



Coláiste Cois Life

Gleann an Ghrífin, Leamhcán

Suspension and Expulsion Policy

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School Mission Statement

Is Gaelcholáiste ilchreidmheach é Coláiste Cois Life ina spreagtar barr feabhais san oideachas i dtimpeallacht foghlama dearfach. Tá an Ghaeilge agus cultúr na hÉireann mar chroílár an Choláiste. Cothaítear forbairt iomlánaíoch na scoláirí don saol amach rompu trí bhéim a chur ar chúram, pobal, meas agus comhionannas.

General Statement and Rationale

This policy outlines the procedures and principles governing the use of suspension and expulsion as sanctions in response to serious breaches of the Code of Behaviour. The school community recognises that suspension and expulsion are significant measures which may restrict a student's access to education. As such, they will only be considered where other interventions have failed, or where the seriousness of the behaviour warrants such action, and will always be applied in a fair, proportionate, and transparent manner, with full regard to the rights of the individual student.

The school is committed to providing a safe, secure, and respectful learning environment for all members of the school community. Students and staff are entitled to be treated with dignity and respect and to work and learn in an environment free from disruption, intimidation, harassment, discrimination, or threat to personal safety. Where behaviour seriously undermines these rights, the school has a responsibility to act in the best interests of the wider school community.

The school acknowledges that the rights of individual students must be balanced against the rights of other students and staff to a safe and orderly learning environment. In cases of serious or persistent unacceptable behaviour, it may be necessary to remove a student from the school community either temporarily or permanently. Such decisions will be made in accordance with fair procedures and due process, and will consider the nature, frequency, and impact of the behaviour, as well as the student's individual circumstances.

This policy operates in conjunction with the school's Code of Behaviour and seeks to support positive behaviour while clearly outlining the circumstances under which suspension or expulsion may be considered. By enrolling in this school, students and their parents/guardians agree to uphold the standards of behaviour expected and to cooperate with the procedures outlined in this policy, which are designed to safeguard the welfare, rights, and educational opportunities of all members of the school community.

Purpose and Scope

This policy outlines the procedures and principles governing suspension and expulsion. It ensures that all disciplinary actions are fair, consistent, proportionate, and in accordance with the following Irish education legislation.

- Education Act 1998 (Sections 28 and 29)
- Education (Welfare) Act 2000 (Sections 23 and 24)
- Developing a Code of Behaviour: Guidelines for Schools (DES, 2008)
- Bí Cineálta 2024
- Children First Act 2015, where applicable

This policy forms part of the school's Code of Behaviour and applies to all students:

- during the school day
- while participating in school-related activities, including digital and online activities
- on journeys to and from school, where behaviour impacts the life of the school.

Other School Policies

This policy operates alongside, and should be read in conjunction with, the following school policies:

- Code of Behaviour;
- Bí Cineálta;
- Child Safeguarding Statement;
- Special Educational Needs Policy;
- Acceptable Use Policy.

Definitions

Internal Suspension: Withdrawal from timetabled classes for a defined period while remaining under school supervision, with access to meaningful educational work. Internal suspension shall be for the shortest duration necessary and shall be subject to review by the Principal.

Suspension: Temporary withdrawal of permission to attend school for a defined number of school days.

Expulsion (Exclusion): Permanent removal of a student from the school roll following due process.

Authority

The Board of Management of the school has the authority to suspend or expel a student.

Authority to suspend students is delegated by the Board to the Principal and, where appropriate, to Deputy Principals. This delegation is formally recorded in Board minutes.

Only the Board of Management may expel a student. The Principal may recommend expulsion but may not make the final decision.

Grounds for Suspension

Suspension may be considered for serious breaches of the Code of Behaviour. The following categories outline the types of behaviour that may give rise to suspension. This list is not exhaustive.

A. General Grounds for Suspension

- verbal abuse of staff;
- serious or persistent disruption of teaching and learning;
- threats or acts of violence;
- serious damage to property;
- bullying, harassment, or intimidation;
- serious substance misuse offences;
- persistent refusal to comply with school rules.

A single serious incident may warrant suspension.

B. Illustrative Examples of Serious Behaviour

Without limiting the generality of the above, behaviours that may warrant suspension include, but are not limited to:

- a serious threat of violence against a member of the school community;
- actual violence against a member of the school community;
- gross defiance or wilful disregard for the authority of staff;
- possession, use, or supply of drugs, alcohol, tobacco, or vaping products while under the authority of the school.
- Possession of a dangerous or offensive weapon

In determining whether suspension is appropriate, the school will consider the student's age, educational needs, any identified special educational needs or disabilities, and whether reasonable accommodations have been made.

Procedures for Suspension

The student will be informed of the alleged misbehaviour and will be interviewed by the Principal/Deputy Principal/Year Head.

The student shall be afforded an opportunity to give their account of events, appropriate to their age and understanding, before any decision is made.

