



Rathdown School Student Code of Behaviour Policy

The mission of Rathdown School is to provide a high quality education in an inclusive and friendly environment where each student can develop her potential academically, physically, spiritually, socially and aesthetically. We aim to promote mutual respect and principles of good citizenship. In this context, our Code seeks to safeguard the rights of the individual while at the same time protecting the needs of the community.

Each pupil, therefore, is expected to behave in a way that promotes the school's mission: to show respect for learning and to behave in a way that promotes a happy atmosphere in the school, and shows respect for others and for the self.

Rathdown School is required by the Education Act (1998) and by the Education (Welfare) Act (2000) to draw up and disseminate a Code of Behaviour to all its students and their parents/guardians.

Our Code of Behaviour is required to maintain order in the school and to clarify expectations of behaviour.

This Code aims to outline the reward and sanction system that operates in the school. It also seeks to make parents/guardians and students aware of the procedures that are in place to deal with misconduct and infringements of the school rules. It states also the procedures for suspensions and expulsions.

Our Code of Behaviour operates in a fair, open and transparent manner and is based on the principles of natural justice. It ensures that each student will be treated as an individual, and that the school will have regard for any medical or other reasons, which may affect the student's behaviour.

The following is a summary of the roles of the various constituent parts of the school:

The Board of Governors determines the values on which the operation of the school is based.

The Board of Management manages the school in accordance with the Education Act (1998) and the values of the school as determined by the Board of Governors. It has final approval of the contents of the Code of Behaviour and the power to make any subsequent amendments to the Code. The **Discipline Subcommittee of the Board of Management** will hear all appeals against decisions to suspend or expel students.

All suspensions of 5 school days or less will be reported to the Board of Management. Only the Board of Management can expel students or suspend them for over 5 school days.

The Principal is responsible for the day to day running of the school, for investigating cases of indiscipline and is generally the final arbiter in most cases of indiscipline.

The Deputy Principal is responsible for the general application of the Code of Behaviour and any investigations required in cases of indiscipline.

The Special Discipline Committee consisting, where appropriate, of the student's Form Teacher, the Principal, Deputy Principal and School Chaplain, or any other member of staff deemed appropriate, will investigate situations where a suspension of over 5 days, or an expulsion, are being considered.

The Discipline Committee in consultation with the Principal, Deputy Principal and staff, is responsible for evaluating, reviewing and proposing amendments to the Code of Behaviour.

****Year Heads are responsible for the care of students in their year group. They liaise with the Form Teachers in their year group. They are responsible for the general application of the Code of Behaviour and any investigations required in cases of indiscipline in their year group.*

Form Teachers are responsible for the care of students in their form group. They, with other staff, are responsible for the application of the Code of Behaviour and for liaising with other teachers, with the Principal and Deputy Principal.

Classroom teachers are responsible for behaviour during class, and for the application of sanctions, which may be required to maintain the standard of behaviour necessary for effective teaching and learning to be carried out. They are also required to bring to the attention of the Form Teacher significant behaviour problems and/or other issues of concern regarding the students in their care.

Other staff, including supervisors, are responsible under the general authority of the school management for bringing to the attention of the relevant authorities instances of indiscipline.

Students are responsible for observing expected standards of behaviour and showing respect for themselves, others and the school. **The rightful authority of the teacher is to be respected at all times. This is so that a positive learning environment can be maintained.**

Parents/guardians are responsible for emphasising at home the need for good behaviour at school, and for supporting the school's efforts in creating and maintaining a school climate where effective learning and teaching can take place.

The Code of Behaviour is connected in its operation to other policies that currently operate in the school and that will operate in the future. These are:

- * The School Rules
- * The Child Protection Policy
- * The Anti-Bullying Policy
- * The Substance Abuse Policy

- * The AUP (Acceptable Users Policy) Internet and Email Policy
- * The Health Education Programme
- * The Safety Statement

The Commends and Merit Card System

- Students who make a special effort in any area of school life will be rewarded with Commends and/or Merit Cards. We aim at all times to promote and reward positive behaviour.

Sanctions

When students fail to observe the standards of behaviour set by the school, sanctions will be applied. These sanctions will be applied in a fair manner.

Preliminary:

- (a) Discussion and reprimand
Frequently, it is only necessary to point out the inappropriate behaviour to the student and the situation is resolved.
- (b) Impositions
Teachers may impose individual sanctions appropriate to the misbehaviour concerned. This may include written exercises or some form of community work in the school.
- (c) Yellow Cards
These may be issued against students for minor infringements of the school rules. Should a student accumulate more than three yellow cards in any half term period, she will be placed in detention for a period of time determined by her Form Teacher.
- (d) Detentions
These may be given for more serious infringements *** *or an accumulation of yellow cards* and may be given by any member of the teaching staff.

Serious:

- (e) Discipline Forms
These forms may be sent home to parents/guardians in cases of serious indiscipline. Parents are required to sign these forms and to return them to the school office.

