

St Mary's Secondary School Code of Behaviour

Mission Statement

The aim of St Mary's Secondary School is to provide holistic education, in the Catholic tradition, for all our students. We are committed to the academic, creative, emotional, spiritual and physical development of each student, in a caring and safe environment.

In keeping with the spirit of our Mission Statement, we have a caring and positive attitude to discipline. Disciplinary decisions are taken in a spirit of concern for all members of the school community.

All members of the school community have a right to enjoy and benefit from school in a secure environment conducive to learning and personal development. This right brings with it certain duties or requirements of students and they are:

Respect for Self

This includes:

- Being responsible, honest, courteous and punctual
- Giving reasonable attention to personal hygiene, neatness and uniform. The judgment of the appropriate authorities in such matters must be accepted by all students.
- Students must take due care of their personal property as the school does not accept responsibility for loss of same.

Respect for Others

This includes:

- Being co-operative, polite and friendly towards students, staff and visitors
- Being respectful to staff inside and outside of school.
- Recognizing the right of others to feel safe and secure in an orderly environment. Behaviour which causes disruption in class can adversely affect the prospects of others and is a serious offence.
- Bullying, intimidation, horseplay, running in corridors, etc. theft and deliberate damage to other people's personal property, are all unacceptable.

Respect for St Mary's

Respect for St. Mary's, which has a proud tradition extending back over 170 years, includes:

- Behaving in a responsible manner while wearing the school uniform inside and outside of the school.
- Students are expected to behave in a manner which reflects positively on themselves and their school when participating in or attending school related events outside of school.
- Theft, deliberate damage to furniture, fittings or buildings or defacement by graffiti are forbidden. Smoking, possession or use of alcohol or illicit drugs on the school premises (which includes the buildings, yards, playing fields& walkways leading up to school), surrounding environment or on school related activities is strictly forbidden. Interference with alarms, fire equipment and emergency exits is also prohibited. The latter are deemed an extremely serious offence.
- Students will be required to make good any damage caused to school property by neglect or misbehavior

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Partnership between Parents & School

The aim of the school is to:-

- Care for your daughter's well-being.
- Endeavour to get your daughter to achieve her full potential.
- Provide a balanced curriculum.
- Endeavour to achieve high standards of work and behaviour through building good relationships and developing a sense of responsibility.

- Keep you, as parents, informed about general school matters and your daughter's progress.
- Be available to meet parents.

The school expects of parents that you will:

- Ensure that your daughter attends school on time, properly dressed and equipped every school day.
- Inform the school about any concerns or problems which might affect your daughter's work or behaviour.
- Support your daughter in doing assigned homework and general study.
- Attend any information evenings relating to your daughter's education.
- Attend annual parent-teacher meetings.
- Familiarise yourself with the school's Code of Behaviour and Discipline and make every effort to ensure that your daughters keeps to this code.

School Attendance

All students must be present in the school during official school hours. Students must attend all classes for which they are timetabled.

- A student who becomes ill at school should report to Year Head. Otherwise being out of class on the excuse of illness will not be accepted. Parents may only be contacted **by the school** in the event of illness.
- A student's use of a mobile phone to contact home is deemed an offence.
- In accordance with the Education Welfare Act 2000, a parent shall notify the Principal/ Year head of the reasons for her/his daughter's absence from school for a school day or part of a school day, by:
 - Ringing the school office before 11.00 am the morning of the student's absence;
- And
 - Recording a note in the "Explanations for Absence" section of the student journal. This must be presented to tutors before the student rejoins class on the day of her return to school.

We request parents/guardians to keep the school informed of any changes to contact numbers.

- Students are not allowed to leave the school premises during school hours without permission from the Year Head (if unavailable, the Principal or Deputy- Principal). To do so is a very serious offence.
- Parents/guardians are requested to make medical, dental or other such appointments outside of class time. In exceptional circumstances when a student has to leave the school premises during school time on a particular day:
 - An explanatory note from parent/guardian must be written in the "Permission to leave school" section of the Journal and presented to the Year Head, on the morning of the appointment. Parent(s)/Guardian(s) are asked also to collect their daughter at the school office and sign the students out at reception. Students should come to reception at the departure time. Students will not be called over the intercom as this disturbs teaching and learning.
 - In the event of a parent being unable to collect their daughter it is essential that the parent/guardian rings the school office. A student will not be allowed to leave the school without a parent/guardian making contact with the school by phone or in person. It is **an extremely serious offence** if a student is absent from school without the knowledge of her parents/guardian.
- Junior students (First, Second and Third Years) are not allowed to leave the school premises during lunch time. First year students are not allowed to leave the school in the morning once they have been dropped to school.
- Students may not be absent from school for the purpose of holidays.
- The school authorities are legally obliged to report a student to the National Education Welfare Board if she is absent from school for 20 days or more.
- **Two half days count as one day.**

Punctuality

Students' punctuality is monitored regularly by Year Heads and Tutors.

