◆ **Students must never interfere with the fire-alarm system, with fire extinguishers or any other safety or security equipment. Students interfering with such will be suspended.**
- ◆ Strict compliance with the following emergency procedures is required.
  - (a) When the fire alarm sounds students must leave their classroom immediately through the designated exit and walk briskly and directly to their assembly point on the school grounds.
  - (b) They must proceed in an orderly fashion and bring no possessions with them.
  - (c) A strict silence must be observed from the moment they leave the classroom until they return to their classroom.
  - (d) They must listen attentively for all instructions and comply with them immediately.
  - (e) Students must remain with their subject teacher(s) at their designated assembly point.
- ◆ Students may not remain in classrooms once school ends **unless under the direct supervision of a teacher.** If they need to wait in school, they must go immediately and report to the office.
- ◆ Students must comply fully with the school internet/computer use policy.



## **BANNED SUBSTANCES AND OTHER ITEMS**

**Please refer to the St Columba's College Substance Abuse Policy.**

- ◆ Smoking or the possession of cigarettes, including E Tobacco products, is strictly forbidden in school, in school uniform or during any school-related activity.
- ◆ The possession and/or use of alcohol, drugs or any illegal/potentially dangerous substance are strictly forbidden in school, in school uniform or on any school-related activity.
- ◆ In the interests of students' safety and wellbeing, the college reserves the right to investigate thoroughly suspicions of possession of, and/or use of substances (including alcohol and/or other drugs), in school or at school events/outings. A student found to be in possession of, and/or under the influence of any such substances will be subject to immediate suspension.
- ◆ No student may give any form of medication to another student. (A student who needs to take any form of medication in school or while on any school-related activity or who develops an allergy to any substance must inform the school authorities of this.)
- ◆ No spray-on deodorants or aerosols may be brought into school or used by students in school or on any school activity.
- ◆ Students may not bring into school any item which may cause injury or damage.

## **PERSONAL PROPERTY**

**Students must take proper care of their own property. The School authorities are not responsible for any items, which are lost, mislaid or stolen.**

- ◆ Students must have their name clearly written/marked on all possessions including all uniform items, text books, copybooks, folders, gear bags and school bags.
- ◆ Small sums of money should be kept in the student's possession at all times and never be left unattended e.g. in jackets, sacks or gear bags.
- ◆ A locker is available for rent to each student and each student should ensure that it is securely locked at all times.
- ◆ Large sums of money or valuable items should not be brought to school but if on occasion this is necessary then they should be handed in at the school office for safekeeping and be collected by the student before leaving school.
- ◆ No items should be placed on top of the locker units as this is a safety hazard.
- ◆ Any materials left on top of lockers for more than 5 days may be removed and placed in containers beside the locker areas.

## **RESPONDING TO UNACCEPTABLE BEHAVIOUR**

The school uses a number of strategies to respond to unacceptable behaviour.

- a) Reasoning with the pupil;
- b) Reprimand (including advice on how to improve);
- c) Loss of privileges;
- d) Detention during a break or after school hours and on Saturdays;
- e) Prescribing additional work;
- f) Referral to Class Teacher/Year Head/Guidance Counsellors/Home-School Links Teacher/Deputy Principals/Principal through the College Referral System;
- g) Communication with parents;

- h) Suspension (Temporary).
- i) Expulsion.

See **Appendix 1** for copy of the discipline slip.

See **Appendix 2** for the Referral Procedures.

## **SUSPENSIONS**

### **Essential elements in the procedure for Suspension**

1. The Principal makes the decision (or in the principal's absence, the Deputy Principal) on the basis of the reasons set out in the Code of Behaviour.
2. The Student is informed of the decision – the student is informed of the precise grounds for the suspension, and is given an opportunity to respond, before the suspension is formalised.
3. The Parents/Guardians are invited to come to the school for a meeting or if suspension is to be immediate Parents/Guardians may be informed by phone, with written follow-up.
4. A Student will never be sent home during the school day, unless collected by parent/legal guardian.
5. A formal letter of notification will be issued to parents.
6. Parents have the right to appeal the basis of a suspension to the Board of Management of the College.
7. Cumulative suspension of 20 days or more in one school year may be appealed to the Trustees and to Department of Education and Science.

### **Grounds for Removing a Suspension**

A suspension may be removed in the event of:

- New circumstances coming to light.
- A successful appeal to the Board of Management.
- A successful appeal to the Trustees/Department of Education & Science.

### **Essential elements in the Procedure for Expulsion**

The Board of Management invites the parents and student to a meeting of the Board of Management indicating clearly in advance that all options including exclusion/expulsion will be considered.

### **Board's Responsibilities**

- To hear the case against the student
- To hear the Parents response
- To examine all the documentation
- To consider the student's record in the school
- To discuss the case in detail
- To make a final decision to expel
- To communicate the decision to the parents formally through the Secretary to the Board
- To inform the Education Welfare officer under Section 24(1) of the Education Welfare Act 2000.

Parents have the right following the conclusion of any appeals procedures provided by the school, or the Trustees, to appeal a decision of the Board of Management, where a Board permanently excludes a student from the school, to the Department of Education and Science.

