

STATEMENT OF SCHOOL DISCIPLINE POLICY AND PROCEDURES

(including statement of disciplinary measures)

AIMS

- To encourage above all an awareness of the importance of self-discipline and a sense of responsibility.
- To accustom pupils to sound habits of good behaviour.
- To enhance pupils' self-esteem and foster a spirit of openness and co-operation, by placing greater emphasis on praise and reward than on punishment and critical control.
- To ensure an appropriate standard of manners and common courtesy within the school as a whole which is set, primarily, by the Headmaster and Staff.
- To establish a calm, purposeful and happy atmosphere within the school where boundaries of acceptable behaviour are clearly understood.

RATIONALE

The Code of Conduct outlines the rights and responsibilities of the pupils in the school. Essential guidelines for the administration of discipline throughout the school are provided by the School Rules, Anti-bullying, Child Protection, Complaints, Drugs Education, Pastoral Care and Educational Visits policies, should be read in association with this policy and are deemed to be part of it.

The Code of Conduct, Expected Behaviour document and the School Rules form part of the school's Discipline Policy and shall have effect as if set out in full in the body of this Policy. Copies of the Code of Conduct, Expected Behaviour document and the School Rules are provided for each pupil and member of staff. It is expected that all boys and their parents will make themselves familiar with their contents.

RESPONSIBILITY FOR DISCIPLINE

- The responsibility for the supervision and control of school discipline is delegated by the Board of Governors to the Headmaster who entrusts the maintenance of good discipline to his staff and Prefects.
- All members of the school community are expected to exercise self-discipline and take responsibility for the consequences of their actions.
- The Personal and Social Education classes contribute to building an awareness of the importance of self-discipline.
- Appropriate sanctions will be imposed where behaviour does not reach the required standard.
- Underlying the application of discipline is a care and concern for the good of every individual and also the greater good of all those who make up the school community.
- The school may act when it is established that a pupil has been involved in criminal or other activity outside school which involves members of the school community, and/or which in the view of the school brings the name of the school into disrepute. This also includes behaviour whilst a pupil is in school uniform or whilst on school activities or trips. The offence committed will be regarded as a legitimate school concern and those involved will be subject to internal school disciplinary measures.

RECOGNISING ACHIEVEMENT

The school values the positive contribution that its pupils make, both in terms of individual achievement and in ways which enhance the life of the school community as a whole. These contributions are recognised in a number of ways:

- academic commendation both termly and annually;
- end of year certificates and school reports;
- award of prizes at Speech Day;
- the school awards scheme for senior activities;
- the Gryphon Badge scheme for activities below senior level;
- displays of work;
- the annual school magazine;
- public commendation at assemblies;
- publication of achievement in the local press.

DISCIPLINE PROCEDURES

The Hierarchy of Discipline and Disciplinary Measures

PREFECTS

- Prefects may give a verbal warning or a limited written task to any pupil whose behaviour is unacceptable. More serious offences shall be referred to the Senior Teacher in charge of Prefects, or if he/she is unavailable, to any other senior member of staff.
- A written record must be kept of any sanction given by a prefect and the file of records must be inspected by the Senior Teacher on a regular basis.

STAFF

- For minor offences, staff may reprimand the pupil verbally or impose appropriate extra written work or community service tasks during breaks.
- Where an offence is repeated or sustained over a period of time, the pupil will be referred to the Head of Department or, if appropriate, directly to the Head of Year.
- For a serious offence or for persistent disruptive behaviour, which affects the learning of other pupils in the class, it may be appropriate to remove the pupil from the classroom, to be, in so far as practicable, supervised by another member of staff. This will be followed by a consultation with the Head of Department.

HEADS OF DEPARTMENT

- For persistent or serious offences within the classroom, including those necessitating a pupil's removal from the classroom, the pupil will be referred to the Head of Department.
- The Head of Department, after discussion with the class teacher, will decide on the next course of action. This may include interviewing the pupil, setting him targets or setting work to be completed during the day.

- When appropriate, the Head of Department will refer the pupil to his Head of Year or to the Academic Vice Principal for further action. The Head of Year will be informed of all direct referrals to the Academic Vice Principal.

