

2024/25



Code of Behaviour

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Code of Behaviour

“Working together, together achieving success”

Scope

This code of behaviour applies to all second level students of Ó Fiaich College and must be adhered to both during school and when participating in activities outside of school time. This policy was drawn up in consultation with all the school partners, including Board of Management, staff, parents, and students. It is in line with the guidelines from the NEWB and the Education Welfare Act 2000.

Rationale

Ó Fiaich College is a busy second level school and a thriving third level Institute providing many third level courses. We all work together closely in our school each day and desire to create an atmosphere that is happy, respectful and provides a safe and secure environment for learning and student well-being. Our Code of Behaviour encourages and reinforces these values. It supports the key school expectations of *Respect, Consideration & Responsibility*.

Relationship to the Mission Statement

‘Working Together in Pursuit of Excellence’ is at the core of what we aspire to in Ó Fiaich College. We as educators facilitate the development of the varied talents which our students have. We encourage our students to become independent and responsible learners. The Code of Behaviour recognises and encourages good behaviour and provides the necessary learning environment to facilitate and encourage learning. We involve parents/guardians in the maintenance of good behaviour and ask the students and parents/guardians to sign the Code of Behaviour at the beginning of the academic year.

Goals

- To contribute to mutual respect.
- To create an environment that encourages good behaviour.
- To recognise the varied talents of the students.
- To encourage acceptance and adherence to an agreed set of principles and behaviour.
- To support effective teaching and learning.
- To encourage students to take responsibility for their learning and behaviour.
- To outline the procedures when a student misbehaves.

Roles and Responsibilities

Students

The students are responsible for upholding the Code of Behaviour and trying at all times to do their best.

Parents/Guardians

The school recognises the important role parents play in the education of their children. The school involves parents in the development and implementation of the Code of Behaviour. The school expects parents to support the code and encourage their son/daughter/Ward to follow it.

Teachers

Teachers have a huge influence on their students. Teacher's main role is in teaching and learning but they also have a role to promote the code of behaviour. As a school our teachers foster positive relationships with the students and encourage them to follow the code. The school has a tutor system where a teacher is assigned to a particular class and has responsibility for promoting positive behaviour within this class group.

Subject Teachers, Tutors, Year Heads, Guidance Counsellors, Learning Support Teachers, SNAS, Home School Community Liaison Officer, School Completion, Behaviour For Learning Teacher, Pastoral Care Team, Deputy Principals and Principal all have a specific role in supporting the Code of Behaviour.

Other Staff

Ancillary staff can also help in the successful implementation of the code. They can report incidents of misbehaviour and examples of positive behaviour they witness. They have an important role to play in the running of the school.

Board of Management

The school policies are approved by the Board of Management. The Board of Management deals with appeals in cases of suspension or expulsion.

Measures that Support the Code of Behaviour

In Ó Fiaich College students are encouraged to follow the Code of Behaviour using the following measures:

- The Code of Behaviour is included in the school journal. Parents and students read the rules and sign the contract at the beginning of the school year.
- The Year Heads explain and reiterates the Code of Behaviour at the opening assembly and throughout the academic year.
- The Class Tutor reinforces and explains the rules during the tutor class & teaches specific lessons on the classroom & corridor expectations. The students are given the opportunity to think and talk about the rules and expectations.
- School rules are an important aspect of the SPHE programme. Important topics are discussed in class concerning Respect, Equal Rights, Bullying which helps students understand the reasons for the Code of Behaviour.
- The Student Council are involved in helping in the review & implementation of the Code of Behaviour. The Student Council are also involved in the promotion of positive behaviour by being involved in the anti-bullying week and other school themed weeks. They highlighting important issues in the school and engage in voluntary & fundraising activities.
- The Student Leaders are involved in helping in the implementation of the Code of by the promotion of positive behaviour and acting as role models for younger students.
- The Pastoral Care Team assists students who are having difficulty by providing one to one support in the form of counselling. Talks are provided for students as part of the role of the Pastoral care team. Issues such as Bullying, Racism, Substance Misuse are discussed and talks provided for students. As we are now receiving BFL support small group work can also be given to assist students e.g. Alert Programme, People Skills etc.
- The Year Head helps students having difficulty to reflect on their behaviour and to improve it. They are also available to meet with parents to talk about strategies to deal with problems that may arise in school.
- Year Heads and Form Tutors may run “Student of the Month” awards to reward positive behaviour or improved behaviour.

School Rules and Responsibilities

School rules and responsibilities assist students in becoming responsible and mature adults. They safeguard students' right to learn and teachers' right to teach in a positive, safe and respectful environment.

Therefore, you are expected to:

1. Come to school every day and arrive on time:

This means:

- ✓ Attend school every day unless it is absolutely unavoidable;
- ✓ If you miss school you bring in a note;
- ✓ If you must leave school during the day, you get permission from Form Tutor and/or Year Head;
- ✓ Arrive to all classes on time;
- ✓ If you are unavoidably late, you sign the late arrival book at reception.

Because:

- ✓ *Time missed is hard to make up;*
- ✓ *The school needs to have an explanation;*
- ✓ *The school is responsible for you during the day;*
- ✓ *It is good manners to do so;*
- ✓ *If you're late, you waste time and disrupt class.*

2. Do your best to work, both in class and at your homework:

This means:

- ✓ Listen to the teachers and follow their instructions;
- ✓ Don't disrupt the class;
- ✓ Do your homework each night;
- ✓ Have your journal out at all times and use it to record homework.

Because:

- ✓ *The teacher is trying to help you;*
- ✓ *It is unfair to others who wish to learn;*
- ✓ *It is a back-up to the work done in class;*
- ✓ *It helps you remember what you have to do.*

3. Come in properly prepared for your subjects:

This means:

- ✓ Have your journal, pens, books, copies and digital device;
- ✓ Carry them in a school bag;
- ✓ Bring any special equipment needed;
- ✓ Go to your locker **only** at the allocated times.