- Students are required to be on time for all classes. The current teaching hours are from 9.15am to 3.50pm daily. Supervision of students extends for 10 minutes before classes commence and for 10 minutes after classes end except in the case of school sponsored activities or courses.
- A signed explanatory note in the student journal from a parent/guardian is required if a student is late for school. The absence of such a note/contact from home may result in a student being placed on detention at break time.
- A student who is late for school is required to enter by the main entrance door, to sign the "late book" at reception and to collect a "late slip" which she must present to the class teacher. This late book must be co signed by a parent/guardian who signs in the student.

- Senior students in the event of being late for school after lunch may lose their lunchtime privilege of going down town for a period of time decided by school management.

In Case of Illness

- Parents are contacted when a student is ill. There may be occasions during school hours when, in the event of an incident or sudden illness, it may be necessary for us to take your daughter urgently to a doctor or to hospital without delay. It is important that we have your prior permission to do this while we continue to try to contact you. Parents are asked to sign the permission slip in your daughter's journal relating to this issue.
- It is very important that we have a record in the relevant section of your daughter's Green Folder of any illness or condition which may lead to her collapse or sudden onset of illness. We need to know what the problem is so that we can take appropriate action while awaiting medical assistance and contacting you. We understand the need for confidentiality

Lunch Pass

Senior Students Only (TY, Fifth Year and Leaving Certs) may leave the school premises at lunchtime with their parent's permission. Junior students (1st, 2nd and 3rd Years) may not leave the school at lunchtime. In the event that your daughter abuses this privilege, it may be withdrawn at the schools discretion.

School Uniform

Full regular uniform must be worn at all times unless otherwise designated by Management. The uniform must be kept clean and presentable. Full uniform consists of:

- **Blouse:** St Marys -Blue and white striped.
- **Skirt:** St Marys- Navy – 3 Pleated- **knee length.**
- **Tights:** Navy tights/socks. Black Leggings/tights are not acceptable
- **Jumper:** Navy jumper with school crest.
- **Shoes:** Black/Navy shoes suitable for school, keeping in mind the importance of a young person's posture and safety. Pumps or canvas type shoes are not acceptable. Runners are required for PE **only** (non-mark soles) and are not to be regarded as shoes for school.
- **Jacket:** Navy school jacket with crest.
- It is essential that the school jacket/scarf is worn if wearing a jacket/scarf to school. Any other jacket/scarf is not allowed and will be confiscated. Please ensure the students name is clearly marked on the name tags provided on the jacket. Student property is entirely the students' full responsibility.
- A minimum of jewellery (watch, 2 rings, 1 bracelet and a max. of 2 small ear studs in ear lobe only) is allowed. Other piercings e.g. nose, upper ear, eyebrow etc., is totally unacceptable and in breach of school policy. Students may be asked to remove these immediately and these will be confiscated. Fashion accessories, make-up, fake nails and fake tan, are not allowed. Excess jewellery and accessories will be confiscated and kept in school until the end of school year.
- Hair colour and hair styles, should be in keeping with the general appearance of the school uniform, as deemed appropriate by management.
- In the event of incorrect uniform, (including make-up, accessories etc) a student may be placed on detention during lunchtime or her lunch time privilege may be withdrawn for a given period decided by Management.
- Further breaches of this rule may result in the issuing of probation cards or further sanctions as outlined in sanctions section of this journal.

Journal

- Students are required to have their students journal in their possession while in class everyday.
- The journal used must be the official St. Mary's Secondary School journal.
- The journal is not a private diary and must be used for **school purposes only**, particularly the noting of exercises and assignments and the noting of correspondence between teachers and parents/guardians and vice versa.
- Teachers have the right to inspect a journal, to write on it, or to request a comment or signature from a parent/guardian.
- Parents/guardians are requested to **sign the journal every week.**
- Students are required to keep the journal in excellent condition.
- Students may not tear pages from the journal or otherwise deface it in any way.

