



Selskar College

Code of Behaviour

Ratified by with amendments Board of Management 15 October 2013

Mission Statement

*“Teaching and Learning with care and respect,
where every person matters”*

As a college community, we believe that good behaviour, endeavour, achievement and contribution in class and around the college should be recognised and rewarded. We also believe that students should take responsibility for their conduct, and when they choose to disobey college rules, they will face sanctions.

College rules apply to all situations where students are in the care of staff. This includes during lessons, in the corridors, at break times, during extra-curricular activities, college outings and games.

When students are permitted by parents/guardians to go down town at lunch time or at other times or are allowed to leave the college at the request of parents/guardians, they are the responsibility of their parents/guardians. Such students while in college uniform are representing the college and the college reserves the right to impose sanctions if their behaviour brings the college into disrepute.

Any student who is enrolled at Selskar College is subject this Code of Behaviour. This is a condition of enrolment and is not dependent on the Code being signed by the parent/guardian or the student.

Signed: _____
(Parent(s)/Guardian(s))

Signed: _____ (Student)

Introduction

This Code of Behaviour was prepared using the NEWB Guidelines for Colleges and the relevant statutory legislation. The Code supports the mission of the college to provide education in an caring, respectful environment where all people are valued.

Respect and Responsibility

Respect for people

- a) Students- Each member of the class has the right to be taught and to learn free from class disruption and other unnecessary difficulties.
- b) Teachers- The teacher has the right to conduct the lesson according to his/her prepared plan, uninterrupted by time-wasting and class disruption.
- c) Parents/Guardians will be treated respectfully and it is expected that this will be reciprocated. On visiting the college all parents must sign in and out at reception for Health and Safety reasons. Parents/Guardians should make an appointment to meet with college staff.
- d) All visitors must be treated with respect by all members of the college community. Visitors (including guest speakers) must sign in and out at reception for Health and Safety reasons.
- e) Students, parents, teachers and visitors have the right to expect co-operation and support from each other in the combined effort to provide and maintain a safe and enjoyable educational environment.

Respect for college rules

A student will make the best use of his/her abilities. She/he will respect and obey college rules. This will require attending to such matters as:

- **Class work**
- **Study and homework**
- **Punctuality**
- **College uniform**
- **Caring for the college environment**

All instructions are needed for the smooth, safe and efficient conduct of the work of the college.

Respect for property

A student will respect and care for his/her property. He/ she will also respect and care for the college environment, the property of others and the public property, and take care that they are not damaged or devalued in any way. Students who damage property will be required to pay the cost of making good the damage and will be subject to disciplinary procedures.

Responsibility

- It is the responsibility of the Principal and Deputy Principal to ensure that all staff members, parents/guardians and students are familiar with college rules.
- It is the responsibility of all staff to implement the college rules.
- It is the responsibility of students to respect and follow the college rules.
- It is the responsibility of parents/guardians to be familiar with and support the college in implementing the college rules.

Classroom expectations & rules

Classrooms (including labs, workshops, gyms and the library) are our places of work. In order to ensure a positive atmosphere that is conducive to teaching and learning the following behaviours must be adopted.

1. *Before lessons*

- a. Students are expected to have all appropriate equipment for class. Lockers must be accessed before 9:00am class and/or during their break times only.
- b. Toilet facilities should be used before 9.00 a.m. and during break times. Disrupting classes for toilet breaks is not recommended.
- c. Students must line up quietly, in single file at the door on time.
- d. Students may only enter the classroom with the teacher's permission.

2. *Start of lessons*

- a. Students must enter rooms quietly and go to their assigned seats/places.
- b. Students must take off all outdoor wear as instructed.
- c. Students must take out books, pens and all necessary equipment for the subject along with their homework journal which must be on the desk at all times.
- d. Students must remain silent while the register is being called.

3. *During lessons*

- a. Students are to sit properly on chairs and to remain in their seat at all times unless given permission to do otherwise.
- b. Students are to work to the best of their ability.
- c. Students must respect all members of their class.
- d. Students must respect all property.
- e. Students must raise their hands if they have a question or wish to respond to a teacher's question.
- f. Electronic devices, magazines or other distractions are not allowed in class. They **will be** confiscated in line with relevant college policy.
- g. Students are expected to work sensibly with their classmates. They must not distract or annoy them or the teachers.
- h. If students arrive late to class they must knock politely on the door, ask permission to join the class and enter quietly. Arriving late without an acceptable explanation is impolite, disruptive and is in breach of college rules.
- i. Eating and chewing are not allowed. Drinking water is only allowed with permission from the teacher.
- j. Students must not leave a lesson without permission from a teacher and a note in their journal which must be carried at all times.