Because:

- ✓ *It wastes time and upsets others if you haven't got them;*
- ✓ *It prevents loss and keeps books from becoming destroyed;*
- ✓ *It is impossible to do the subject without it;*
- ✓ *It delays the start of classes if you go at other times.*

4. Come to college in uniform:

This means:

- ✓ Wear and respect full uniform every day;
- ✓ Only school jackets are acceptable;
- ✓ Wear appropriate PE gear **ONLY** on PE day;
- ✓ Having Discrete facial piercings.
- ✓ Following safety rules, especially in practical rooms.

Because:

- ✓ *You will always look clean and tidy;*
- ✓ *School jackets are part of the uniform code;*
- ✓ *Facial piercings, large ear-rings, chains etc. can be a risk to safety and hygiene.*

5. Have respect and consideration for your teachers:

This means:

- ✓ You are always courteous and respectful to teachers;
- ✓ Use polite language, hands up, one voice;
- ✓ You show courtesy and respect when accompanied by teachers outside the college.

Because:

- ✓ *Everyone is entitled to this;*
- ✓ *This respects **everyone's** right to be listened to;*
- ✓ *It makes outings more enjoyable for all.*

6. Have respect and consideration for other students:

This means:

- ✓ Value everyone's opinion;
- ✓ Being helpful and treating others with good manners and respect;
- ✓ Not bullying or cyberbullying others;
- ✓ Not fighting;
- ✓ No horseplay;
- ✓ Stay to the left when moving on all corridors and stairs;
- ✓ Following the one way system;
- ✓ Respect others property.

Because:

- ✓ *Everyone is entitled to an opinion;*
- ✓ *You are entitled to this;*
- ✓ *This causes fear, hurt and misery;*
- ✓ *It can cause serious injury;*
- ✓ *This too, can lead to accident or injury;*
- ✓ *It keeps the corridors safe and orderly;*
- ✓ *You would expect **your** property to be respected.*

7. Respect college and classroom property:

This means:

- ✓ Don't break, damage or deface college property;
- ✓ Take good care of your books and digital devices;
- ✓ When using equipment or books, you return them tidily after class;
- ✓ You always put litter in the bins provided;
- ✓ You follow the recycling guidelines in school to help care for the environment.

Because:

- ✓ *Others have to use it and it is expensive;*
- ✓ *Others will need to use them after you;*
- ✓ *They will then be in place for other users;*
- ✓ *No one likes messy surroundings;*
- ✓ *We all need to help with climate change.*

8. Have mobile phones switched off & not visible in class/school:

This means:

- ✓ If you have a mobile phone you must make sure that it is switched off before you come to school;
- ✓ Mobile phones should not be visible in class/school at any time;
- ✓ If you need to contact home during the school day you use the phone in the office;
- ✓ Storing your phone, headphones, ear pods etc. safely in your locker or bag.

Because:

- ✓ *This is against school Policy;*
- ✓ *A mobile phone can cause serious distraction in school;*
- ✓ *Neither teacher nor students can work properly if they are distracted by mobile phones;*
- ✓ *You are responsible for your digital devices.*

9. Using my digital device only for classwork in school & only on teacher instruction:

This means:

- ✓ The digital device is only used when the teacher decides;
- ✓ The digital device is for educational use only in class.

Because:

- ✓ *A digital device is great for school work;*
- ✓ *The digital device is not for playing games on;*
- ✓ *Students cannot focus on the work being covered if the student is distracted by using the digital device for personal reasons.*

10. Modelling the Core Values of our school:

This means:

- ✓ Being respectful and caring;
- ✓ Including & considering others;
- ✓ Having a positive attitude;
- ✓ Being an active member of my school community.

Because:

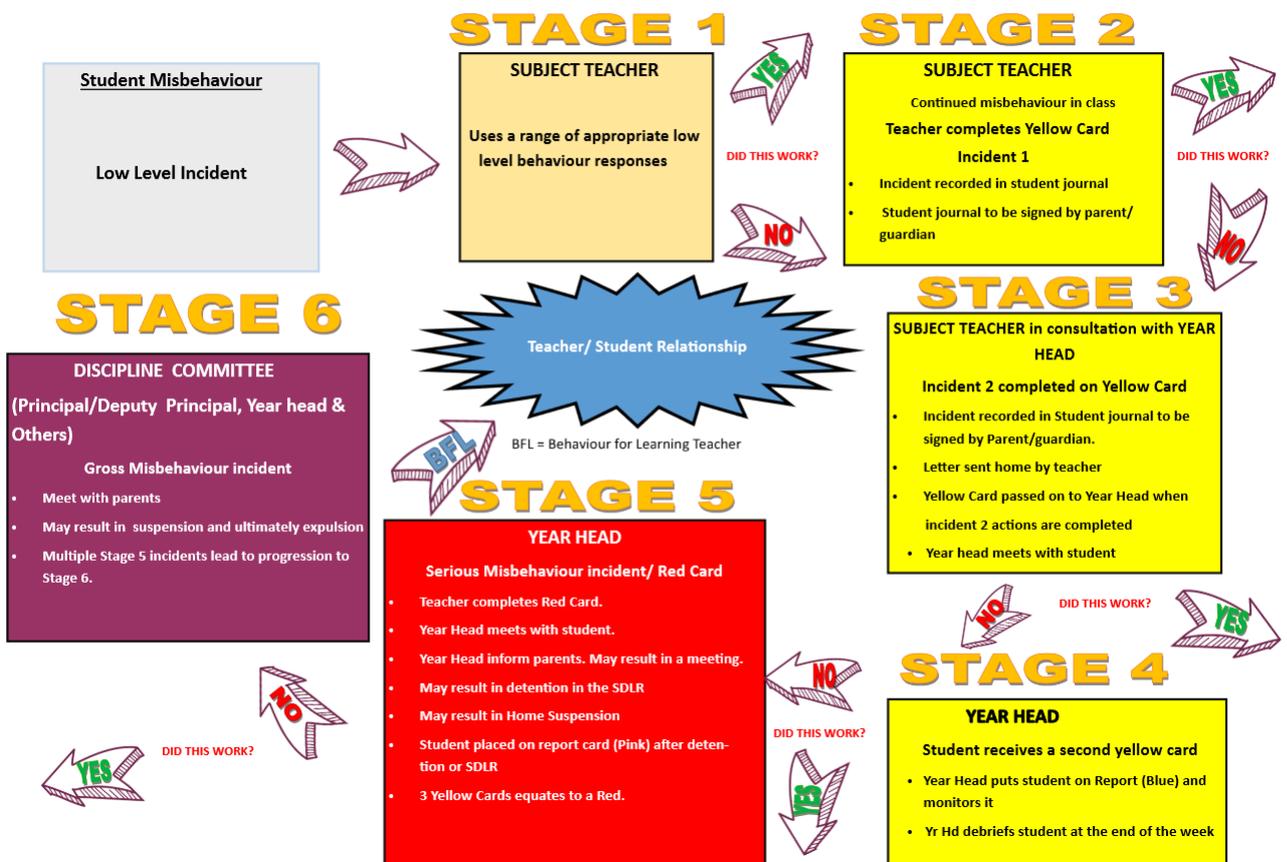
- ✓ *I am proud that I attend Ó Fiaich College.*



