



# Stratford College

Co-educational Secondary School

## Code of Behaviour and Discipline

6<sup>th</sup> June 2019

### *Preamble*

The *Code of Behaviour and Discipline* of Stratford College is an important document. Being part of a group demands such qualities as self-discipline, mutual courtesy and respect by each member of this school community: staff, parents and students. A close observation of the code, which is based on best practice, aims to provide the most conducive and safe learning environment for every student, something to which each is entitled. Appeals to bend the code by individual students or parents are unhelpful to the smooth running of the school.

Stratford College's *Code of Behaviour and Discipline* is a conventional and traditional code. Once accepted there is an obligation on all to support the *Code* and its spirit wholeheartedly. Moreover, any action or behaviour that brings the College into disrepute will result in immediate suspension and/or exclusion. Please read this document carefully and discuss it with your son/daughter before agreeing to its standards. Parents and students are reminded that students should always represent Stratford College with pride whether in or outside the school and not bring the school into disrepute.

All members of our school community are reminded about the importance of respecting individual right to privacy. It is not permitted to record and/or circulate any private information without consent. Any attempt to libel or slander an individual member of the school community will be dealt with by this code.

From time to time, and **only by authorisation of the Principal**, photographs and/or film may be taken of your son/daughter which may be used for official school publications i.e. school prospectus, newsletter, website or school activities.

Please note that surveillance cameras (CCTV) are used as part of securing the school property and individual belongings. However, the school does not accept responsibility for loss or damage to personal property.

### **Role of Parents/Guardians**

1. Parents/Guardians are expected to support their children by taking an active interest in their progress and to support the *Code of Behaviour and Discipline* of Stratford College.
2. If there is any topic/issue that Parents/Guardians wish to discuss they are advised to make contact with the relevant Class Tutor. Similarly, Class Tutors, in co-operation with the Dean of Discipline, may request meetings with Parent/Guardian to discuss a student's progress. The structure of the school day and the demands of the timetable do not permit impromptu meetings between teachers and parents.

### **Role of Staff**

1. If a student breaches the terms of *The Code of Behaviour and Discipline*, the matter will be dealt with, initially, by the appropriate staff member. This may involve a reprimand, a punishment exercise, withdrawal of privileges, giving of a demerit. Depending on the gravity, the matter may be referred to the Class Tutor and possibly to the Dean of Discipline.
2. The Class Tutor is responsible for monitoring the overall conduct and dress code of students and the collation of merits and demerits.
3. In some cases, a Discipline Committee may be convened by the Principal. This will consist of the Dean of Discipline and appropriate staff members and will investigate serious breaches of discipline as determined by the Principal.
4. Parents will be notified by relevant staff of detention and, in the case of suspension, will be met with by the Dean of Discipline.
5. All staff should acknowledge positive behaviour by students through verbal praise, positive notes in their journals etc.

## **Role of Students**

All students are expected to respect the ethos of Stratford College. The highest possible standard of conduct inside and outside the school is expected.

Failure to co-operate with staff may result in referral to the school's Discipline Committee and/or suspension. Parents will be notified of any such action.

The Board of Management of Stratford College reserves the right to exclude a student from the school if s/he consistently fails to co-operate with the school's *Code of Behaviour and Discipline* and its spirit.

Close boy/girl relationships in school may inhibit school learning for them and for their classmates.

When students are being accepted or chosen for a school tour, previous behaviour may be taken into consideration.

When moving inside the school building students should always walk and keep to the left of the corridors.

## **Merit**

Stratford College promotes and acknowledges academic progress, good behaviour and a positive contribution to school life.

The school achieves this through the following systems:

1. **Student of the Month** – awarded with a certificate by their form tutor
2. **Student of the Term** – awarded with a certificate at assembly
3. **Class of the Term** – awarded at assembly. This could be a Mini Sports Day, an in-house Arts afternoon e.g. Drop everything and Mould! , a classical walking tour, a Painting with Words afternoon in the local park, a trip to an educational film e.g. at the IFI, a trip to the Science Gallery, a visit from the Reptile Farm etc. Most importantly the class get to choose their educational award with their tutor.
4. **Student of the Year** – recognised at our annual award ceremony in September.
5. **Class of the Year** - recognised at our annual award ceremony in September.