4. *End of lesson*

- a. Students should not begin to pack up or put on outdoor wear before the teacher instructs you to.
- b. Students are responsible for picking up litter from their area. Tables and chairs must be left neatly for the next class.
- c. Students must not leave the classroom until instructed by the teacher.
- d. Students should then leave the room quietly and walk directly to the next class.

College journal

1. Selskar College Student Journal is an integral part of communication between teachers and parents.
2. Failure to produce the journal when required to do so by a teacher or any other member of staff will lead to after college detention.
3. Students who deface or lose their college journal will be required to replace it at their own expense.

Homework

1. Homework, including written exercises learning and revision, is given on a regular basis and students are required to complete it neatly and to the best of their ability.
2. Students are required to note all homework assigned in their college journal.
3. Parents/guardians are required to ensure that homework both written and oral is completed. The journal is then signed at the end of every week.
4. If for some reason homework, or part of it, cannot be completed, parents/guardians are required to note this in the college journal.

Mobile phones and other I.C.T devices

1. Mobile phones and other devices must be turned off and put away during all classes and between class periods. The only time they are permitted is at breaktime and lunch time.
2. Any student found in breach of this rule will have the complete device including SIM card confiscated for a minimum period of 48 hours.
3. Mobile phones and I.C.T devices brought to college must be switched off and kept in the student's locker or bag at their own risk.
4. The college authorities are not responsible for any articles lost or stolen.

College uniform and personal property

1. Students are expected to wear the full and correct uniform coming to, during and leaving college. Breach of this college rule will result in after hours detention.
2. Full PE uniform is required during PE classes. Exemptions from P.E will only be granted with a medical certificate.
3. Students are expected to be neat and tidy at all times and the college authorities are the judges of acceptable standards of appearance.
4. When outside the college environment and in college uniform students are required to uphold the good reputation and ethos of the college.
5. Students are at all times responsible for their own personal property which should be clearly labelled.
6. Students are not permitted to leave their belongings, including college bags, in the college building after college hours.
7. The college authorities are not responsible for any articles lost or stolen.

Smoking and substance abuse

1. Smoking (including any nicotine or substance inhalation device) and or substance abuse within college grounds is strictly prohibited and is subject to suspension and to the full rigours of the law.
2. Students in college uniform found smoking within the vicinity of the college entrances and exits are in breach of college rules and will be subject to sanction.

Finally, but most importantly:

Teachers are in the position of parents/guardians while students are in college. This means in particular that:

- There is no excuse for rudeness, disrespect or insolence towards teachers or any other staff member.

- Any reasonable request from a teacher or other member of staff should be carried out at once and without argument.

Breaking any of these rules will be treated as a **VERY** serious matter.

Rewards and Sanctions

Rewards

1. Students of the month for each class will be acknowledged and displayed. A copy of the certificate and photograph will be sent home.
2. College postcards will be sent home to acknowledge good behaviour.
3. Teachers will praise good behaviour.
4. Teachers will discuss good behaviour of students at parent-teacher meetings.
5. Special events for achievements will be organised.
6. Nominations for Students of the Year and Attendance will be celebrated at an end-of-year awards ceremony.
7. Raffle per-term to acknowledge good attendance.

Sanctions

Discipline issues will be dealt with by the classroom teacher.