Guidelines for the Implementation of Discipline Procedures

The purpose of these sanctions and strategies to help to bring about a change of behaviour. The following guidelines are intended as a help to all staff to adopt a consistent, uniform and fair approach to the implementation of Discipline Procedures in the school.

Circle of Referral:



The Subject Teacher's Response

The subject teacher is the main source of help for students. They have an established relationship of trust with their students and a strong influence with students. Each teacher has responsibility for managing behaviour with their own class groups and will deal with routine misbehaviour through classroom management strategies. Regular and serious breaches of the code of behaviour will be reported to the relevant Year Head using the Circle of Referral.

Stage 1 & 2 Misconduct

The subject teacher uses a range of appropriate responses to address the behaviour e.g. quiet word, tactical ignoring, changing seating plan, verbal warning, phone call home, appropriate extra work etc.

Stage 2 - Continued Misconduct in class - Yellow Card (see Appendix 1)

- Teacher completes Yellow card – Incident 1.
- Incident is recorded in the student journal.
- Student Journal is signed by the Parent/Guardian.

Stage 3 – Persistent Misconduct in class - Yellow Card (see Appendix 1)

- Teacher in consultation with Year Head completes Yellow card – Incident 2.
- Incident is recorded in the student journal.
- Student Journal is signed by the Parent/Guardian.
- A Letter is sent home by the subject teacher & a copy is given to the Year Head.
- The fully completed Yellow Card is passed onto the Year Head.
- The Year Head meets with the student & discusses the misconduct, detention may be given or a meeting may take place with the subject teacher to address any concerns/issues.

Stage 4 – Second Yellow Card

- The student receives a second Yellow Card.
- The Year Head meets the student and places them on a Report Card (Blue) and monitors it on a regular basis.
- The Year Head debriefs the student at the end of the week regarding progress and any issues that arose during the week.

Stage 5 – Serious Misbehaviour/Incident – Red Card (see Appendix 1)

- The student receives a Red Card for Serious Misconduct and breach of the Code of Behaviour or the student receives three Yellow Cards (6 incidents).
- The Year Head informs the Parents/Guardians – this may result in a meeting being arranged with the Parents/Guardians to discuss behaviour.

- The Year Head may also, undertake the following actions:
 - The offending student may be suspended from school activities or outings.
 - The student may be suspended to home & school work assigned for the duration of the Home Suspension.
 - In School Detention in the Self Directed Learning Room may be arranged- this is designated as an in-college detention centre which caters for students whose conduct warrants being removed from class due to disruptive behaviour. It can be used for students who have been suspended from normal school activity instead of sending them home.
 - Only students whose conduct complies with the criteria for suspension stated in this code will be sent to Self-Directed Learning Room.
 - Only the Year Heads or the Principal/Deputy Principal can assign a student to the Self Directed Learning Room.
 - A student suspended from normal school activity may spend a maximum of three days in Self Directed Learning Room.
 - An appropriate range of work will be given to the student to complete in the Self Directed Learning Room.
 - Parents/Guardians will be informed if their son/daughter/ward are assigned to Self-Directed Learning Room.
 - After completion of the three days in the Self Directed Learning Room, the student will be spoken to by the coordinator of the Self Directed Learning Room for a debrief and review.
 - The student on return to school or normal class activity will meet & discuss the matter with the relevant Year Head. The Year Head will have allowed an opportunity for the student to reflect on their behaviour and to suggest ways to improve. The Year then places them on a Report Card (Pink) and monitors it on a regular basis.