All relevant facts will be investigated by school management.

The Principal (or delegated authority) decides based on evidence and proportionality if a student is to be suspended.

Parents/Guardians are informed by phone and in writing of

- the reason for suspension;
- the duration and dates;
- expectations during suspension;
- arrangements for return to school;
- appeal rights, including Section 29 appeal rights where applicable.

Written confirmation of the suspension will be sent to parents/guardians and be recorded on VSWARE. Also, when communication cannot be made a text message may be sent.

Pending the implementation of a suspension, and where necessary to ensure safety or good order, a student may be temporarily withdrawn from class under appropriate supervision. This measure shall be time-limited and reviewed without delay.

Immediate suspension may be imposed where the continued presence of a student poses a serious risk to safety or good order.

Suspensions normally do not exceed three school days. The Principal, with Chairperson approval, may impose up to five school days in exceptional circumstances. Any suspension beyond five days requires Board approval.

Where a student is suspended for six or more consecutive school days, or where cumulative suspensions reach 20 school days or more in a school year, the Principal shall notify the Educational Welfare Officer in writing.

A formal re-entry meeting will be held, and appropriate support will be put in place to support reintegration.

Appeals to the Board of Management (Suspension)

A parent/guardian has seven school days from the date of written notification of a suspension to lodge an appeal to the Board of Management.

- Where the student is 18 years of age or older, the student may appeal.

Appeals must be submitted in writing to the Secretary of the Board of Management, clearly outlining the grounds on which the appeal is being made.

The appeal shall be considered at the next scheduled meeting of the Board of Management or, where necessary, at an extraordinary meeting convened for this purpose.

Parents/guardians wishing to attend the Board meeting must notify the Secretary of the Board of Management at least two school days in advance. Where attendance is confirmed, parents/guardians shall be advised of the specific time allocated to make representations.

At the meeting, the Principal shall outline:

- the reasons for the suspension
- the procedures followed
- the support and interventions considered prior to the suspension

The appeal shall then be heard by the Board through written submission and/or oral representation by the parents/guardians or the student, as appropriate.

Following the presentation of the appeal, the Principal shall take no further part in the proceedings, except where clarification is requested by the Board. The Principal and parents/guardians (if present) shall then withdraw from the meeting.

The Board of Management shall deliberate in private, having regard to:

- the evidence presented;
- the proportionality of the sanction;
- the principles of fair procedures and natural justice;
- relevant Department of Education and Tusla guidance.

The decision of the Board of Management shall be communicated in writing to the parent/guardian without undue delay.

The Board of Management may decide to:

- uphold the suspension
- amend the duration of the suspension
- substitute an alternative sanction or support measure

Where an appeal is upheld after a suspension has already been served, the suspension shall be removed from the student's record.

In accordance with Section 29 of the Education Act 1998, parents/guardians (or a student aged 18 or over) may appeal a decision to suspend a student for 20 school days or more to the Dublin and Dún Laoghaire Education Training Board.

Parents/guardians shall be informed in writing of this right of appeal, the relevant timelines, and the procedures involved.

Procedures for the Reintroduction of the Student to School

Prior to a student's return to school following suspension, parents/guardians will be requested to attend a meeting with the Principal, or a staff member delegated by the Principal. Where appropriate, the student shall also be invited to attend.

The purpose of this meeting is to:

- reaffirm the seriousness of the behaviour that led to the suspension;
- review expectations under the school's Code of Behaviour;
- secure parental engagement and support;
- agree strategies to support the student's successful reintegration into school.

Where necessary, the student and parents/guardians may be required to agree to specific conditions upon return to school. These may include, but are not limited to:

- behaviour or attendance monitoring;
- engagement with guidance, counselling, or other appropriate supports;
- ongoing review meetings;
- Engagement with a behavioural improvement plan.

Where appropriate, restorative actions may be required. These may include, but are not limited to:

- facilitated restorative conversations;
- reflection tasks;
- apologies;
- agreements to repair harm;
- Behaviour for learning.

These measures are intended to support positive behaviour, safeguard student wellbeing, and reduce the likelihood of further disciplinary action.

Expulsion (Exclusion)

The authority to exclude a student from the school rests solely with the Board of Management, acting in accordance with its statutory responsibilities, the school's Code of Behaviour, and relevant Department of Education guidelines.

Expulsion is the most serious sanction available to the school and will be considered only in exceptional circumstances. It may be applied where the Board of Management is satisfied that the continued presence of the student in the school constitutes a serious risk to the safety, welfare, or education of members of the school community, or where the student's behaviour has had a persistent and seriously detrimental effect on the learning environment.

In most cases, expulsion will be considered only after the school has made every reasonable effort to support the student in modifying their behaviour. Such efforts may include, but are not limited to:

- implementation of the school's staged disciplinary procedures
- individual behaviour support plans or contracts
- ongoing engagement with parents/guardians
- referral to and support from internal or external agencies, where appropriate
- the use of suspension as a proportionate and time-limited response

The Board of Management must be satisfied that these interventions have been exhausted and have not resulted in a sustained improvement in behaviour.