1. A verbal warning will give the student the opportunity to change their behaviour.
2. If the behavioural interruptions continue sanctions such as moving students within the classroom, penalty sheets, break time detentions, notes in journals, moving students to another classroom under supervision, extra work, will be brought into action by the classroom teacher. Parents will be informed through the college homework journal if detention requires the student stays at the college for lunchtime. These sanctions will be noted in the class behaviour report.
3. If the student chooses not to change their behaviour the recorded incidents and actions taken will be brought to the attention of the Year Head after the classroom teacher has exhausted other means of sanction. Written records of incidents and actions taken by the class teacher will be given to the Year Head who will invoke the use of support structures where applicable and work with the student and parents/guardians to help the student to change the undesirable behaviour.
4. After college detention is a sanction. Parents will be notified in writing of the date and time of such a detention. Parents/Guardians are responsible for making arrangements for the student to get home after such a detention. In particular, where a student usually travels by bus, parents must arrange that their child has an alternative way of getting home after an evening detention.
5. The class behaviour report will be given to the Year Heads at the end of each day. Where there is cause for concern the Year Head will act on this.
6. Where behavioural interruptions are persistent and the student continues to refuse to adhere to college rules action will be taken.
7. High level disruptive behaviour such as aggressive behaviour, refusal to follow basic instructions, foul language, vandalism of college property, dangerous use of equipment will merit immediate removal from the classroom leading to suspension.
8. Offensive language or behaviour directed at staff member will result in an immediate 3 day suspension in line with the College Suspension policy (Appendix A).
9. On returning to college after suspension the parent/guardian and the student must meet with the Principal/Deputy Principal/Year Head before the student returns to classes. The student's behaviour will be monitored on return and they may be subject to additional conditions designed to support them in managing their own behaviour.
10. If a student's behaviour continues to breach college rules the incident reports and the actions taken will be referred to the Principal who may in turn refer the matter to the Board of Management for further disciplinary action up to and including permanent exclusion (See Appendix B).

Appendix A: Suspension Policy

Suspension is defined as requiring the student to absent himself/herself from the college and college grounds for a specified, limited period of college days. During the period of a suspension, the student retains their place in the college.

Suspension is a sanction designed to address the student's behaviour. It is envisaged that any period of suspension:

- enables the college to set behavioural goals with the student and their parents
- gives college staff an opportunity to plan other interventions
- impresses on a student and their parents the seriousness of the behaviour.

The grounds for suspension

Suspension is used as a proportionate response to the behaviour that is causing concern. Normally, other interventions will have been tried before suspension, and college staff will have reviewed the reasons why these have not worked. The decision to suspend a student requires serious grounds such as that:

- the student's behaviour has had a seriously detrimental effect on the education of other students
- the student's continued presence in the college at this time constitutes a threat to safety
- the student is responsible for serious damage to property.

A single incident of serious misconduct may be grounds for suspension.

Factors that will be considered before suspending a student

1. *The nature, seriousness and persistency of the behaviour*
2. *The context of the behaviour*
3. *The impact of the behaviour on other students and staff, teaching and learning in the class group and the student concerned.*
4. *The interventions tried to date, including involvement of internal supports and supports from external agencies and services.*
5. *Whether suspension is a proportionate response to the behaviour*
6. *The possible impact of suspension*

Forms of suspension

Immediate suspension

In exceptional circumstances, the Principal may consider an immediate suspension to be necessary where the continued presence of the student in the college at the time would represent a serious threat to the safety of students or staff of the college, or any other person. Fair procedures must still be applied.

Suspension during a State examination

This sanction must be approved by the Board of Management and will only be used where there is:

- a threat to good order in the conduct of the examination
- a threat to the safety of other students and personnel
- a threat to the right of other students to do their examination in a calm atmosphere.

The Board of Management of Selskar College has decided that, as part of the college's policy on sanctions, and following the consultation process with the Principal, parents, teachers and students, that the following named behaviours incur suspension as a sanction. The decision to impose suspension for these named behaviours does not remove the duty to follow due process and fair procedures in each case.

- Fighting
- Directed Offensive language
- Smoking in the college grounds or at the entrances
- Theft or Damage to property
- Possession of Weapons
- Threatening behaviour
- Under the influence of unprescribed mind altering substances (legal or illegal)
- Walking off school premises without permission during class time
- The use or possession of illegal substances or alcohol
- Causing a danger to self or others
- Failure to comply with in house sanctions

Students will not normally be suspended for:

- poor academic performance
- poor attendance or lateness
- minor breaches of the code of behaviour.

However, any behaviour that is persistently disruptive to learning or potentially dangerous can be a serious matter. Behaviour must be examined in context to understand both the behaviour itself and the response or sanction that is most appropriate. Therefore, students whose behaviour is persistently in breach of the expectations as set out in the college Code of Behaviour may be suspended if that sanction is considered the best course of action.