Stage 6 - Further Stage 5 Misconduct or Gross Misbehaviour

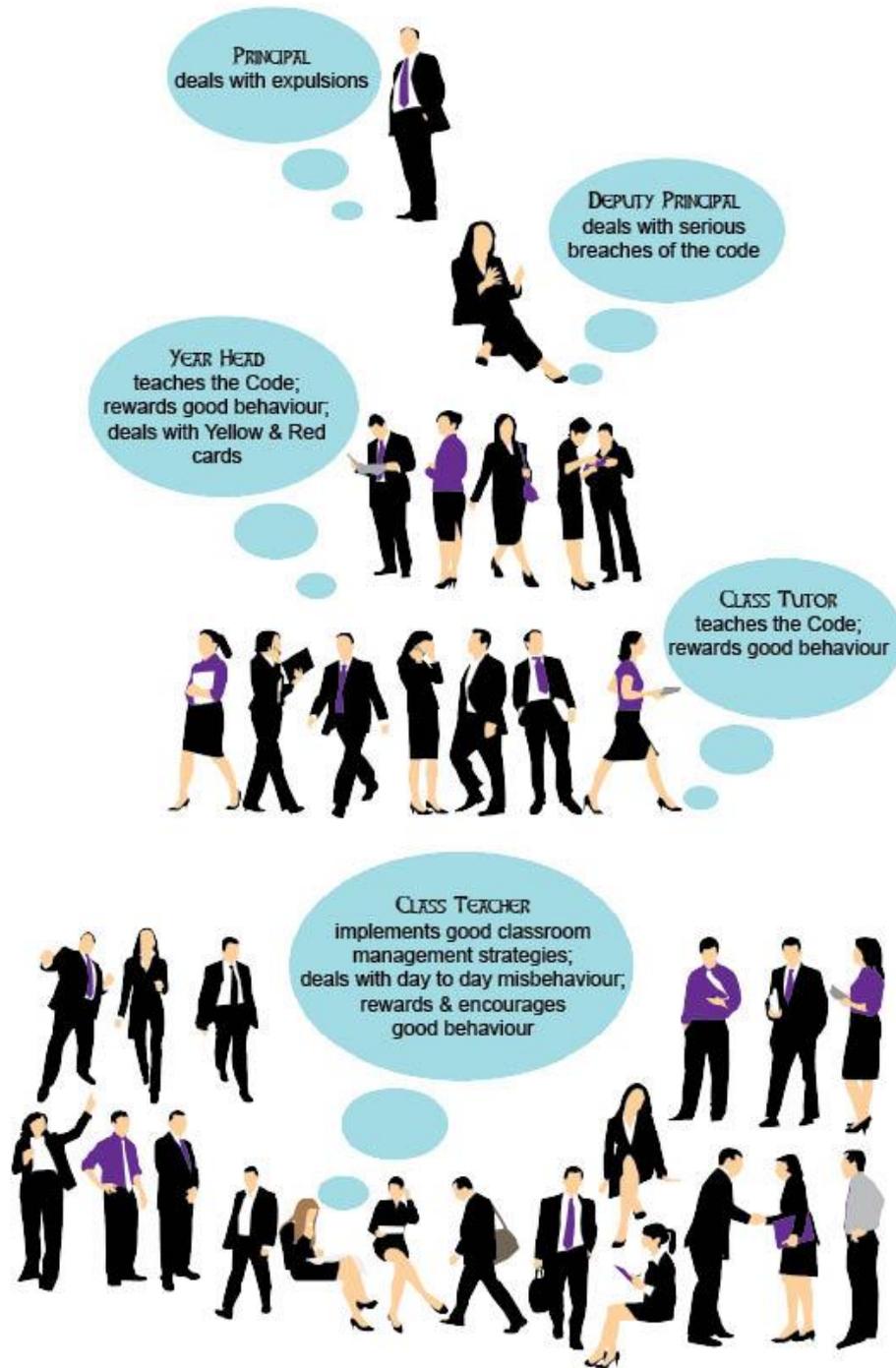
1. The Year Head meets with the Parents/Guardians.
2. The Year Head will arrange that the student's behaviour will be discussed by the College Disciplinary Committee.
3. The student will be suspended to home pending a meeting of the Disciplinary Committee.
4. Parents/Guardians will be informed of this procedure and will be invited to attend the meeting of the disciplinary Committee.
5. The first concern of the Disciplinary Committee will be to explore and recommend a restorative course of action. It may in extreme cases recommend permanent suspension or exclusion from college. The recommendations of the Disciplinary Committee will be conveyed by the Principal or Deputy Principal to the parents/Guardians of the students concerned. Where appropriate the recommendations will be reported by the Principal to the Board of Management.

The section including the grounds for expulsion and procedures in respect of expulsion may be viewed at the end of the policy (see appendix 2)

Substance Misuse

Ó Fiaich College has a specific and detailed policy on its response to Substance Misuse. While it is a Stage 5 Offence, students found in possession of, or using drugs will be dealt with according to the College's Substance Misuse Policy.

Ladder of Referral



The following section includes the grounds for expulsion and procedures in respect of expulsion – please note that the LMETB Policy on Suspension & Expulsion applies to all LMETB schools (see *appendix 2*)

Expulsion

The grounds for expulsion

Expulsion of a student is a very serious step, and one that is only taken in extreme cases of unacceptable behaviour and after the school has taken significant steps to address the misbehaviour and to avoid expulsion of a student.

These might include:

- Repeated breaches of the Code of Behaviour over a sustained period of time which threaten to undermine the learning environment in the school.
- The student's continued presence in the school constitutes a real and significant threat to safety.
- The student is responsible for serious damage to property.
- Consumption or sale of alcohol or illegal drugs on the school premises or at any event organised by the school.

Expulsion for a first offence

There may be exceptional circumstances where the Board of management / LMETB 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 other students in the school
- sexual assault

Procedures in respect of expulsion

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 and LMETB by the Principal.

