

School Policy on Suspension & Expulsion of Students:

The Board has duties under the Safety, Health & Welfare at Work Act, 1998 to provide a safe place of work and a safe system of work for employees and for those affected by the work activity (the Students). The Board shall “ take other reasonable measures as it considers appropriate to ensure that good order and discipline are maintained in the school and that the safety of students is secured.”

The Code of Discipline & Behaviour outlines a scale of sanctions to be imposed for breaches of School Rules.

With reference to the Code of Behaviour and after having considered the particular situation, the Principal/ Deputy Principal shall have open to them the authority to suspend a pupil for a specified period. The Parents/Guardians of such pupil shall be informed by phone where they can be so contacted and a letter sent to the home informing them of the matter. The Parents/Guardians may be requested to come to the school to discuss the matter and that the child’s return is conditional upon agreeing to co-operate with school rules and policies.

The school management reserves the right to apply sanctions in the Code of Behaviour for incidents that have occurred outside the school grounds where such incidents impact on the good governance of the school.

Where the matter is of such import that suspension is immediate, the pupil can not be returned to class and must be removed from school, the Parents/Guardians will be requested to call and collect the child from school. It will be open to the Parents/Guardians to discuss the matter with the Principal/Deputy Principals.

In all instances of suspension of a pupil the Parents/ Guardians shall be informed that such decision may be appealed to the Board of Management.

Lifting of a suspension and return to school is always conditional upon a guarantee of adherence to School Rules and Policies and co-operative behaviour throughout the school.

A student may be suspended pending recommendation to the Board of Management for consideration of expulsion. In such case the Parents/Guardians will be offered the opportunity to discuss the matter and informed of their right to appeal to the Board of Management. Final decision to expel a student rests with the Board of Management.

School Policy on Suspension & Expulsion of Students:

This policy applies to the school management, students, teachers and parents/guardians. It should be considered in relation to other policies – Code of Behaviour, Enrolment Policy, Anti-Bullying Policy, Substance Use, School Rules etc. In aspiring in the Mission Statement to create the best school in which to teach, learn work and play, the Board has duties under the Safety, Health & Welfare at Work Act, 1998 to provide a safe place of work and a safe system of work for employees and for those affected by the work activity (the Students). The Board shall “ take other reasonable measures as it considers appropriate to ensure that good order and discipline are maintained in the school and that the safety of students is secured.” In promoting inclusion and participation by all there is an acceptance that the school can only function effectively for the benefit of all by having a coherent system of structures and rules that recognise the right of the pupil to learn unimpeded and the right of the teacher to teach without obstruction.

Rationale

The school management recognises that no two situations are ever precisely the same and will consider the particular needs of pupils and staff in each instance. The school management also recognises the difficulties which certain pupils may experience due to educational, social/family, emotional issues and which may impact on their behaviour. The school through its Pastoral Care Structures and Policies will endeavour to address unacceptable behaviour by encouraging responsible behaviour and applying intervention strategies as appropriate. The school will seek the support of parents/guardians in responding to incidents. Where intervention has failed or may no longer be an effective response the school will apply sanction as outlined in the Code of Behaviour.

Suspension will be here defined and understood as the necessary removal/withdrawal of a pupil from attendance at school for a specified period of time as a consequence of an action or behaviour that is deemed serious and injurious to the good governance of the school. (A pupil may also be removed from an individual class pending resolution of an issue) . Suspension is employed as a response to signal to the parent/guardian that the school is seeking support and to the pupil that his/her behaviour has been obstructive to the mission statement of the school and that the pupil must address his/her behaviour, recognise that a particular standard of behaviour is required and confirm that every effort will be made to adhere to rules and policies upon return to school. Suspension may be from 1 to 6 days or until the Board can meet to consider the matter dependant upon the circumstances. (Refer to Code of Behaviour).

Expulsion will be here defined as the permanent removal of a pupil from school as a consequence of actions or behaviour that are of such import as to compromise - a) the safety / welfare of the pupil; b) the safety / welfare / ability of an employee to carry out their work without threat or obstruction; c) the safety / welfare / entitlement of another pupil to learn in an environment free from threat or obstruction. Expulsion will normally only be considered after other processes have failed or when the action or behaviour is of such seriousness that expulsion is the only option.

Objective of this policy

In setting out this policy in conjunction with the Code of Behaviour, the Board aims to present to pupils, parents and staff the norms of behaviour and relationships that are essential for meeting the aspirations of the Mission Statement and which reflect the ethos of the school as respectful of the rights of all involved in the school to go about their business in a safe, caring and comfortable environment.

Policy Content.