Rolling suspension

A student will not be suspended again shortly after they return to college unless:

- they engage in serious misbehaviour that warrants suspension and
- fair procedures are observed in full and
- the standard applied to judging the behaviour is the same as the standard applied to the behaviour of any other student.

Procedures in respect of suspension

The college is committed to following fair procedures when proposing to suspend a student in line with relevant legislation. Where a preliminary assessment of the facts confirms serious misbehaviour that could warrant suspension, the college will:

1. Inform the student and their parents about the complaint, how it will be investigated, and that it could result in suspension. Parents may be informed by phone and/or in writing, depending on the seriousness of the matter.
2. Give parents and student an opportunity to respond by phone, in writing or by attending a meeting, whichever is deemed most appropriate in the circumstances.

Procedures in relation to immediate suspension

In the case of an immediate suspension, parents/guardians will be notified, and arrangements made with them for the student to be collected, brought home or sent home with the agreement of parents/guardians. The college has regard to its duty of care for the student. In no circumstances will a student be sent home from college without first notifying parents.

Implementing the suspension

The Principal will notify the parents and the student in writing of the decision to suspend. The letter will confirm:

- the period of the suspension and the dates on which the suspension will begin and end
- the reasons for the suspension
- any study programme to be followed
- the arrangements for returning to college, including any commitments to be entered into by the student and the parents (for example, parents might be asked to reaffirm their commitment to the code of behaviour)
- the provision for an appeal to the Board of Management
- the provision for an appeal to the ETB, if appropriate

Records and reports

Written records will be kept of:

- the investigation
- the decision-making process
- the decision and the rationale for the decision
- the duration of the suspension and any conditions attached to the suspension.

The Principal will report all suspensions to the Board of Management, with the reasons for and the duration of each suspension.

The Principal is required to report suspensions in accordance with the NEWB reporting guidelines (Education (Welfare) Act, 2000, section 21(4)(a)).

Authority to suspend and the period of suspension

A student will not be suspended for more than three days, except in exceptional circumstances where the Principal considers that a period of suspension longer than three days is needed in order to achieve a particular objective.

The Board of Management of Selskar College has delegated to the Principal, the authority to suspend a student for a maximum periods of five days.

Students may be referred to The Board of Management for a review of their behaviour. The Board of Management may decide to suspend a student for a longer period of time. This will normally be a maximum period of ten days, except in circumstances where the Board of Management considers that a longer period of suspension is needed.

The Board will formally review any proposal to suspend a student, where the suspension would bring the number of days for which the student has been suspended in the current college year to twenty days or more. Any such suspension is subject to appeal under section 29 of the Education Act 1998.

These provisions enable college authorities to give the student a reasonable time to reflect on their behaviour while avoiding undue loss of teaching time and loss of contact with the positive influences of college. They recognise the serious nature of the sanction of suspension and ensure that this seriousness is reflected in college procedures. The provisions mean that the Board of Management takes ultimate responsibility for sanctions of significant length, especially where such suspensions might reach twenty days in one college year and therefore might lead to an appeal.

After the suspension ends

A period of suspension will end on the date given in the letter of notification to the parents about the suspension. The college will endeavour to help the student to take responsibility for catching up on work missed. When suspension, is completed, a student will be given the opportunity and support for a fresh start. Although a record is kept of the behaviour and any sanction imposed, once the sanction has

been completed the college expects the same behaviour of this student as of all other students. Students may be readmitted on a phased basis should this be considered necessary.

Appeals

Parents, or a student aged over eighteen years, may appeal the Principal's decision to suspend a student to The Board of Management of the college.

Such an appeal must be made in writing (within 7 days of the date of the letter of suspension) to the Chairperson of the Board of Management, stating the grounds on which the appeal is being made. However, the college may insist that the student remain at home while the appeal proceeds. In the event that an appeal is successful the suspension will be expunged from the student's record.

In the case of decisions to suspend made by the Board of Management an appeal may be lodged to the Chief Executive Officer of Waterford & Wexford Education and Training Board.

Section 29 Appeal

Where the total number of days for which the student has been suspended in the current college year reaches twenty days, the parents, or a student aged over eighteen years, may appeal the suspension under section 29 of the Education Act 1998, as amended by the Education (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2007.