**The purpose of the merit system is to recognise and reward all those pupils who seldom get into trouble and who make our job as teachers pleasant.**

## Demerit

A student will incur a demerit when s/he behaves in a manner that is counterproductive to his/her own education and/or to the learning environment of other students. Teachers must be allowed to teach and students to learn.

Stratford College uses Vsware to track your child's behaviour. Each student commences the year with 0 points. We expect all parents to regularly check Vsware to see how their child is progressing. It is a useful tool to view their day to day behaviour, positive and negative. You are expected to sign your child's diary every two weeks after checking on Vsware for their behaviour and lates.

Merits on Vsware:		Demerits on Vsware:	
Improved behaviour	1	No book	1
Offered Assistance	1	No homework	1
Improved Application	1	Disrespectful in class	2
Great effort at extra-curricular	1	Belongings left in hall	1
Clean sheet at end of week	1	Not working in class	2
Great effort put into key assignment	1	Late for class	2
Positive Example	1	Late for school	3
Work Improved	1	No journal	3
Improved attendance	2	Disruptive behaviour	3
Excellent work ethic	2	Key assignment not submitted	3
Inspiring leadership	2	Uniform violation	3
Impressive team work	2	Truant from class	9
Exceptional extra- curricular action	3	Serious breach of school rules = instant detention	9
Outstanding key assignment	3	Phone confiscated	3
Excellent interpersonal skills	3	Chewing gum	1
Volunteered for school event	3	Copying another student's homework	3
Quality comment/question	2	Damaging school property	3
No lates every half term	2	Incomplete homework	1
Clean sheet at end of month	4	Talking out of turn in class.	1
<b>Impressive Presentation</b>	2		

Class Tutors will acknowledge merits in mid-year and end of year school reports.

## Disciplinary Procedures

1. The subject teacher, Class Tutor, Dean of Discipline and/or the Principal in that order, may deal with a breach of The Code of Behaviour.

2. The Principal and/or a Discipline Committee convened by the Principal, consisting of the Dean of Discipline and appropriate staff members, will investigate a serious breach of *The Code of Behaviour and Discipline*.
3. Detention will be awarded on receipt of -9 points.
4. Detention is held at regular intervals for a maximum duration of two hours. Written notice of detention will be posted, telephoned or texted to students and parents; the timing is at the discretion of the school staff and may not be altered. A student who fails to attend detention, exceptional circumstances excluded, will be automatically suspended for one day. In the event of the date of detention, awarded for minor mishaps clashing with a school organised event, the date will be re-arranged.
5. Two detentions due to misbehaviour followed by a third incidence warranting detention will result in an in-house suspension i.e. exclusion from class for one day. Two further detentions due to misbehaviour, followed by a third incidence of misbehaviour warranting detention will result in a one-day suspension from school. Detentions are held outside normal school hours and are for one hour for less serious breaches and two hours for more serious ones.

**Sanctions are as follows:**

1. Verbal correction
2. Notes on VSware
3. Referral to Class Tutor
4. Referral to Dean of Discipline
5. Telephone contact with parents
6. Formal meeting with parents
7. Detention
8. In-house suspension
9. Suspension
10. Expulsion

Serious disciplinary issues will be referred to the Principal/Board of Management with a recommendation for suspension and/or exclusion.

## Procedures for Suspension/Expulsion

### General

1. Suspension will usually only occur after the Principal has ensured all discipline options under the Code of Behaviour have been applied and documented.
  - Ensured all appropriate support personnel (internal and external) have been involved as relevant.
  - Ensured that discussion has occurred with the student and parent / guardian regarding specific misbehaviour which the school considers unacceptable and which may lead to suspension.
  - Ensured that diagnostic assessments have been carried out where appropriate (i.e. NEPS), particularly where unacceptable behaviour is ongoing & consistent.
  - (except in cases of very serious misconduct) provided a formal written warning detailing these behaviours, as well as clear expectations of what is required of the student in the future.
  - Recorded all action taken, and
  - Copied all correspondence
3. Principal may suspend immediately in some circumstances e.g. violence, threats of violence, illegal drugs etc. for a maximum of 6 days.
4. If a student is suspended for a period of 6 days or more, the Principal must inform the local Educational Welfare Officer.
5. If a student is suspended for a cumulative total of 20 days or more in one school year, the Principal must inform the Education Welfare Officer.

