

Ballinode Community College

Code of Behaviour

Section A:

Ethos Statement

Ballinode Community College is a constituent college of Mayo, Sligo & Leitrim Education & Training Board.

Mayo, Sligo & Leitrim ETB is a community of learners with an historic and unique tradition as a provider of education and training. In responding to the needs of the community it delivers the highest standards of teaching and learning.

Mayo, Sligo & Leitrim ETB Colleges, Schools and Centres of Education are democratic, co-educational and multi-denominational in character where policies, practices and attitudes are underpinned by the core values of Respect, Equity and Fairness.

The Board of Management of Ballinode Community College is publishing this document as the official Code of Behaviour. The ETB as patron of the school has approved this publication. Copies of the policy are available at the school and are furnished to each person who applies to be admitted to the school.

Mission Statement

Our College provides a safe healthy environment in which all students are nurtured and encouraged to achieve their full potential.

The Code of Behaviour helps to set the standards that the school community aspires to and acts as a template which allows students and staff to work together to continue to develop the school and maintain its characteristic vision.

Ballinode Community College acknowledges the primary responsibility of parents/guardians for their children, and seeks to assist them by creating a healthy and safe environment in the school so that students may thrive and work to achieve their potential

Aims

1. To develop a moral framework within which initiative, responsibility and healthy relationships can flourish.
2. To enable students to develop a sense of self worth and a respect and tolerance for others.

3. To produce an environment in which students feel safe, secure and respected.
4. To encourage positive and creative behaviour.

Objectives

To assist students in developing

- self confidence
- self control
- sensitivity and consideration for others
- pride in themselves and their school e.g. always wearing and displaying the school uniform
- an interest in their activities
- responsibility for their learning and their environment
- an independence of mind
- a sense of fairness
- an understanding of the need for rules
- non-sexist attitudes
- non-racist attitudes
- a persistent approach to tasks
- an appropriate response to bullying and abuse

A Positive Focus

Students' achievements, academic or otherwise, will be recognised. The following measures are taken:

A student of the month is announced for each class group each month and positive behaviour is incentivised. Rewards will be accessible to all students.

Achievements are recognised within the school, through class tutor meetings, and in school publications.

Examples of students' work and achievements are displayed in classrooms and throughout the school.

Code of Conduct

- Treat everyone at school with care and respect: this includes fellow students, teachers, support staff, and all who visit the school
- Regular and punctual attendance at all classes is expected. For every absence students must provide a written explanation from a parent or guardian.
- Students are expected to conduct themselves in an attentive, courteous and studious manner, and to maintain an acceptable standard of personal hygiene.
- The school journal is an essential part of school equipment. All students must bring their journal to school every day. It is to be used to record homework, and notes from parents and teachers only.

- The use of mobile phones, personal stereos, iPods and other inappropriate equipment is prohibited in class, and will result in the said item being confiscated. Inappropriate use of picture phones is prohibited at all times.
- Inappropriate use of the internet is forbidden (please see Acceptable Usage Policy).
- Eating and drinking is confined to the canteen, and at break times only.
- Any student found in possession of alcohol, other non-prescribed drugs or controlled substances, either on the school premises or during any school related activity will be subject to immediate disciplinary action, including the possibility of suspension and exclusion.
- Smoking on the school premises is prohibited.

Care of School Premises

Everyone in the school is responsible for the care of the school premises.

Students and staff are encouraged to feel a sense of ownership of the school and its environment.

- Staff will display students' work
- The building will be kept clean and tidy
- The grounds will be kept free of litter
- Damage or defacing school building and property is prohibited.