(f) Class Exclusions

From time to time, teachers find it necessary to exclude a student from a class. This usually arises when the student's behaviour is such that it prevents other students from learning. Teachers will often have imposed other sanctions before deciding to exclude the offending student. A student who is excluded from class will be asked to sit at the back of the class of another teacher. Second and third exclusions from a class will lead to a week's suspension from the class in which the misbehaviour occurred. A fourth exclusion will result in complete suspension from school for a period of up to 5 school days.

Parents will be notified in writing of each exclusion and will be required to assist in seeking a resolution to the problem.

(g) Suspension

Serious breaches of school discipline will lead to an immediate suspension of up to five school days at the discretion of the Principal.

(h) Bullying

Bullying is regarded as a serious breach of school discipline. Any student who is found to be engaging in bullying behaviour will incur sanctions up to and including suspension for up to five school days at the discretion of the Principal.

(i) Smoking

Smoking is a costly and harmful habit. It is the school's responsibility to discourage students from acquiring the habit, to help those students who are already addicted and to ensure that the school environment is as healthy as possible for the vast majority of students who do not smoke.

The Tobacco (Health Promotion and Protection) Regulations, 1990, prohibit the smoking of tobacco in any part (including the grounds) of primary and secondary schools. The use or possession of tobacco products by any student of the school in the school buildings, or in the school grounds or in its immediate environs is strictly forbidden. Students are not permitted to smoke coming to school or on their way home. Students found to be in breach of these regulations will be suspended from school for three school days. Repeat offences are considered more serious and may be subject to increasing sanctions.

(j) Alcohol

The use, possession, sale or distribution of alcohol is prohibited in school. Any student found in possession of alcohol will be suspended for five school days pending investigation.

(k) Drugs or Illegal Substances

Any student of the school who is found using, dealing, in the possession of drugs or illegal substances, supplying or involved in the organisation of the supply of illegal substances on school grounds, or at school-based or related activities will be expelled.

Procedures to be followed before a student may be suspended for over 5 school days

- A Special Discipline Committee consisting, where appropriate, of the student's Form Teacher, the Principal, Deputy Principal and School Chaplain, or any other member of staff deemed appropriate, will investigate the alleged misconduct thoroughly.
- In investigating the alleged misconduct, this designated committee will keep thorough notes of any interviews or other evidence uncovered.
- If the investigating committee recommends that a substantial suspension or expulsion be imposed the school will write to the student's parents/guardians as follows:
 - setting out in clear terms the allegations facing the student
 - advising them that it has been recommended that the student be suspended or expelled.
 - enclosing copies of all notes and/or statements concerning the case
 - advising them that they (and their child, if required) have the opportunity to be heard by the Discipline Subcommittee of the Board of Management.
- If the parents/guardians or student request an opportunity to be heard by the Discipline Subcommittee of the Board of Management, this committee will proceed as follows:
 - hear the case by the Special Discipline Committee
 - consider the written notes and submissions
 - hear the students' and parents'/guardians' case
- The Discipline Subcommittee of the Board of Management will then decide the case.
- The student and her parents may appeal this decision to the Board of Management and may also appeal the decision to the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Science under the terms of Section 29 of the Education Act (1998).
- As laid down by the Education (Welfare) Act 2000, the Principal will inform, in writing, an Educational Welfare Officer if a student is suspended for more than 6 school days.

- If it has been decided to expel the student from the school, the Board of Management will, before expelling the student, inform the Educational Welfare Officer in writing of its decision and of the reasons for that decision.
- A student will not be expelled from the school before 20 days have elapsed from the date of receipt by the student of the notification from the educational officer to expel. During this period, the student will be suspended from the school.

Procedure for returning to school after a suspension

- If a suspension arising from abuse of tobacco or alcohol is the first suspension that has been imposed on a pupil then she shall return to school when the required number of days for the suspension has elapsed.
- With regard to suspensions for other reasons, a student will be permitted to return to the school once she has entered into a 'contract' about future behaviour in the school. The school may require other agreements and undertakings, which it may deem necessary from time to time.
- The school is entitled to enforce the contract that will be drawn up between itself and the student in the event of a breach of that contract.

Absence from School

- Students who are absent from school must produce a note signed by a parent/guardian explaining the reason for the absence and detailing the date/s of the absence. This note should be handed into the school office on the day of return after the absence.

Grievance Procedure for Students

*** *Should this exist?*

Grievance Procedures for Parents/Guardians

***• *The grievance procedure for suspensions and expulsions is outlined above. Grievances regarding other disciplinary procedures should be brought to the Form Teacher initially, then to the Year Head and so on up the line to the Principal.*

Amendments to the Code of Behaviour

- Any amendments made to the Code of Behaviour will become part of the Code, and will be notified to students and parents/guardians.

Review of the Code

- The Code will be subject to review on a regular basis.

Availability of the Code

- This Code and any amendments made to it will be made available to parents/guardians and students in accordance with the provisions of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000. The school may provide a summary of the Code for inclusion in homework journals or other such publications, but for the purposes of policy procedure, the entire Code as here set out shall be the guide.

Policy last updated - January 2004