## **PARENTS**

**Parents have a vital role in promoting good behaviour in school and so effective home/school liaison is very important. The school has a right to expect that parents will give their full support in dealing with their child's behaviour.**

We expect parents:

- ◆ to keep us informed of behavioural difficulties they may be experiencing at home;
- ◆ inform us of any trauma which may affect their child's performance or behaviour at school;
- ◆ inform us about their child's ill health and any absences connected with it.

The school will endeavour to achieve good home/school liaison by:

- ◆ promoting a welcoming environment within the school;
- ◆ encouraging parents to come into school on occasions other than parents' evenings;
- ◆ keeping parent informed of school activities by letter, newsletter etc;
- ◆ involving parents at an early stage in any disciplinary problems.

The College Pastoral Care and Wellbeing policy also provides additional support structures for pupils through the College Guidance Counsellors, Home School Liaison Teacher and Principal/Deputy Principal, and is an integral component of the College Code of Behaviour, along with the wider Pastoral Structure which includes Class Teachers and Year Head Teachers.

## **OTHER AGENCIES**

The College will liaise with and utilise such agencies as the Educational Welfare Officers, Social Services, Health Services and Educational Psychological Services, where appropriate.

## **LINKS TO OTHER POLICIES**

Parents and students are advised that all other school policies are an integral part of the Code of Behaviour.

By enrolling their child at this school, parents are acknowledging acceptance of the Code of Behaviour.

## **REVIEW**

This Code of Behaviour was approved by the Board of Management of St Columba's College on 21<sup>st</sup> August 2020.

The policy will be reviewed in September 2021.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ (Principal)

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ (Chairperson of Board of Management)

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix 1: Discipline Slip for recording of behavioural issues.

### Discipline Slip



Student Name	
Class	
Date of incident	
Describe how the student's behaviour has breached the Code of Behaviour	
What action have you taken?	
Is there anything you wish to add?	
Signed:	
Date:	

To be given to Class Teacher/Year Head when completed

Class Teacher/Year Head to record action taken (PTO →)

Date received:	
Action taken:	
Follow up to initial action:	
Signed:	(Class teacher)
Date:	
Signed:	(Year Head)
Date:	

## Appendix 2: Referral System (Revised Sept 2018)

# Referral System



1. Teacher addresses issues in the classroom
2. **Problem issues**
  - Discipline Slip issued – student informed
  - Discipline Slip given to Class Teacher/Year Head
3. **Class Teacher/Year Head interviews with the student**
4. **Class Teacher passes discipline slips to the Year Head**
5. **Year Head**
  - Interviews the student
  - Detention (may impose sanction as appropriate)
  - May refer to Guidance Teacher
  - Home School Links Teacher may be informed
  - Parents may be informed at the discretion of the Year Head
6. **3 further slips on same student**
  - Refer to Year Head
7. **Year Head**
  - Interviews the student
  - Detention (at the discretion of the Year Head)
  - Letter to parents
  - Deputy Principal informed
  - Deputy Principal meets parents
8. **3 further slips on the same students**
  - Refer to Year Head
9. **Year Head**
  - Interviews the student
  - Sends file to Deputy Principal with recommendation for suspension
10. **Deputy Principal**
  - Deputy Principal informs Principal
  - Suspends student
  - Meets student with parent before or on return from suspension
11. **3 further slips**
  - Refer to Year Head
  - Refer to Principal



**St. Columba's College  
Stranorlar,  
Co. Donegal.**

**Phone (074) 9131246 Fax (074) 9132528**

**(Please detach this page and return to the Class Teacher/Year Head)**

In order to create the best possible teaching and learning environment and to maintain the safety and well-being of all, each student is required to uphold the spirit and the letter of the school's Code of Behaviour, which is underpinned by the full support of every parent/guardian

I agree to abide by the Code of Behaviour of the School, summarized below, and therefore I undertake

- ◆ To treat each person in school with respect
- ◆ To co-operate with my teachers and classmates
- ◆ To complete all homework- written/aural/oral/practical on time
- ◆ To have all my books and equipment for all classes
- ◆ To keep my school journal neat and tidy and use it only for school business
- ◆ To comply fully with the school's code on the wearing of uniform
- ◆ To attend school punctually on each school day
- ◆ To go directly and punctually from class to class during the school day
- ◆ To comply with all appropriate instructions issued by staff members
- ◆ To follow the school regulations on safety and health matters
- ◆ To take care of my own property and respect that of others
- ◆ To refrain from littering
- ◆ To respect the school environment
- ◆ Not to engage in boisterous behaviour
- ◆ Not to interfere with fire or safety equipment
- ◆ Not to smoke, use alcohol or any banned or illegal substances in school
- ◆ Not to engage in unseemly behaviour which would bring my family or my the school into disrepute or undermine school discipline

**I have read the Code of Behaviour and agree to abide by it.**

**Student's Signature** \_\_\_\_\_

**Class/Year** \_\_\_\_\_

**I/We have read the Code of Behaviour of the School and we agree to accept and support it.**

**Parent's / Guardian's Signature** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date** \_\_\_\_\_