The Code of Behaviour outlines a scale of sanctions to be imposed for breaches of School Rules and provides a rationale for rules and behaviour. It is the duty of parents/guardians and pupils to familiarise themselves with the Code of Behaviour. It is a condition of attendance at Carndonagh Community School that parents and pupils confirm their agreement to recognise and agree to the Code of Behaviour. The school management reserve the right to amend their response to particular incidents giving due consideration to the individual nature of each case.

With reference to the Code of Behaviour and after having considered the particular situation, the Principal/ Acting Principal shall have open to them the authority to suspend a pupil for a specified period. The Board authorises the Principal / Deputy Principal as Acting Principal to suspend a pupil from school in accordance with this Policy.

The Parents/Guardians of such pupil shall be informed by phone where they can be so contacted and a letter sent to the home informing them of the matter. The Parents/Guardians may be requested to come to the school to discuss the matter and that the child's return is conditional upon agreeing to co-operate with school rules and policies.

The school management reserves the right to apply sanctions in the Code of Behaviour for incidents that have occurred outside the school grounds where such incidents impact on the good governance of the school.

Where the matter is of such import that suspension is immediate, the pupil can not be returned to class and must be removed from school, the Parents/Guardians will be requested to call and collect the child from school. It will be open to the Parents/Guardians to discuss the matter with the Principal/Deputy Principal.

In all instances of suspension of a pupil the Parents/ Guardians shall be informed that such decision may be appealed to the Board of Management. Lifting of a suspension and return to school is always conditional upon a guarantee of adherence to School Rules and Policies and co-operative behaviour throughout the school. Suspension of a pupil for longer than 6 days will be reported to the Educational Welfare Officer. All suspensions will be reported to and noted by the Board of Management.

A student may be suspended pending recommendation to the Board of Management for consideration of expulsion. In such case the Parents/Guardians will be offered the opportunity to discuss the matter and informed of their right to meet with and appeal to the Board of Management. Final decision to expel a student rests with the Board of Management. Before a student is expelled the Board must inform the Educational Welfare Officer of the belief that a student should be expelled and the reason for so believing.

The Board will not effect an expulsion within 20 days of the EWO being notified but will apply such sanction for this period to ensure good order and discipline are maintained and the safety of students is secured. A decision to expel may be appealed by Parent / Guardian to the Secretary General of the Dept. of Education & Science.

Process of expulsion:

Each step should be conducted in the presence of a witness and notes kept.

- i) the case against the student should be put to her/him and s/he should be given an opportunity to respond. The Parents should be informed of the grounds upon which expulsion is being considered, and the nature of the evidence being relied upon. It is accepted that the quality of proof required for expulsion need not be the quality required in a court of law.
- ii) The parents should also be provided with a fair opportunity to consider the evidence and to offer evidence in return.
- iii) Having considered all aspects of the case, if the Principal decides to recommend to the Board of Management that the student be expelled, s/he must inform the student's parents in writing of the decision, the reason(s) for it and of their right to make representations to the Board of Management on behalf of the pupil. In the interest of the student, parents should be required to give notice to the Secretary of the Board of Management of their intention to make such representations no later than a specified date to enable an early hearing by the Board of Management.
- iv) Parents are entitled to seek access to the student's file and to documentation relevant to the expulsion. If the Principal, for whatever reason refuses to hand over copies of documentation, the parents may subsequently have a legitimate complaint that full details of the 'case to answer' were not furnished in advance.
- v) Arrangements should be made at the earliest possible date for a joint meeting of the Board of Management with the Principal and the parents. The recommendation of the Principal and the representations (if requested) of the parents should be heard by the Board at this meeting. No new evidence or information which had not previously been made known to the parents should be introduced at this meeting. The pupil may need to stand suspended from school pending the decision of the Board of Management.
- vi) When the Board has heard all the evidence, the parents and/or their representative(s) and the Principal must withdraw to allow the Board to consider the case. Even though the Principal is a member of the Board, s/he may not be party to the consideration of the case as s/he is an involved party. Further the Board should ensure that any member of the Board who might have a conflicting interest should be excused and not participate in the decision.
- vii) To ensure its independence as the final authority in the case, the Board of Management must not be involved in the process up to the decision of the Principal to recommend the expulsion of the student.
- viii) If the recommendation of the Principal is rejected, it is a matter for the Board to decide on what conditions, if any, the student will be allowed back to school.
- ix) If the recommendation of the Principal is approved the parents or, (in the case of a student over 18 years) the student must be informed of their right to appeal the decision to the Secretary General of the Dept. of Education & Science.

The Board will review this policy in the light of legislation or developments or upon request by the partners. The Policy will be available to parents upon request and may be accessed on the school website www.carndonaghcs.ie.

Reviewed and amended by the Board of Management at the meeting of 1st December 2011.