

CODE OF BEHAVIOUR

In Sancta Maria College we seek to develop a sense of community that reflects the ethos of the Sisters of Mercy and the vision of Catherine McCawley.

'Mercy Education is committed to holistic development and to the achievement of full potential of each student, particularly those who are disadvantaged or marginalized. It is a process informed and influenced by the teaching and example of Jesus Christ and is conducted in an atmosphere of care, respect and joy.'

Mercy education is committed to ongoing whole-school development in collaboration and partnership with the Board of Management, Staff, Parents and the wider Community.

Patronage of the school moved to CEIST - the core values of which are inclusive of the Mercy philosophy of Education. The core values of CEIST are intended to support and nourish the lives of the people who are at the heart of our schools - students, staff and parents.

- Promoting Spiritual and Human Development
- Achieving Quality in Teaching and Learning
- Showing Respect for Every Person
- Creating Community
- Being Just and Responsible

Ethos:

The ethos of the school is based on the quality of relationships between management and teachers, among teachers, between teachers and parents, between teachers and students and among students.

The relationship is one of mutual respect giving a clear message to students that they are worthy, important and responsible.

Through good models of adult behaviour students are constantly encouraged to develop self-esteem, self-discipline and high standards.

Objectives:

The objectives of the Code of Behaviour are that

- The creation of an orderly environment will permit teaching and learning to occur.
- Clearly defined limits are provided for all in the school community.
- A spirit of mutual understanding and cooperation is fostered.
- High standards of behaviour are developed and maintained.
- Students are encouraged and required to take responsibility for their own behaviour.
- The school is a safe place and school related activities continue in a safe environment.

Rationale:

- To set out the basic mission of the school and the manner in which students participate in the life of the school.
- To fulfil statutory requirements, viz. Education Act, 1998; Education Welfare Act, 2000.

- Other School Policies
- Audited in line with NEWB Guidelines

Responsibilities:

This code attempts to outline fundamental rules within a framework of rights and responsibilities and will lead, guide, encourage and instruct within that framework.

The code also recognises that some situations will arise which will necessitate refinement of these rules to accommodate unique problems, which will arise from time to time.

Managerial responsibility:

The management of Sancta Maria College ensures that a fair and effective Code of Behaviour includes rules, ways of encouraging and affirming student efforts, rewards, sanctions, and implementation procedures. The Code was developed with the participation of staff, students, and parents. It is the responsibility of the Principal to create the right climate within which individuals in the school community can fulfil their responsibilities and s/he will ensure that the school's Code is administered fairly and consistently at all times.

Staff responsibility:

School personnel are responsible at all times for the behaviour of students within sight or sound of them and should respond promptly and firmly to any instances of unacceptable behaviour. They are also responsible for promoting positive behaviour throughout the school.

Parental Responsibility:

Parents and a supportive home environment play a crucial role in shaping attitudes that produce good behaviour in school.

We ask parents to be aware of and support the Code of Behaviour, school policies and procedures and to support these.

Parents are expected to attend Parent/teacher meetings and other meetings as requested.

When concerns arise, parents may be called on and the school expects parents to play a positive role in addressing their child's disciplinary issue.

Parental understanding and support for the code is strengthened through activities such as:

- An introductory meeting for parents of new students, dealing specifically with the code, school standards, expectations for students and the role of parents in helping students to meet the standards.
- Encouraging parents to share information about anything that might affect a student's behaviour in school, and making sure they know how to do so.
- Clear channels through which parents can communicate any concerns they may have about a student and explore ways of helping the student.
- Information offered in consultation with the Parents' Association, such as talks on behavioural matters and aspects of child and adolescent development.

- Parental involvement in reviewing and planning school policies, as part of school development planning.

Student Responsibility:

- Students are expected to be punctual at all times, to be clean and tidy and dressed in the prescribed uniform.
- Students will be prepared for each subject with the relevant homework completed; all students are expected to listen attentively in class.
- Students will respect people and property; they will report any accidental damage they cause and act in a proper manner around school.
- Students when in school uniform and/or on school activities, are expected to obey school rules.