HEADS OF YEAR

- Following a referral from the Head of Department, for serious offences inside the classroom, the Head of Year can employ a range of strategies such as speaking to the parents, using a Discipline Card or Academic Monitoring Card or placing the pupil in an academic detention or other such sanction as may be appropriate.
- For serious offences outside the classroom, a member of staff may refer the pupil to his Head of Year who, depending on the situation, may impose a Discipline Card, an Academic Monitoring Card, a written sanction (as defined in the Discipline Guidelines for Staff) or a Friday detention or such other sanction as may be appropriate.
- Heads of Year may also report persistent offenders or those who commit, in the view of the Head of Year, sufficiently serious offences, to the Senior Teacher overseeing the year group, the Senior Vice Principal or Headmaster.
- Following a pupil's second Friday detention in one year, the Head of Year will refer the matter to the Senior Vice Principal.

SENIOR TEACHERS

- For offences, within or outside the classroom which are, in the view of the Head of Year, sufficiently serious and/or persistent, the Head of Year may refer the pupil to the Senior Teacher in charge of the Junior, Middle or Senior School as appropriate.
- Senior Teachers may impose any sanctions up to and including Friday detention and may recommend to the Vice Principals and Headmaster the use of Saturday morning detention or suspension.

HEADMASTER AND VICE PRINCIPALS

- For a serious or persistent offence of any nature, the Headmaster or Vice Principals may impose a Saturday morning detention.
- Prior to his first Saturday detention in any one year, the pupil will be interviewed by a Vice Principal and/or the Headmaster.
- Prior to a second Saturday detention, the pupil will be interviewed by the Headmaster.
- If further Saturday detentions are imposed on a pupil, he will, along with his parents, be interviewed by the Headmaster who may be accompanied by a Vice Principal or Senior Teacher. On the judgement of the Headmaster, these further detentions may be replaced by a suspension.

NOTIFICATION

- It is the responsibility of the Senior Vice Principal to ensure that parents are informed in writing when an Academic Report Card or a Discipline Card is issued.
- It is the responsibility of the designated senior teacher to inform parents in writing when Friday or Saturday detention is imposed.

- It is the responsibility of the appropriate Head of Year to inform parents in writing when an academic detention is imposed.

SUSPENSION AND EXPULSION

Suspension

- A decision to suspend a pupil will, save in exceptional circumstances, only be taken if any of the following circumstances apply:
 - in response to a serious breach or serious or persistent breaches of the school's Discipline Policy and all other policies referred to in the Rationale section of this policy;
 - when to allow the pupil to remain at school would pose a serious threat the health and safety of the pupil, other pupils or staff in the school;
 - where alternative strategies to modify a pupil's behaviour and encourage more positive attitudes have been tried and have failed;
 - on a precautionary basis in the case of suspected serious breach or breaches of the school's Discipline Policy where the school needs time to carry out a full investigation or where necessary to protect the integrity of such an investigation and where expulsion is a potential disciplinary outcome.
 - A decision to impose suspension shall be taken by the Headmaster and shall be for a defined period not, initially, exceeding five days.
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- Wherever reasonably practicable and unless a serious threat to the health and safety of pupils or staff is judged to exist or precautionary suspension is required, suspension shall not be imposed until:
 - after the relevant facts and evidence to support the allegations have been examined;
 - the pupil concerned had an opportunity to put his side of the case and others involved have had an opportunity to give their version of events to the Headmaster;
 - where reasonably practicable the situation has been discussed with the pupil's parents.
 - In cases of incidents involving a number of pupils any suspensions imposed on such pupils shall reflect, so far as is reasonably practicable, their individual responsibilities or participation in the events giving rise to the consideration of a decision to suspend.
 - In the case of suspension the Headmaster will:
 - inform the pupil's parents verbally of the suspension and the reasons for it as soon as possible;
 - afford the pupil's parents the opportunity to come to discuss the matter with himself;
 - confirm the suspension and the reasons for it to the pupil's parents in writing;
 - inform the Chairman of the Board of Governors (or in his absence a Vice Chairman or other senior member of the Board) first verbally and then in writing;
 - inform the Education Welfare Office of the South Eastern Education and Library Board in writing.
 - The length of the period of suspension may be extended beyond five working days by the Headmaster only if he obtains permission to do so from the Chairman of

the Board, or in his absence a Vice Chairman or other senior member of the Board, and up to a limit of forty five working days in any one school year and in every case written notice of the reasons for and the duration of the extension shall be given to the pupil's parents and the Education and Welfare Office of the South Eastern Education & Library Board.