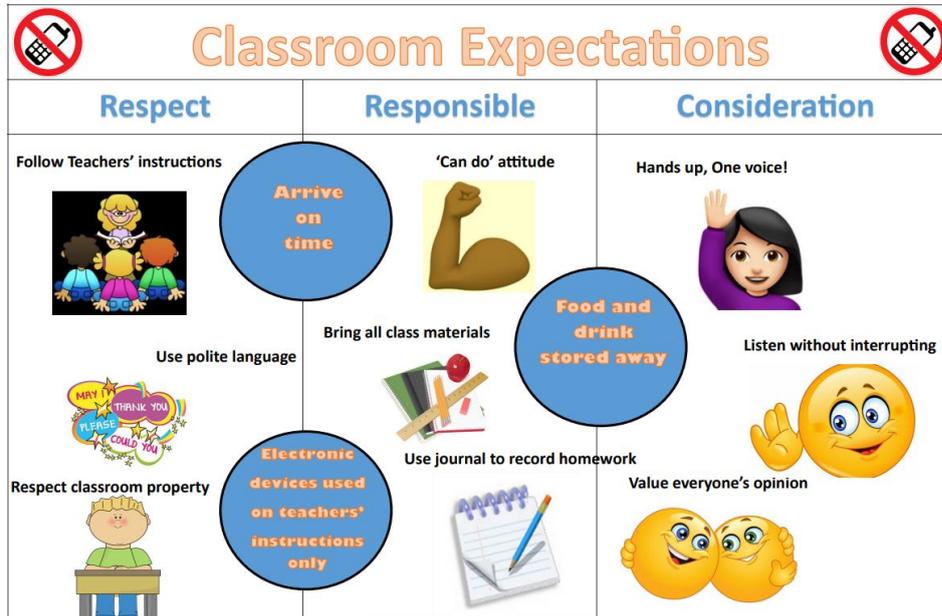
3. Consideration by the Board of Management of the Principal's recommendation.
4. The Board of Management will organise a meeting with the parents/guardians of the student concerned. Prior to this meeting, the Board will provide the parents/guardians with written description of the allegations against the student. They will also be furnished with the policies and procedures under which the course of action is being taken.
5. The parents/guardians will be invited to make a written submission, if they so desire, before the Board meeting.
6. At the Board meeting, the Board will hear the Principal's case, (in the presence of the parents/guardians) and hear the response from the parents/guardians and the student (if that is the wish of the parents/guardians). The Board will also consider all relevant documentation.
7. The Board having considered all the issues involved and all of the representations made will make a decision on the matter. The Principal, parents/guardians or student will not be present for the Board's discussion and decision on the matter.
8. 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. The expulsion shall not take effect before the passing of 20 school days following receipt of the written notification by the Educational Welfare Officer. The student may however be suspended from school during this period of time.
9. The Board will inform the parents in writing about its conclusions and that the Board of Management/LMETB will now inform the Educational Welfare Officer
10. Consultations arranged by the Educational Welfare Officer.
Confirmation of the decision to expel.

A decision by the Board of Management to expel a student may, in accordance with Section 29 of the *Education Act, 1998* be appealed to the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Science.

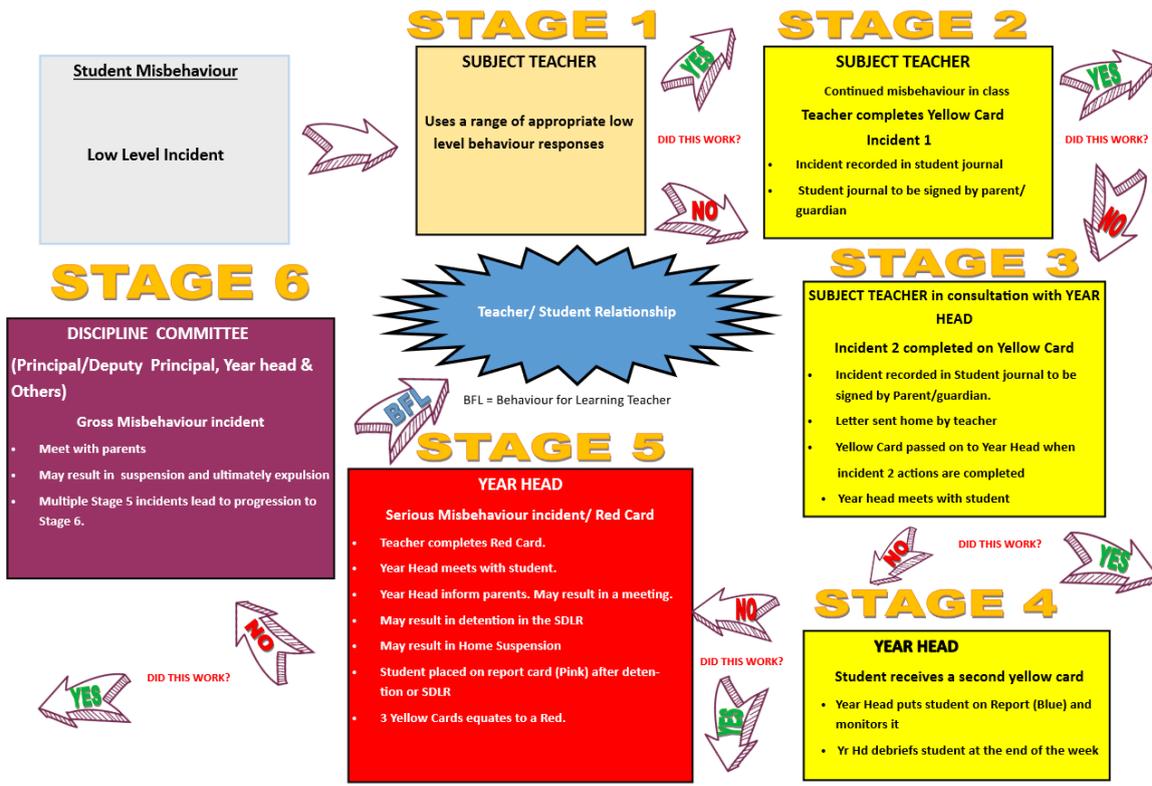
LMETB reserves the right to decide which of the tasks involved in these procedural steps requires separate meetings and which tasks can be accomplished together in a single meeting, consistent with giving parents due notice of meetings and a fair and reasonable time to prepare for a Board hearing.