Standards of Students' Behaviour:

The basis of student behaviour rests on self- respect, respect for others, for the school, the local community and for the environment.

Unacceptable Behaviour:

Students have a right to be in an orderly and safe learning environment and are duty bound to behave, inside the school premises, on school buses, in the town, in school uniform and any school related activity, in a friendly and orderly manner and to show respect for all persons and property.

Unacceptable behaviour in such contexts includes repeatedly disrupting the class, shouting, leaving the class without permission, showing disrespect for teachers and other students, lingering, failure to do work to the best of one's ability, fighting, using inappropriate language, rowdy behaviour, behaving disrespectfully with others, throwing objects at others, bullying, indulging in acts of vandalism and other inappropriate behaviour.

Travel on School Buses:

While travelling on a school bus, students must behave in an orderly and respectful manner. School discipline policies apply to bus boarding and travel as well. Students are required by law to wear seat belts at all times while travelling on school buses.

Dress Code:

Students are expected to maintain high standards in their personal appearance. This is part of being proud of themselves and of their School. It is also a vital part of preparing students for the world of work, where personal presentation can matter a great deal in achieving their ambitions. Students are expected to wear the full school uniform, relevant sportswear, or other indicated attire for school outings.

Prescribed uniform:

Sancta Maria College green jumper, white shirt, grey pants or A-line skirt (knee length) of polyester/serge material. All students must wear dark shoes (not runners). Incoming 1st year students from August 2013 onwards must wear black shoes only (no runners allowed).

In the interests of health, safety and uniformity in school activities, the school management reserves to itself the right to restrict the use of jewellery and will be the final arbiters in matters of hairstyle.

Punctuality:

Punctuality is essential. All students are expected to be punctual in arriving at school, at lessons, and at any other school function. Students should moreover have all the necessary materials and equipment at hand before the commencement of lessons.

Schoolwork:

Students must work to the best of their ability. Low standards of work are the result of lack of effort, absence of interest and lack of self-pride. Shabbily completed work will be corrected but will not be graded.

School assignments and homework should be completed on time. If, for any valid reason, such work is not presented on time, students are expected to produce a note of explanation from their parents.

Changing Classes between Lessons:

When it is necessary to move between lessons this should be done quickly and quietly. Lingered is not acceptable.

Attendance and Absences:

In accordance with the education legislation, it is compulsory for parents to send their school-age children to school. Every absence, whether it is for a full day or part of a day, must be explained in writing by the parent/guardian and the letter given to the Principal/ Deputy Principal or to the class tutor.

When a student needs to be absented from school for any part of the school day, a parent/designated person will collect the student and sign the register.

The school is obliged to notify the N.E.W.B. officer whenever a student is absent for more than 20 days for whatever reason.

Organised Excursions:

Educational visits, field trips and seminars authorised by the B.O.M. and are taken as an extension of the classroom. Students are expected to attend these activities. While on such excursions, students are to consider themselves as guests and ambassadors of their school. Students must treat teachers, helpers, guides and hosts with respect and courtesy. The school will notify parents and obtain their written consent in advance.

School rules and school discipline operate during any school organised activity, irrespective of its nature.

Any activity by a pupil inside or outside school, at any time, that can adversely affect the school's reputation or responsibility to other students, is seen as a breach of the Code of Conduct and can be dealt with by the school management.

Property:

Students are expected to respect such school property as furniture, buildings, books, materials and equipment. Students have an important role to play in ensuring that the physical environment is kept clean and attractive.

In case of intentional damage to school or personal property of others, such behaviour renders parents or guardians liable for restitution. Restitution equivalent to the minimum cost of the item damaged or destroyed will be charged. Incidents of pilfering will be dealt with in a similar manner.

Public property must be respected at all times; the school management has the right to deal with student's behaviour when the student is in school uniform.