Unacceptable Behaviour

Unacceptable behaviour includes:

- Disrespect, disobedience, defiant attitude towards teachers and other staff
- Abusive, insulting or sexual remarks made to or about staff or other students
- Bullying, intimidating or threatening staff or other students
- Racist/offensive remarks
- Disruption of classes through talking, shouting, leaving assigned seat, refusal to follow instructions, etc.
- Late-coming and skipping classes
- Damage to school property or property of other students or staff
- Possession of knives, dangerous implements, fireworks, sprays, etc.
- Smoking, spitting, chewing gum
- Eating or drinking in building other than in the canteen
- Littering inside or outside school
- Not wearing and displaying full school uniform
- Failure to have all necessary books, copies, pens, pencils and equipment
- Not doing required class work and homework
- Accessing IT grounds and premises

- Leaving school grounds during school day without prior written permission from parents/guardians and school management.
- Any behaviour which impacts adversely or is damaging to the reputation of the College

Sanctions

A reprimand from a member of staff is expected to be sufficient to correct inappropriate behaviour. However, if this fails to correct the behaviour of a student the following procedures may be adopted:

- Moving the student to a different place
- Moving the student to another classroom
- A community task – picking up litter, tidying up etc.
- Exclusion from school outings and tours
- Exclusion from the right to represent the school
- A meeting with a senior member of staff-Principal, Deputy Principal, Assistant Principal or Class Tutor
- Letter/ phone-call to parent/guardian
- Parent/guardian called to school to discuss behaviour problems
- Detention for one hour after school (notification to parent/guardian)
- Lunchtime detention
- Reduced hours in school
- Suspension from school for a stated period
- Exclusion from school
- In the case of wilful or careless damage to property, students will have to pay for repair or replacement.
- Any other sanction that is deemed appropriate by the Principal or the Board of Management

Referral System

The school operates a referral system to address incidents of repeated misbehavior:

1. In cases where there is repeated misbehaviour in class and interventions have been tried by the subject teacher, a referral form will be completed by the subject teacher and passed on to the class tutor. The class tutor will discuss the issue with the student in question. A warning will be issued as to future behaviour.
2. Where students receive a second referral they will be placed on lunchtime detention for one week. Parents / guardians will be notified of this by letter.
3. Upon receipt of a third referral, the deputy principal will place the student in question *on report* so that behaviour can be monitored. The student will carry a report card to class each day for a week. Teachers will sign the card at the end of each class and the card will be signed by parents each evening. At the end of the week the completed card will be handed to the Deputy Principal. In addition, students will again be placed on lunchtime detention for one week. Parents / guardians will be notified of this by letter.

4. In instances where students receive a fourth referral, or subsequent referrals, parents / guardians will be invited to the school for a meeting to discuss the issues in question and to decide how best to address them.

Promoting good behaviour

Promoting good behaviour is the main goal of this code. Positive behaviour will be encouraged by:

- Student of the Month awards
- Praise from staff
- Encouraging students by granting additional responsibilities and by allowing students to involve themselves in the development of the code of behaviour
- Acknowledging students achievements at all levels
- Public acknowledgement from staff of positive behaviour through *vs ware* and student events

Parents/Guardians

Parents have a vital role in promoting good behaviour in school. Therefore effective home/school liaison is very important. The school has a right to expect that parents will give their full support in dealing with their child's behaviour.

We expect parents/guardians to:

- Keep us informed of behavioural difficulties they may be experiencing at home
- Inform us of any trauma which may affect their child's performance or behaviour at school
- Inform us about their child's ill-health and any absences caused by it

- The school will endeavour to achieve good home/school liaison by
- Promoting a welcoming environment in the school
- Giving parents/guardians regular constructive comments on students' work and behaviour
- Encouraging parents/guardians to join parents' association and come to parent/teacher meetings and other events in the school
- Involve parents/guardians early in any disciplinary matter

Other Agencies

Full use will be made of such agencies as Education Welfare Officers, Home/School Liaison Officers, Social Services, Health Services, and the Educational Psychological Services where appropriate.

Links to other Policies

Parents and students are advised that school policies on Admissions, Bullying, Substance Abuse, Acceptable Usage Policy etc. are an essential aspect of the Code of Behaviour.

Suspensions

The Board of Management has delegated authority to the Principal of the College to suspend for a period of up to 5 days. Parents/guardians have the right to appeal a suspension imposed by the Principal to the Board of Management.

Suspension Procedures

Where there is serious misbehaviour which may warrant suspension the College will

- Inform the student and their parents/guardians about the complaint/incident.
- Afford parents/guardians and the student an opportunity to respond. Normally this will involve a meeting between the parties.
- Where an immediate suspension is considered by the Principal to be warranted for reasons of the safety of the student, other students, staff or visitors, a preliminary investigation will be conducted to establish the case for the imposition of the suspension. In the case of an immediate suspension parents/guardians will be notified and arrangements made with them for the student to be collected.
- Where the Board of Management considers imposing a suspension the parents/guardians of the student will be afforded the opportunity to appeal to the Board of Management.