Appendix 1 Code of Behaviour Documentation

Classroom Expectations



Circle of Referral



Examples of Low, Serious & Gross Misbehaviour

Persistent Low level Misbehaviour (Stages 1-4)	Serious Misbehaviour (Stage 5)	Gross Misbehaviour (Stage 6)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inattentive/off task • Ignoring Instructions • Distracting others in class • Inappropriate language/comments • Not being in correct uniform • Absent from class without permission • Littering corridor/class • Not having class materials • Not attempting homework • No homework • Late to class • Chewing gum • No Journal • Mobile phone visible • Using mobile phone in class without permission • No equipment or partial equipment, including PE gear. • Talking out of turn • Shouting out a question or comments • Using iPad without permission • Making noises • Disrupting teaching and learning • Eating in class 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deliberate use of inappropriate language/comments, directed at a teacher or student • Using a dismissive or aggressive tone when speaking to a teacher • Physical aggression e.g. horseplay/pushing • Throwing objects • Walking out of class without permission • Leaving school without permission • Interfering with, damaging or defacing school property or the property of others • Name calling/jeering/homophobic racist comments (see anti-bullying policy for guidance on appropriate response) • Deliberately disrupting teaching and learning. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Repeated aggressive behaviour verbal and/or physical • Persistent or severe verbal abuse of student • Persistent or severe verbal abuse of staff • Bullying and/or cyberbullying • Strong & repetitive defiance • Accessing inappropriate content on mobile devices • Using IT device to photograph staff/students • Malicious damage to school staff or student property • Smoking, possessing or using alcohol and/or addictive substances • Fighting • Throwing an object to inflict injury • Theft • Incitement of violence • Intimidation of staff/students • Inappropriate behaviour on buses and school trips • Continuous extreme behavioural difficulties • Other incidents not named above deemed to be serious • Sexual Harassment

Responses to Low, Serious & Gross Misbehaviour

Low Level Misbehaviour (Stages 1-4)	Serious Misbehaviour (Stage 5)	Gross Misbehaviour (Stage 6)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proximity • Signal/Gesture/Look • Quiet Word • Change Seating • Verbal Reminder of expectation • A simple reprimand • Tactical ignoring • Discussion with student • Correct student before behaviour escalates • Remind student of consequences of the behaviour • Teach/model/practice expected behaviour • Speak to the student at the end of class • Assign extra appropriate schoolwork • Record misbehaviour in Journal to be signed by parent/guardian. • Persistent incidences of low level behaviour recorded on Yellow Card. Three incident records warrants referral to year head. • Letter home to parents/guardians before referral to year head. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Red card referral to year head • Year Head discusses incident with parent/guardian and student. • Possible detention • Self-Directed Learning Room (Room 3) at Year Head's discretion in consultation with the subject teacher. • Suspension to home at Year Head's discretion in consultation with the Deputy Principal/Principal and subject teacher. • Student placed on Report Card to be monitored by Year Head. • Referral to Behaviour for Learning Teacher by Year Head • Possible referral to care team 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Direct referral to DP/Principal via Year Head • Student suspended to home at management discretion. • Discipline Committee • Referral to BOM • Permanent Exclusion

Yellow Card – Stage 2 & 3

Name: _____

Class and year head: _____

Date of handover to Year Head: _____

<p><u>Stage 2</u> Student Initials</p> <p><u>Incident 1</u> _____</p> <p>Date: _____</p> <p>Description of incident:</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p><u>Teacher action: Note in Journal</u></p>	<p><u>Stage 3</u> Student Initials</p> <p><u>Incident 2</u> _____</p> <p>Date: _____</p> <p>Description of incident:</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p><u>Teacher action: Note in Journal and Letter Home</u></p>
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<p><u>Efforts to address behaviour</u></p> <p>Change seating arrangement <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Verbal warning <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Spoken to after class <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Note in journal <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Keyword Worksheet <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Phone call home <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Extra appropriate schoolwork <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Letter home <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Other: _____ <input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p><u>Date</u></p>	<p><u>Any other comments</u></p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>
		<p><u>Parent response to phone call</u></p>

Examples of possible low level incidents (yellow card issued when these are persistent)

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Inattentive/off task• Ignoring Instructions• Distracting others in class• Inappropriate language/comments• Not being in correct uniform• Absent from class without permission• Littering corridor/class• Not having class materials• Not attempting homework• No homework• Late to class• Chewing gum	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• No Journal• Mobile phone visible• Using mobile phone in class without permission• No equipment or partial equipment• Talking out of turn• Shouting out a question or comments• Using iPad without permission• Making noises• Disrupting teaching and learning• Eating in class
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Subject

Teacher: _____

Year

Head: _____

RED Card (Stage 5)

Name: _____

Class: _____

Year Head: _____

Day: _____ Date: _____

1.	Deliberate use of inappropriate/threatening language/comments, directed at a teacher/member of staff or other student	
2.	Using a dismissive or aggressive tone when speaking to a teacher or member of staff or invasion of personal space	
3.	Serious Physical aggression e.g. fighting or threatening stance	
4.	Deliberate breach of school computer, internet, E-Mail AUP	
5.	Interfering with, damaging or defacing school property or the property of others	
6.	Deliberately disrupting teaching and learning	
7.	leaving school without permission from school personnel	
8.	Failure to comply with the School Mobile Phone Policy	
9.	Other behaviour of a serious nature not listed above	

Details of Misconduct: _____

Teacher's/Staff Signature: _____

Student Signature: _____

Appendix 2



LOUTH AND MEATH EDUCATION AND TRAINING BOARD

SUSPENSION AND EXPULSION POLICY AND PROCEDURES

1. Policy Statement

- 1.1. The suspensions and expulsions policy applies to all schools established and maintained by Louth and Meath Education and Training Board.