Lockers:

Students should use the lockers assigned to them solely for storing their school materials and personal items necessary for school. It shall be the responsibility of each student to keep the assigned locker clean and undamaged. The expenses to repair damage done to lockers may be charged to the students who are responsible for the damage.

Any damage to a student's locker must be reported at once or the student may be held responsible for the damage.

A student's locker can be searched whenever the school administration deems fit. Items found in students' lockers in violation of school policies, rules and regulations will be confiscated.

Students are not to keep valuables or money in their lockers. The school is not responsible for items stolen.

Behaviour in Common Areas:

While in the circulating areas, in the corridors, grounds and other common areas, students are expected to behave well as they would in class. Standards of behaviour and hygiene in toilets must be ensured.

Prohibited items:

Any object that can cause physical or moral harm is absolutely prohibited.

The use of mobile phones is prohibited. If students are found using a mobile phone it will be confiscated. The mobile phone can only be collected by a parent/guardian from the school during school hours. The school phone may be used for urgent calls.

Chewing gum is forbidden – students may be asked to remove gum from furniture.

Smoking and Alcohol Use: Students are absolutely prohibited from smoking (including E cigarettes) consuming alcoholic drinks, and using substances prohibited by law – students may be suspended or expelled for serious breaches.

Weapons: Sharp objects, knives and other weapons, which can be used to threaten, bully or harm others, are absolutely prohibited from the school premises, during travel to and from school, and during school excursions.

Valuable items: Students are responsible for their own property and should not bring valuables or excessive amounts of cash to school.

Promotion of good behaviour:

In line with our Mission Statement it is policy to encourage and promote positive behaviour. A range of methods is promoted that encourage and affirm students' efforts and responsibility taken, as well as rewarding achievement:

- A prompt personal word of praise from the teacher, Class Tutor, Year Head is one of the simplest and perhaps the most effective way of recognising and affirming students' good efforts and achievements.
- At Assembly the opportunity is taken to commend publicly, achievements by students such as an academic or sporting achievement or a positive contribution by a student or group of students to the life of the School.
- The public address system is also used on a regular basis to commend achievement.
- Announcements and celebrations regarding in-school and out-of-school achievements using the school website and the published school newsletter.
- A positive written communication about the student to parents from the class teacher/class tutor.
- A written affirmation of students' positive efforts recorded in the students' individual school diary.
- Efforts recognised in the Student of the Month Award
- Efforts recognised during Awards Day.
- Awards for Junior, T.Y and Leaving Certificate Students of the Year.
- Awards for the highest Junior and Leaving Certificate exam results.
- A display of students' work in the classroom, immediately outside the classroom or in prominent places on the school premises.
- Recognition and celebration of whole class efforts.
- A positive letter home to Parents from the Principal
- Letter of appreciation and congratulations from the Principal for outstanding achievement or for service to the school during formal occasions.
- This list is not exhaustive

Sanctions:

A range of methods that encourage and affirm students' efforts and responsibility taken, as well as rewarding achievement is promoted.

Sanctions will be reasonable and proportionate to the nature of the incident. The purpose of a sanction is to bring about a change in behaviour by;

- using them to improve students' behaviour
- help students to learn that their behaviour is unacceptable
- helping them to realise the effect of their actions and behaviour on others
- helping students in ways appropriate to their age and development to understand that they have choices about their own behaviour and that all choices have consequences
- helping them to learn to take responsibility for their behaviour

A sanction should;

- defuse and not escalate a situation
- preserve the dignity of all the parties
- be applied in a fair and consistent way
- be timely

Parents will be kept informed from the outset of instances of serious misbehaviour.