A. General Grounds for Expulsion

Expulsion may be considered where one or more of the following apply:

- the student's continued presence in the school constitutes a serious risk to the safety, welfare, or education of students, staff, or others;
- the student's behaviour has had a persistent and seriously detrimental effect on the learning environment;
- the student has persistently failed to respond to repeated and sustained interventions and sanctions;
- the Board of Management is satisfied that all reasonable efforts to support the student have been exhausted and have not resulted in a sustained improvement in behaviour.

B. Illustrative Examples of Serious Misconduct

Notwithstanding the above, the Board of Management may determine that expulsion is appropriate for a first offence where the behaviour is of such seriousness that it represents a grave and immediate risk to the school community.

Such behaviours may include, but are not limited to:

- a serious threat of violence towards a student, staff member, or any member of the school community;
- actual violence, physical assault, or severe intimidation;
- sexual assault or behaviour of a serious sexual nature;
- supplying prescription medication, illegal drugs, or alcohol to other students;

- possession of illegal drugs or alcohol on school premises or while under the authority of the school.
- Possession of a dangerous or offensive weapon

This list is not exhaustive.

The Board of Management should ensure that no decision to expel a student is discriminatory and that reasonable accommodations and appropriate supports have been considered for students with disabilities or special educational needs.

Procedure for Expulsion

A thorough, fair, and impartial investigation shall be carried out under the direction of the Principal. The investigation shall establish the facts of the case and consider:

- the nature and seriousness of the behaviour
- the impact on the school community
- previous interventions, supports, and sanctions applied

All relevant information shall be recorded and retained in accordance with school procedures.

In line with Section 24(4) of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000, expulsion shall be considered only where all reasonable efforts to address the student's behaviour have been made, except in cases of serious misconduct.

The student shall be given an opportunity to be heard and to provide their account of events at an appropriate stage in the process.

The student's views shall be considered in a manner appropriate to their age, maturity, and understanding.

This reflects DES expectations regarding student voice, engagement, and fair procedures in disciplinary processes.

Parents/guardians shall be informed in writing that expulsion is being considered and of the specific grounds on which it is proposed.

The written notification shall clearly outline:

- the reasons expulsion is being considered
- the procedures to be followed
- the right of parents/guardians to make representations to the Board of Management

Parents/guardians shall be given a minimum of five school days' notice of the Board of Management meeting at which expulsion will be considered, in accordance with Section 24(2) of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000.

A comprehensive written report shall be prepared by the Principal for the Board of Management.

The report shall include:

- details of the incident(s)
- records of interventions and disciplinary measures
- relevant supporting documentation

A copy of the report shall be provided to the parents/guardians in advance of the Board meeting to allow adequate time for consideration.

Parents/guardians wishing to attend the Board meeting shall notify the Secretary of the Board of Management at least two school days in advance.

Parents/guardians shall be afforded sufficient time at the meeting to make representations on behalf of the student.

The Board may seek clarification from the Principal where necessary.

Following representations, the Principal and parents/guardians (if present) shall withdraw from the meeting.

The Board of Management shall deliberate in private and reach a decision based on the evidence presented.

The decision shall be proportionate, reasoned, and recorded, in line with DES expectations for governance and oversight.

The decision of the Board of Management shall be communicated in writing to the parents/guardians without undue delay.

Where expulsion is imposed, the correspondence shall include:

- the reasons for the decision
- the effective date of expulsion
- confirmation of EWO notification
- the right to appeal the decision under Section 29 of the Education Act 1998

In accordance with the Education (Welfare) Act 2000, the school shall notify the Educational Welfare Officer (Tusla) of its decision.

The student shall not be expelled until 20 school days have elapsed from the date of notification, during which the Educational Welfare Officer will consult with all parties to explore alternative educational arrangements.

If the Board decides not to exclude, an alternative sanction will be decided in consultation with the Principal.

Appeals (Expulsion)

Parents/guardians or students over 18 may appeal an expulsion decision to the Dublin and Dún Laoghaire Education and Training Board under Section 29 of the Education Act 1998.

Appeals must be lodged within 42 calendar days. The Board shall comply with any determination.

Monitoring

School management shall maintain oversight of the use of suspension by systematically monitoring the number of days lost to suspension. This monitoring will ensure that suspension is used appropriately, proportionately, and consistently with the school's Code of Behaviour, Department of Education guidelines, and the principles of fair procedures.

The Board of Management shall use this information to satisfy itself that disciplinary measures are being implemented fairly and effectively, and that the school's approach to behaviour management continues to promote student wellbeing, inclusion, and a positive learning environment.

Review and Publication

This policy shall be reviewed regularly by the Board of Management.

The policy shall be made available to parents and students and published on the school website.