2. Legal framework

- 2.1. Louth and Meath ETB acknowledges the duty of schools under its control to publish their policy concerning admission and participation in the school, including the policy of the school relating to the expulsion and suspension of students pursuant to Section 15 (d) of the Education Act 1998 and Section 23 of the Education Welfare Act 2000. The Code of Behaviour in Ó Fiaich College specifies:
 - The standards of behaviour that shall be observed by each student attending the school
 - The measures that may be taken when a student fails or refuses to observe those standards
 - The procedures to be followed before a student may be suspended or expelled from a school
 - The grounds for removing a suspension imposed in relation to a student
 - The procedures to be followed relating to notification of a child's absence from school.
- 2.2. Ó Fiaich College affirms that its Code of Behaviour is prepared in accordance with the Guidelines issued by the Education Welfare Board 2008. The Code of Behaviour addresses:
 - The standards of behaviour expected in the school

- The plan for promoting good behaviour
 - The ways in which a school responds to unacceptable behaviour
 - The plan for implementing the code of behaviour
 - School procedures for the use of suspension and expulsion
- 2.3. Ó Fiaich College recognises the Right to Appeal pursuant to Section 29 of the Education Act.
- 2.4. In regard to informing the Education Welfare Board, Ó Fiaich College affirms its statutory obligation pursuant to section 21 (4)(a) of the Education Welfare Act.
- 2.5. Ó Fiaich College affirms that data collected in relation to students and parents is in compliance with the Data Protection Acts 1988 to 2018.

3 Suspensions

- 3.1 The Board of Management of Ó Fiaich College holds the authority to suspend a student. This authority is devolved under Section 44 (11(a)) of the Education and Training Boards Act 2013 by Louth and Meath ETB to the Boards of Management of each of the schools under its control.
- 3.2 Louth and Meath ETB recognises that the Boards of Management of Ó Fiaich College may delegate this authority to the Principal of Ó Fiaich College. The Board of Management should make a formal delegation arrangement taking due account of the provisions of the Education and Training Boards Act 2013.
- 3.3 Ó Fiaich College recognises that suspension is only one strategy within the Ó Fiaich College Code of Behaviour in response to inappropriate behaviour.
- 3.4 Ó Fiaich College recognises that when all other strategies have been exhausted, suspension affords a student time to reflect on their behaviour, to acknowledge and accept responsibility for their behaviour and to accept the need for the behaviour to change. Ó Fiaich College works closely with parents to assist a suspended student to re-join the school community successfully.
- 3.5 Ó Fiaich College acknowledges that suspension should be a proportionate response to the behaviour that is causing concern. 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 students continued presence in the school at this time constitutes a threat to safety.
 - The student is responsible for serious damage to property.
 - The student breaches the Code of Behaviour. (At the discretion of the Principal.)
- 3.6. Ó Fiaich College affirms that all suspensions must be notified to the Board of Management of Ó Fiaich College.
- 3.7. Ó Fiaich College affirms that the Education Welfare Services of the Child and Family (Tusla) should be Informed of suspensions in the following circumstances:
- Where the period of suspension is for 6 or more consecutive school days.
 - Where the aggregate number of days on which a student has been suspended /absent in any school year is 20 or more days.
- 3.8. Ó Fiaich College affirms that suspension may occur after the following factors have been considered:
- The nature and seriousness of the behaviour
 - The impact and context of the behaviour
 - The interventions tried to date
 - That all discipline options under the Ó Fiaich College Code of Behaviour have been applied and documented
 - That all actions /decisions taken are recorded and all correspondence copied.
 - Discussion has occurred with the student and parent(s) regarding the specific behaviour which the school considers unacceptable, and which may lead to suspension.
- 3.9. The Board of Management of Ó Fiaich College affirms that students attending Ó Fiaich College may be suspended as follows pending investigation and /or discussion with parents. The following list is not exhaustive:
- For serious misbehaviour
 - For an unacceptable level of repeated misbehaviour
 - For bullying, insulting, aggressive or violent behaviour towards others whether in person, by mobile phone or via social media or other electronic means; in the school, or when identifiable with the school
 - For the supply/possession /use of alcohol and /or illegal drugs
 - For the supply /possession /use of weapons/ hazardous materials
 - For behaviour that may be a danger to self or others
 - For racist behaviour /supply of racist behaviour/use of racist material
 - For behaviour that is contrary to the terms of the Equal Status Act 2000
 - For sexual harassment and/or the possession/supply /use of pornographic material.

- 3.10. Ó Fiaich College acknowledges that a single incident of serious misconduct may be grounds for suspension. Such grounds may include where the continued presence of the student in the school at the time would represent a serious threat to the safety or welfare of students, staff of the school or any other person.
- 3.11. A student may be suspended during a state examination and such suspension should normally be approved by the Board of Management of Ó Fiaich College. This type of suspension should only be used where there is:
- A threat to good order in the conduct of the examination
 - A threat to the safety or welfare of other students and personnel
 - A threat to the right of the other students to do their exam in a calm atmosphere.
- 3.12. Louth and Meath ETB recognises that the Board of Management of Ó Fiaich College may decide as part of the school's policy on sanctions and following consultation process with the Principal, parents, teachers and students, that particular named behaviour incur suspension as a sanction. This does not remove the duty to follow due process and fair procedures in each case.