The following is a list of sanctions used to facilitate disciplinary procedures:

- Reminders of school rules, classroom standards and expectations
- Keeping students in at break or lunch time to do some additional work
- Extra work assigned to students
- Moved to another location in the classroom
- Moved to another classroom
- Do some cleaning
- Written report submitted to class tutor
- Enhance the environment in some way
- Written report to parents which may be communicated on the students school diary
- Report on behaviour at regular intervals
- Privileges curtailed e.g. not allowed to town, kept from school activities
- Put on report
- Confiscation of property, to be returned at a later time
- Written note to parents
- Notes signed by parents indicating their child's misbehaviour
- Sending students to Programme Head, Deputy Principal or the Principal
- Out of school detention
- Suspension for a few days
- Expulsion (See school policy on Suspensions and Expulsions)

Discipline procedure:

All staff is involved in maintaining school discipline. The subject teachers deal with ordinary breaches class discipline. The supervisor on duty deals with issues occurring at break times. The teacher in charge of the group deals with issues occurring at group activities. When however, the unacceptable behaviour persists in class or outside class, the following procedural structures of the school are used as the situation demands.

If a teacher considers an incident serious then it is recorded and the class tutor discusses the incident with teacher and pupil. The pupil also records the incident. After three recorded incidents a letter informs the parents/guardians.

If three more recorded incidents occur student and parents will be informed that the discipline committee will review the situation and make recommendations to the Principal. As the situation demands, a student may be referred to the Pastoral Care Co-ordinator or the Career Guidance Counsellor. The H.S.C.L may be involved depending on the nature of the behaviour.

We reserve the right to deal with any issues/incidents that occur outside school hours which may affect the reputation of the school.

A comprehensive explanation of the code is outlined to students with Special Needs and/or students from a different ethnic background. These students are also taught how to relate cause and effects of behaviour through Guidance Counselling and Pastoral Care.

Also the following procedure operates in immediate cases.

Subject teacher > Class tutor > Programme/Year Head > Deputy Principal > Principal.
[These may deal with situations as individuals or as part of a discipline committee].

In extraordinary cases the Board of Management is involved.

Under the laws of natural justice parents/guardians have a right to present the pupils side of the case and the right to appeal a sanction. (See Policy on Suspensions and Expulsions.) In the case of suspensions, the Board of Management has formally delegated in writing the authority to suspend a student to the Principal of Sancta Maria College in keeping with the N.E.WB guidelines and sets down the parameters within which this authority may be exercised. Regular in-services are provided for staff on issues relating to behaviour and on classroom management.

Illness and Accidents:

Whenever a student falls ill or an accident occurs in school the student must inform one of the teachers immediately. The Principal will see that the student's needs are met. The parents/guardians of the student involved will be informed and necessary arrangements made. If parents/guardians are unable, for whatever reason, to look after the student alternative arrangements will be made.

Bullying

All forms of verbal and physical behaviour that is meant to hurt, intimidate or jeopardize the integrity and the dignity of a person, such as name calling, ridiculing, taunting, threatening and use of physical violence are all forms of bullying. Bullying of any kind is strictly forbidden in Sancta Maria College and the necessary measures to prevent and stop such acts shall be taken by the school immediately.

Cases of bullying that are found to be beyond the power of the school and other cases of persistent bullying where the school has exhausted all the means and provision available, will be referred to outside authorities.

(See School Policy on Anti-Bullying.)

Parents/visitors who wish to have a consultation with a subject teacher or class tutor need to make a prior appointment. This is to be arranged through the Principal.

In urgent cases where a pre-arranged appointment is not appropriate parents should, in the first instance, report to the school Secretary/Principal.

Parents must not approach classrooms directly during teaching times.

Roles:

The Board of Management will ensure that this policy is developed, approved, implemented and reviewed.

The Principal and Deputy Principal will implement, evaluate and report to the Board of Management.

The teaching staff will co-operate with and assist the Principal/Deputy Principal.

Parents and students will ensure that they respect, accept and abide by all the conditions pertaining to this code.

Success Criteria:

The fulfilment of the Objectives of this code.

Review:

This code was ratified by the Board of Management on 6th October 2014. It was proposed by Ms. Mona Staunton and seconded by Mr. John O'Toole. This code will be reviewed and revised in the light of changing circumstances, if such changes occur. Otherwise it will be reviewed in 2016.