Mobile Phones

- The use of mobile phones/any equipment such as cameras, dvd camcorders and other video making equipment is not permitted on the school premises, (i.e. school buildings and adjoining land).
- Sanctions shall include confiscation for a given period of time and may only be recovered by a parent calling to the school after the expiry of that period.
- Further breaches of this rule may result in longer periods of confiscation.

- The use of equipment such as cameras, camera phones, dvd camcorders and other video making equipment will be deemed a serious offence may incur suspension.

Lockers

- Lockers which are the property of St Mary's, may be assigned to students for their personal use on a yearly basis at an annual cost communicated to students in early September. In certain cases, two students may be assigned a single locker.
- Students must keep their lockers tidy, in good order, free from graffiti and must keep them locked.
- Teachers may inspect lockers from time to time, and may at any time ask a student to open her locker for inspection.
- A student is in serious breach of the rules if she has unauthorized or banned substances, materials, utensils, tools or weapons in her locker.
- The privilege of having a locker may be revoked at any time for breach of these rules.
- The Board of Management does not accept responsibility for loss or damage to a student's property.

Forbidden Substances

- The possession, use or consumption of tobacco, alcohol, or any banned substance is prohibited on the school premises or grounds, or at any school outing or event.
- The presentation of a student on the school premises or grounds or at any school outing or event in an intoxicated state or having consumed an intoxicating or banned substance is strictly forbidden and an extremely serious breach of school rules.
- The possession or taking of prescribed drugs is strictly forbidden unless the student bears a note from her parents/guardians which has been authenticated by the Principal, Deputy Principal or other authorized teacher.

Student Cars

- Use of cars by students during the school day is not allowed i.e. 9:15am-3:50pm.
- In the event of a student using her car during this time it will be deemed as a serious offence as will any student who chooses to be a passenger.

School Outings, Trips, Excursions etc

- Educational outings, to exhibitions, museums, factories etc and work experience, are part of our curriculum. Students must attend.

Classroom Behaviour

- Students are expected to contribute positively to the learning environment of a classroom and to obey all classroom rules.
- Student must request permission to speak, and must listen clearly to others as appropriate.
- Students are expected to apply themselves appropriately to their studies and work. Homework is to be done properly and on time. In the event of matches etc. students should make every effort to complete homework for the next class.
- An explanatory note on the journal from a parent/guardian is required in the event of a student's failure to complete homework.
- Students are required to bring all required texts and equipment to class.
- Students must line up outside the classroom quietly and wait for their teacher to arrive.

Bullying

- The school's Anti-Bullying Policy is available to parents on request.
- Bullying is repeated aggression, be it verbal, psychological or physical, conducted by an individual or group against others. When the behaviour is systematic and ongoing it is bullying.
- In keeping with our Code of Behaviour and Discipline, it is vital that students understand that all forms of maltreatment of others are unacceptable and a breach our code of conduct.

Sanctions for Breach of the Code of Behaviour

- Students are required to respect the rights of others, to treat each member of the school community with respect, to adhere to our schools code of conduct and to obey all rules.
- In the interest of good order, to protect the rights of all who use our school and to achieve our overall objectives, breaches of the code of conduct may incur sanctions and penalties.
- Students and parents need to be aware that high standards of behaviour and co-operation are expected and disciplinary measures are used in a positive fashion to maintain these standards.
- In all disciplinary matters, teachers will inform students of the specific breaches of the code of conduct that have been noted and will give students an opportunity to respond to the charges against them.
- Teachers will warn students appropriately of the consequences of their misbehaviour.

Sanctions for Minor Breaches

- Class teachers will deal appropriately with all matters relating to minor breaches of the code of conduct and may inform the Class Tutor where applicable
- Sanctions may include:
 - The use of a student record card.
 - The issuing of a reprimand or warning.
 - The requesting of a verbal or/and written apology.
 - The assigning of punishment exercise.
 - The noting of the misdemeanor in the journal for parent/guardian signature.
 - The assigning of extra homework.
 - Detention at break or lunch time.
 - Students may be withdrawn from their own class and placed in the special care of another teacher.
 - Confiscation of equipment/property.
 - Removal of lunch time privilege

In some cases of student misbehaviour, the class tutor and or Year Head may request the counselor to intervene in an effort to help the student overcome behavioural or personal problems.