## Appeals

A formal appeal system may be initiated for suspensions of 3 days or more. A request for such an appeal should be made in writing and will be considered, in the first place by the Board of Management and Principal. Any such appeal will consider procedural fairness and the right of a student to an impartial judgement (cf. Appendix 1). Appeals may be made to The Secretary General of the Department of Education and Science in the event of the cumulative period of suspension being 20 days or more. This must be done in writing within **42** days of notification of suspension cf. Circular M48/01.

**Expulsion** can only occur after the Principal has:

- ensured all discipline options under the Code of Behaviour have been applied and documented
- ensured all appropriate support personnel (internal and external) have been involved as relevant
- ensured all other procedures, referrals, supports have been exhausted

- ensured that discussion has occurred with the student and parent / guardian regarding specific misbehaviour which the school considers unacceptable and which may lead to expulsion
- provided formal verbal and written warnings at appropriate times detailing these behaviours, as well as clear expectations of what was required of the student in the future
- recorded all action taken, and
- copied all correspondence
- informed the parents/guardians of his/her intention to recommend expulsion to the Board of Management
- Invited the parents/guardians to the Board of Management hearing and
- Invited the parents/guardians to make a written submission in advance of the Management Meeting.
- Provided the parents /guardians with a full, written description of the allegations against the student and the case being made at the meeting, together with copies of all documentation, statements etc. supporting that case.
- Made a formal expulsion recommendation to the Board of Management with full supporting documentation.

Expulsion can only occur after the Board of Management has

- Heard the Principal's case against the student (this case should be made in the presence of the parents/guardians)
- Heard the Parents'/guardians' response
- Examined all the documentation
- Considered the student's record in the school
- Taken legal / expert advice
- Ensured the Principal is not present for Board of Management's discussion and decision on the matter.
- Discussed the case in detail
- Considered all procedural matters as previously outlined
- Made a final decision to expel
- Communicated the decision to the parents formally through the Principal
- Informed the Education Welfare officer under Section 24(1) of the Education Welfare Act 2000.

### **Property**

1. Stratford College encourages a policy of environmental friendliness. As such students must not litter in classrooms or in the school grounds. Students are expected to comply with all requests from teachers in relation to keeping their surroundings clean and tidy.

2. After considerable consultation with staff, parents and the Board of Management in the Spring of 2019, Stratford College has decided that
- a. **Phones, devices smaller than an iPad mini and tablets with 3G, 4G or any future 'G' capabilities are not allowed into the classroom, nor can they be used during break-times, in the Library or supervised study. This list may change due to technological changes.**
  - b. Phones must be kept in their lockers throughout the school day. There will be a **No Visibility/No Carriage Rule in operation**. This means that it is not acceptable for students to have their phones on their person while in the school hall, in the corridors, the classroom or in evening study. If they are caught with their phones on their possession, they will have it confiscated. (please see our Code of Behaviour and Discipline policy).
  - c. Digital device\* usage in the classroom is teacher-led. Teachers will tell the students when to bring in their digital devices. They may not be needed for all classes or for every day.
  - d. **Mobile Phones**  
*First Offence:* it will be confiscated until the following day. It will be left at the office and it can be collected at end of the next day.  
*Second Offence:* It will be left in the office for three days and a parent must collect it.  
*Third Offence:* A week long confiscation will ensue, and a parent must collect it on the completion of the week. Parents/guardians are advised that all urgent communication for students should be directed through the school secretary.

Pupils sending nuisance text messages, or the unauthorized taking of images with a mobile phone/device camera, still or moving is in direct breach of the school's acceptable use policy, the school's Anti-Bullying Policy and the school's Code of Behaviour and Discipline Policy.

It should be noted that it is a criminal offence to use a mobile phone/digital device to menace, harass, or offend another person. As such, the school may consider it appropriate to involve the Gardai in such incidents.

3. Students should be discouraged from bringing large amounts of cash into the school and are advised that they bring all personal items of property into school at their own risk. Other items should be left in the student's locker and it is mandatory to purchase a lock for their lockers.

4. The College accepts no responsibility for loss or damage to a pupil's property. Schoolbooks and copies, uniform and sports gear should be clearly labelled.
5. Students must respect school property and must make restitution for the damage or defacing of either school property or the property of another student.
6. Chewing gum is forbidden in all areas of the school.
7. It is strictly forbidden for a student to take photos in school without a teacher's knowledge. This applies to when the teacher is on school property, while in school uniform and on occasions when the student can be connected to the school.