- Following any further serious offence, the Headmaster may recommend consideration of the step of expulsion to the Board of Governors.
- In cases of unacceptable behaviour or conduct suspension will normally serve as a final warning about a pupil's behaviour.
- Precautionary suspension shall not be viewed as a penalty or as a disciplinary outcome.

Expulsion

- Following a pattern of persistent serious misbehaviour or where occasioned by a grave offence, the Headmaster may decide that he must recommend to the Board of Governors consideration of the step of expulsion of the pupil from the school.
- In such a case a pupil will always have served a period of suspension before expulsion is implemented.
- The procedure for expulsion is as follows:
 - the Headmaster will suspend the pupil using the procedures set out above;
 - the Headmaster will recommend consideration of the step of expulsion to the Board of Governors at a meeting of the Board;
 - the Board will at such meeting either reject the Headmaster's recommendation, in which case the matter will proceed no further, or agree that expulsion should be considered in which case the matter shall proceed to the next step.
 - the pupil's parents will be informed that the Board is considering expulsion and will be invited to a consultation meeting with the Chairman of the Board (or his nominee), the Headmaster and a senior officer of the South Eastern Education and Library Board. At this meeting the parents will have the opportunity to put their case for consideration. Consultation will include discussion about the future provision of suitable education for the pupil concerned. If the parents fail to attend this consultation meeting either through neglect or refusal this shall not prevent a pupil from being expelled;
 - the Chairman (or his nominee) and the Headmaster will report to the Board of Governors which will make its final decision at a Board meeting. The Headmaster shall outline the facts of the investigation to the Board meeting. If the parents wish to make a further written or verbal submission to this meeting of the Board, they may do so.
 - if the Board of Governors decides to expel, the Headmaster will immediately inform the pupil's parents in writing of the decision. In this letter the Headmaster will give details of the right of appeal to the Expulsion Appeals Tribunal and how, where and when to do so.

Representation

- Parents/guardians may not be accompanied by a legal representative at either the consultation meeting or the final Board meeting at which the decision about expulsion will be taken.

Investigation

- In the event of an alleged offence being denied by the pupil concerned the school's investigation of such alleged offence will be commensurate with the level of offence and potential penalty.
- If the offence is serious, in addition to the matters outlined above under the heading "Suspension and Expulsion", no action will be taken by the school without allowing the pupil concerned to state his position. If necessary, the school will interview other pupils and members of the school community, take written statements and review other evidence.
- In all instances the standard of proof shall be the balance of probabilities.
- Where a serious matter is being investigated, the pupil concerned has the right, where practicable, to be accompanied by parents/guardians at the time of interview.
- Where it is not practicable for the pupil to be accompanied by parents or guardians, he may be accompanied by a member of staff.
- During the investigation procedures, the pupil concerned has the right to be informed of any allegations made against him.
- The identity of any pupil witnesses may be withheld at the discretion of the Headmaster.
- If an alleged offence is also the subject of an external investigation of the police or other competent authority, the school's investigation will be subject to any requirements of such external investigation. The school may continue, implement or suspend its own investigation and disciplinary procedure as it considers appropriate during the course of the external investigation.

Appeals procedure

- A pupil has the right to appeal against a disciplinary procedure. This may be done personally, or by his parents to a Vice Principal or to the Headmaster. An appeal must be in writing and be delivered to the School within seven days of the decision under appeal and must set out the grounds of the appeal.
- The right of appeal in the school context against a decision of the Headmaster is to the Board of Governors of the school. Such an appeal should be sent in writing to the school, addressed to 'The Chairman of the Board' within seven days of notification of the Headmaster's decision, setting out the grounds of appeal.
- The Board of Governors is duty bound and shall advise parents of their right to appeal a decision to expel to the South Eastern Education & Library Board.
- Under current Statutory provisions an appeal against the decision of the Board of Governors to expel a pupil is made, initially, by sending a written Notice of Intention to make a formal appeal within ten days of receipt of the letter from the Board of Governors setting out the decision to expel. The Notice of Intention to make a formal appeal should be sent to the Clerk of the Tribunal, c/o South Eastern Education & Library Board, Grahamsbridge Road, Dundonald, Belfast BT16 2HS

Evaluation

The Disciplinary Procedures of the school are kept under review and updated in line with current practice, with a regular review by the Board of Governors.