More Serious Breaches

- Where a problem persists or is of a more serious nature the teacher makes a report to the Tutor and Year Head who may issue Report Card 1/Probation 1. When On Report the student will be required to present her Probation Card to each class teacher and to her year head as required. The probation card will also require the signature of a parent/guardian each day. The period of Probation is at the discretion of the Year Head but normally a minimum of one week
- If Probation 1 stage is not satisfactory or the initial problem is serious, the Year Head in consultation with the Class Tutor and/or Deputy Principal may issue Probation 2 and the parents are contacted directly by the school. At this stage the Parents /Guardians and the student may be asked to meet member/members of staff with a view to resolving the matter, and to helping the student improve her behaviour.

At this stage in an attempt to positively impact behaviour further pastoral interventions may be put in place – e.g. a teacher/tutor may be assigned to mentor the student. The student would then be responsible for meeting the teacher/tutor every morning and sometimes every evening to reinforce positive behaviour and evaluate progress.

During this stage the student would also be encouraged to visit the guidance counselor on a weekly basis.

The year head/ Deputy Principal monitor progress on a weekly basis.

Suspension

- If probation 2 is unsatisfactory or the initial problem very serious the Principal or Deputy may suspend a student from school. Grounds for suspension may include - (to mention a few examples)
 - Threat to safety
 - Detrimental effect on other students
 - Theft
 - Single incident of serious misconduct
 - Assault
 - The use or threat of violence
 - Truancy
 - Other Interventions exhausted

Investigations are undertaken by class tutor/ year head and or Deputy Principal and the student/students concerned are given an opportunity to respond to any allegations posed. When suspension is considered, parents/Guardians will be informed of the students misdemeanour and asked to attend a meeting with the Principal and or Dep Principal/Year Head ASAP. The parents and student will be afforded an opportunity to respond to the charges against the student before a decision is made on suspension.

In the event of suspension a letter of suspension will be issued to the parents/Guardians of the student detailing:

- the length of suspension,
- reason for suspension,
- their right to appeal this decision to the BOM,
- general study to be done while on suspension and
- date and time of next meeting with parents and student to re-instate the student.
- Certain conditions may be imposed on a student before she will be accepted back to St Mary's after a suspension. Such conditions may include:
 - A meeting of the student with parents/guardian and Principal and/or members of staff.

- A written apology.
- A written undertaking of good and appropriate behaviour.
- The completion of assignments.
- Work with pastoral care team and/or career guidance counselor.
- Etc. etc.

Parents/Guardians may appeal a suspension to the Board of Management.

- The process of such an appeal does not confer on the student the right to return to class until the appeal has been heard or the suspension has been served.
- The Board will hear the appeal and will decide to either uphold the appeal or to approve the suspension.
- If the event of a successful appeal against a suspension by parents, the Board will delete any reference to the suspension from the students file and may impose another sanction on the student instead of suspension, or may decide to impose no further sanction on the student.
- In the case of a six day suspension of a student, or an accumulation of twenty days or suspensions in a school year, the Educational Welfare Officer will be informed.

Expulsion

The Board of Management may expel a student from the school in cases of:

- the most serious misdemeanors.
- or following the unsuccessful application of interventions and sanctions.
- Expulsion will be sanctioned only following the most rigorous examination by the BOM of the circumstances of the case and will be exercised in accordance with the Principles of Natural Justice and in conformity with the relevant legislation and the code of Conduct of St Mary’s.
- Before the BOM will consider and make a final decision on a case that may incur a penalty of expulsion, parents/guardians will be informed of the details of the case and the seriousness of the situation and will be invited to make a submission to the BOM and or to meet the BOM to hear the charges against their child and to present their response.
- In the case of the expulsion of the student, the student’s parents/guardians will have the right to appeal the decision of the BOM to the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Science. Such appeal should be made within 42 days of the expulsion order having been made.
- In the case of expulsion of a student, the EWO will be informed.

Review & Ratification

This policy was reviewed and ratified by the Board of Management on 09-09-14.

Signature of Chair _____ Date _____

Signature of Principal _____ Date _____