Note: At the end of a suspension the student will not be allowed back to school unless he/she is accompanied by at least one parent/guardian to discuss his/her reintegration back into the school.

Section 29 Appeal

Where the total number of days for which a student has been suspended in the current school year reaches 20 days, the parents/guardians or a student aged over 18 years, may appeal the suspension under section 29 of the Education Act 1998. At the time when parents/guardians are being formally notified of such a suspension they and the student will be told about their right to appeal. The appeal is made in the first instance to the VEC. Where an appeal to the VEC is concluded, parents/guardians or a student over 18 years may appeal to the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Skills.

Implementing the Suspension

The Principal will notify the parents/guardians 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
- Any study programme to be followed

- The arrangements for returning to school, including any commitments to be entered into by the student and the parents/guardians.
- The provision for an appeal to the Board of Management.

Expulsion

Expulsion of a student is a very serious step, and one that will only be taken by the Board of Management in extreme cases of unacceptable behaviour. Prior to a decision to expel the College will make every effort to address the misbehaviour by

- Meeting with parent/guardians 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

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 includes

- A serious threat of violence against another student or member of staff
- Actual violence or physical assault
- Supplying illegal drugs to other students in the college
- Sexual assault

Procedures in respect of expulsion

Step 1: A detailed investigation will be carried out by the Principal or under the direction of the Principal.

The Principal will:

- Inform the student and their parents/guardians in writing about the details of the alleged misbehaviour, how it will be investigated and that it could result in expulsion.
- Give parents/guardians and the student every opportunity to respond (including meetings) to the complaint of serious misbehaviour before a decision is made and before a sanction is imposed.

Step 2: A recommendation to the Board of Management by the Principal to expel a student.

Where such a recommendation is made the Principal will:

- Inform the parents/guardians and the student that the Board of Management is being asked to consider expulsion

- Ensure that parents/guardians 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 records as are given to the parents/guardian
- Notify the parents/guardians of the date of the hearing by the Board of Management and invite them to the hearing
- Advise the parents/guardians that they can make a written and oral submission to the Board
- 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 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. Where the Board decides to consider expelling a student it will hold a hearing. At the hearing the Principal, parents/guardians or a student aged over 18 years, put their case to the Board in each other's presence. Each party will be allowed to question the evidence of the other party directly.

Step 4: Board of Management deliberations and actions following the hearing.

- The Principal, parents/guardians or student will not be in attendance during the Board's deliberations
- Where the Board of Management, having considered all aspects of the case, is of the opinion that the student should be expelled, the Board will notify the Educational Welfare Officer (EWO) in writing, of its opinion, and the reasons for its opinion.
- The student will not be expelled before the passage of twenty school days from the date on which the EWO receives this written notification.
- The Board will inform the parents/guardians in writing about its conclusions and the next step in the process. Where expulsion is proposed, the parents will be told that the Board has informed 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 EWO will make all reasonable efforts to hold individual meeting with the Principal, parents/guardians, the student and anyone else who may be of assistance.
- The EWO will convene a meeting of those parties who agree to attend to ensure that arrangements are made for the student to continue in education.

→ A Board may consider it appropriate to suspend a student during this time. Suspension will only be considered where there is likelihood that the continued presence of the student during the twenty-day period 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 EWO has elapsed, and where the Board of Management remains of the view that the student should be expelled, the Board should formally confirm the decision to expel.
- Parents/guardians and the student will be notified immediately that the expulsion will proceed.
- Parents/guardians and the student will be informed of the right to appeal and be supplied with the standard form on which to lodge an appeal
- The appeal will be made in the first instance to the ETB. Where an appeal to the ETB has been concluded a further appeal (if necessary) may be made to the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Science

N.B. By enrolling their child in this school, parents/guardians are acknowledging acceptance and support for the Code of Behaviour.

This policy was formulated in 2012

Most recent review September 2013

Ratified by BOM October 2013

Next Review date August 2014