### **Health & Safety**

1. Pupils should take the utmost care when on the school premises and have regard to their own safety and the safety of others. Pupils should show respect and courtesy to each other and to the members of staff at all times.
2. In keeping with our anti-bullying policy, all forms of bullying are totally unacceptable. They should be reported immediately to the relevant Form Teacher, staff member or Senior Prefect *cf. Anti-Bullying Policy*.

### **3. Online privacy, Cyber Bullying and code of behaviour**

Circulating, publishing or distributing (including on the internet) material associated with school activities including but not limited to material in relation to staff and students where such circulation undermines, humiliates or causes damage to another person is considered a serious breach of school discipline and may result in disciplinary action. As part of such disciplinary action the Board of Management reserves **the right to suspend or expel** a student or students where it considers the actions to warrant such sanctions.'

**An incident of Cyber Bullying warrants an immediate one-day suspension.**

It should be noted that it is a criminal offence to use a mobile phone/digital device to menace, harass, or offend another person. As such, the school may consider it appropriate to involve the Gardai in such incidents.

4. The drinking of alcohol, the smoking of tobacco and the possession of or involvement in illegal drugs is totally forbidden and may result in suspension and possible expulsion from the college *cf. Substance Abuse Policy*.
5. Students, when moving around the school, should walk and not run. All cyclists should dismount at the school gates. From thereon they should push their bicycles or motorcycles to the bicycle racks.
6. All students should observe the Acceptable User Policy which is available on our school website or from the Principal following written request.

### **School & Homework**

1. Each pupil is expected to complete all homework to the best of his/her ability and on time.
2. Copybooks should be kept in good condition and written exercises should be completed neatly.
3. When in class pupils should work to the best of their ability, listening carefully and attentively and participate actively by asking questions etc.
4. A letter should explain any absences from class by students from parents/guardians in advance when possible. Pupils should make every effort to catch up on material missed as a result of these absences. It is the student's responsibility to approach the teacher for help in this area.

*A copy of our school policy on Assessment for Learning is available from the Principal following a written request.*

### **Attendance & Punctuality**

1. Students are required to attend school regularly. It is the duty of parents to ensure regular attendance. If a pupil is absent, parents are asked to submit a note of explanation on returning to school. Requests for all absences from school must be made in writing to the Class Tutor.
2. Students, apart from 6<sup>th</sup> Years and Prefects are not allowed to leave school during school hours without the permission of the Principal / Class Tutor.
3. Punctuality is essential at all times. Students who arrive late to school are required to report to the school office immediately and sign the late-book. Students, who change classrooms, should proceed directly from one classroom to another at class changeover time and should not normally go to their lockers between or during classes. Students should organise necessary books and equipment first thing in the morning, at break and at lunchtime for subsequent classes. Students who are persistently late for class may not be admitted to class.
4. On Fridays school finishes at 1.10pm. Break times are at 11.05- 11.15am and 1.10– 1.45pm. Jewish students are obliged to attend prayers each morning at 8.40 am and to attend Hebrew and/or Jewish Studies. Classes begin at 8.55 am and finish at 3.45 pm.
5. One late warrants three negative points.

*A copy of our school policy on Attendance is available from the Principal following a written request.*

### **Uniform**

*Domestic circumstances, except in exceptional circumstances, do not preclude a student from observing the dress code of Stratford College.*

1. All students, with the exception of 6<sup>th</sup> Years, must wear complete school uniform at school, while travelling to and from school, at school functions and at games. Sports uniform should be worn to school on relevant sports days. A complete uniform list is available from the school office. 6<sup>th</sup> Years should observe an appropriate dress code, which will be determined at the discretion of the staff.

2. If for any reason a student is not wearing complete school uniform, a letter from the parent stating the reason should be handed to the Class Tutor. Students not wearing the full uniform may be sent home and may return when dressed correctly. One breach of uniform code warrants three negative points.
  
3. Hairstyles should be simple traditional styles, which are at the discretion of the staff. Senior boys should be clean-shaven. Jewellery and make-up must be discreet. Earrings may be worn and should also be discreet. Skirts should be worn below the knee. Piercings are not permitted in other parts of the body. Clear, plastic retainers may be used.

**Dietary Restrictions**

**Students should not bring ham/pork products or shell fish into the school.**

Approved on behalf of the Board of Management

**Mr Cormac Murphy,**

**Chairperson**

**Ms Patricia Gordon**

**Principal**

**Dated: 6/6/2019**