At the time when parents are being formally notified of such a suspension, they and the student will be told about their right to appeal to the Chief Executive Officer of Waterford & Wexford Education and Training Board

Where an appeal to the ETB is concluded, parents, or a student aged over eighteen years, may appeal to the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Science.

Grounds for removing a suspension

A suspension may be removed if the Board of Management decides to remove the suspension for any reason or if the ETB or Secretary General of the Department of Education and Science directs that it be removed following an appeal under section 29 of the Education Act 1998.

Review of use of suspension

The Board of Management will review the use of suspension in the college at regular intervals to ensure that its use is consistent with college policies, that patterns of use are examined to identify factors that may be influencing behaviour in the college and to ensure that use of suspension is appropriate and effective.

Appendix B: Expulsion Policy

A student is expelled from the college when a Board of Management makes a decision to permanently exclude him or her from the college, having complied with the provisions of section 24 of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000.

The Board of Management of Selskar College has the authority to expel a student as devolved (under section 31 of the Vocational Education (Amendment) Act 2001) by the Waterford & Wexford ETB.

The grounds for expulsion

Selskar College considers that the expulsion of a student is a very serious step, and one that shall only be taken by the Board of Management in extreme cases of unacceptable behaviour.

The college will endeavour to address the misbehaviour and to avoid expulsion of a student including, as appropriate:

- meeting with parents and the student to try to find ways of helping the student to change their behaviour
- making sure that the student understands the possible consequences of their behaviour, if it should persist
- ensuring that all other possible options have been tried seeking the assistance of support agencies

A proposal to expel a student requires serious grounds such as that:

- the student's behaviour is a persistent cause of significant disruption to the learning of others or to the teaching process
- the student's continued presence in the college constitutes a real and significant threat to safety
- the student is responsible for serious damage to property.

The grounds for expulsion may be similar to the grounds for suspension. In addition to factors such as the degree of seriousness and the persistence of the behaviour, a key difference is that, where expulsion is considered, college authorities have tried a series of other interventions, and believe they have exhausted all possibilities for changing the student's behaviour.

The Board of Management of Selskar College has decided that, as part of the college's policy on sanctions, and following the consultation process with the Principal, parents, teachers and students, that the following particular named behaviours incur expulsion as a sanction. However, the general decision to impose expulsion for named behaviours does not remove the duty to follow due process and fair procedures.

- Serious malicious damage to school or other property
- Supply illegal/legal drugs
- Serious physical assault or violence
- Sexual assault

Expulsion for a first offence

There may be exceptional circumstances where the Board of Management forms the opinion that a student should be expelled for a first offence. The kinds of behaviour that might result in a proposal to expel on the basis of a single breach of the code could include:

- a serious threat of violence against another student or member of staff
- actual violence or physical assault
- supplying illegal drugs to others in the college
- sexual assault.

Determining the appropriateness of expelling a student

Given the seriousness of expulsion as a sanction the Board of Management will undertake a very

detailed review of the following factors in deciding whether to expel a student:

1. *The nature and seriousness of the behaviour*
2. *The context of the behaviour*
3. *The impact of the behaviour*
4. *The interventions tried to date*
5. *Whether expulsion is a proportionate response*
6. *The possible impact of expulsion*

Procedures in respect of expulsion

Selskar College required by law to follow fair procedures as well as procedures prescribed under the Education (Welfare) Act 2000, when proposing to expel a student. Where a preliminary assessment of the facts confirms serious misbehaviour that could warrant expulsion, the procedural steps will include:

1. A detailed investigation carried out under the direction of the Principal.
2. A recommendation to the Board of Management by the Principal.
3. Consideration by the Board of Management of the Principal's recommendation; and the holding of a hearing.
4. Board of Management deliberations and actions following the hearing.
5. Consultations arranged by the Educational Welfare Officer.
6. Confirmation of the decision to expel.

The Board of Management of Selskar College has decided that the above procedural steps at 2, 3, & 4 can be accomplished together in a single meeting, consistent with giving parents due notice (at least 7 calendar days) of meetings and a fair and reasonable time to prepare for a Board hearing.

Step 1 A detailed investigation carried out under the direction of the Principal.

In investigating an allegation, in line with fair procedures, the Principal will:

- inform the student and their parents (in writing) about the details of the alleged misbehaviour, how it will be investigated and that it could result in expulsion
- give parents and the student every opportunity to respond to the complaint of serious misbehaviour before a decision is made and before a sanction is imposed. This will include a meeting with the Principal, parents and the student and any other relevant personnel.

Step 2 A recommendation to the Board of Management by the Principal

Where the Principal forms a view, based on the investigation of the alleged misbehaviour, that expulsion may be warranted, the Principal makes a recommendation to the Board of Management to consider expulsion. The Principal will:

- inform the parents and the student that the Board of Management is being asked to consider expulsion
- ensure that parents have records of: the allegations against the student; the investigation; and written notice of the grounds on which the Board of Management is being asked to consider expulsion
- provide the Board of Management with the same comprehensive records as are given to parents
- notify the parents of the date of the hearing by the Board of Management and invite them to the hearing
- advise the parents that they can make a written and oral submission to the Board of Management
- ensure that parents have enough notice to allow them to prepare for the hearing.

Step 3 Consideration by the Board of Management of the Principal's recommendation; and the holding of a hearing

The Board of Management will review the initial investigation and satisfy itself that the investigation was properly conducted in line with fair procedures. The Board will undertake its own review of all documentation and the circumstances of the case. No party who has had any involvement with the circumstances of the case will be part of the Board's deliberations.

Where a Board of Management decides to consider expelling a student, it will hold a hearing. At the hearing, the Principal and the parents, or a student aged eighteen years or over, put their case

to the Board in each other's presence. Parents may wish to be accompanied at hearings and the Board shall facilitate this, in line with good practice and Board procedures. After both sides have been heard, the Board shall ensure that the Principal and parents are not present for the Board's deliberations.

Step 4 Board of Management deliberations and actions following the hearing

Having heard from all the parties, it is the responsibility of the Board to decide whether or not the allegation is substantiated and, if so, whether or not expulsion is the appropriate sanction. Where the Board of Management, having considered all the facts of the case, is of the opinion that the student should be expelled, the Board will notify the Educational Welfare Officer in writing of its opinion, and the reasons for this opinion. (Education (Welfare) Act 2000, s24(1)). The student cannot be expelled before the passage of twenty college days from the date on which the EWO receives this written notification (Education (Welfare) Act 2000, s24(1)). The Board shall inform the parents in writing about its conclusions and the next steps in the process. Where expulsion is proposed, the parents should be told that the Board of Management will now inform the Educational Welfare Officer.

Step 5 Consultations arranged by the Educational Welfare Officer

Within twenty days of receipt of a notification from a Board of Management of its opinion that a student should be expelled, the Educational Welfare Officer must:

- make all reasonable efforts to hold individual consultations with the Principal, the parents and the student, and anyone else who may be of assistance
- convene a meeting of those parties who agree to attend (Education (Welfare) Act 2000, section 24).

Pending these consultations about the student's continued education, a Board of Management may take steps to ensure that good order is maintained and that the safety of students is secured (Education (Welfare) Act 2000, s24(5)). A Board may consider it appropriate to suspend a student during this time. Suspension should only be considered where there is a likelihood that the continued presence of the student during this time will seriously disrupt the learning of others, or represent a threat to the safety of other students or staff.

Step 6 Confirmation of the decision to expel

Where the twenty-day period following notification to the Educational Welfare Officer has elapsed and where the Board of Management remains of the view that the student should be expelled, the Principal shall on behalf of the Board of Management formally confirm the decision to expel. Parents shall be notified immediately that the expulsion will now proceed. Parents and the student shall be told about the right to appeal and supplied with the standard form on which to lodge an appeal. A formal record shall be made of the decision to expel the student.

Appeals

A parent, or a student aged over eighteen years, may appeal a decision to expel to the CEO of County WWETB. Where an appeal to the ETB has been concluded and the decision of the Board of Management upheld, parents, or a student aged over eighteen years, may go on to appeal to the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Science. An appeal may also be brought by the National Educational Welfare Board on behalf of a student.

Review of use of expulsion

The Board of Management shall review the use of expulsion in the college at regular intervals to ensure that its use is consistent with college policies, that patterns of use are examined to identify factors that may be influencing behaviour in the college, and to ensure that expulsion is used appropriately.