4 Inappropriate use of Suspension

- Rolling suspension. A student should not be suspended again shortly after they return to Ó Fiaich College unless they engage in serious misbehaviour that warrants suspension, that fair procedures are observed in full and the standard applied to judging the behaviour is the same as that standard applied to the behaviour of any other student.
- Informal / unacknowledged suspension. Exclusion of a student for part of the school day as a sanction is a suspension.
- Open-ended suspension. Students should not be suspended for an indefinite period. Any such suspension would be regarded as a de- facto expulsion.

5 Procedures in respect of Suspension.

- 5.1 Louth and Meath ETB affirms that Ó Fiaich College is required to follow fair procedures when proposing to suspend a student. The school should observe the following procedures

- The student and parent(s) should be informed about the complaint
 - The student and parent(s) should be given the opportunity to respond
 - In the case of 'immediate' suspension, a preliminary investigation should be conducted to establish the case for the imposition of the suspension. Parents must be notified, and arrangement made for the student to be collected from the school. The school must have due regard for its duty of care for the student.
- 5.2 A student should not be suspended for more than 3 days except in exceptional circumstances. Louth and Meath ETB recognises that the Board of Management of Ó Fiaich College should provide guidance to the Principal concerning the kinds of circumstances under which suspensions of longer than 3 days might be approved. If a suspension of longer than 3 days is being proposed the matter should be referred to the Board of Management for consideration and approval. However Louth and Meath ETB recognises that the Board of Management of Ó Fiaich College may wish to authorise the Principal, with the approval of the Chairperson of the Board of Management, to impose a suspension of up to 5 days in circumstances where a meeting of the Board cannot be convened in a timely fashion. Such authorisation must be recorded in the minutes of meeting of the Board of Management and reviewed on an annual basis.
- 5.3 Louth and Meath ETB affirms the Boards of Management of Ó Fiaich College should 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 school year to 20 days or more. Any such suspension is subject to appeal under section 29 of the Education Act 1998.

6 Implementing the suspension

- 6.1 The Principal of Ó Fiaich College should notify the Parent(s) 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 school, including any commitments to be entered into by the student and the parents.
 - The provision for an appeal to the Department of Education, in the case of a suspension which would bring the days suspended in one academic over 20 days.

- 6.2 In the case where Parents do not agree to meet with the Principal, Louth and Meath ETB confirms that written notice will serve as notice to impose a suspension.
- 6.3 A suspension may be removed if the Board of Management of Ó Fiaich College decides to remove the suspension for any reason.

7 Section 29 Appeal against Suspension

- 7.1 Where the total number of days for which the student has been suspended in the current school year reaches 20 days, the parent(s) or a student aged over 18 years, may appeal the suspension under Section 29 of the Education Act 1998 to the Minister for Education.
- 7.2 An appeal may be made by the parent of the student concerned, or by the student concerned where the student has reached the age of 18 years. In accordance with section 26 of the Education (Welfare) Act, 2000, the Child and Family Agency (Tusla) may appoint a person, independent of that Agency, to appeal a decision of a board of management or person acting on behalf of the board of management to permanently exclude a student from a school.
- 7.3 An appeal must be made within **42 calendar days** from the date of the decision of the board of management or a person acting on behalf of the board of management.
- 7.4 Appeals must be made in writing on the Section 29 Appeal Form and submitted to the Section 29 Appeals Administration Unit which has been established within the Department of Education to provide administrative support to enable appeals committees perform their functions. The Section 29 Appeal Form may be downloaded from the Department's website or obtained directly from the Section 29 Appeals Administration Unit. Contact details for the Unit are available on the Department's website www.education.ie .

8 Expulsion

- 8.1 Louth and Meath ETB has the authority to expel a student. This authority may be delegated under Section 44 (11(a)) of the Education and Training Boards Act 2013 by Louth and Meath ETB to the Board of Management of Ó Fiaich College.
- 8.2 Expulsion should be a proportionate response to the student's behaviour. Ó Fiaich College acknowledges that expulsion of a student is a very serious step and one that should only be taken by the

Board of Management of Ó Fiaich College in extreme cases of unacceptable behaviour.

8.3 The Board of Management of Ó Fiaich College affirms that Ó Fiaich College needs to have taken significant steps to address the misbehaviour and to avoid expulsion.

Such measures may include:

- Meeting with parents and students to try and find ways of helping the student to change their behaviour.
- Making sure that the student understands the possible consequences of their behaviour should it persist
- Ensuring that all possible options have been tried.
- Seeking the assistance of relevant support agencies, e.g. Child and Family Agency (Tusla) Education Welfare Services, HSE Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services. National Behavioural Support Service JLO, NEPS, NCSE.

8.4 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 school constitutes a real and significant threat to the safety and welfare of others.
- The student is responsible for serious damage to property.

8.5 Before expulsion is considered, school authorities must satisfy themselves that all possibilities have been exhausted for changing the student's behaviour.

8.6 'Automatic Expulsion'

The Board of Management of Ó Fiaich College may decide in consultation with the Principal, parents, teachers and students that particular named behaviours would result in 'Automatic' expulsion. This does not remove the duty to follow due process and fair procedure.

8.7 Expulsion for first or once-off offence

There may be exceptional circumstances where the Board of Management of Ó Fiaich College decides 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 of Behaviour could include:

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

9 Factors to Consider before proposing to expel a student

9.1 The Board of Management of Ó Fiaich College should take the following factors into consideration before considering expelling a student:

- The nature and seriousness of the behaviour
- The context of the behaviour
- The impact of the behaviour
- The interventions already tried to change the student's behaviour
- Whether expulsion is a proportionate response
- The possible impact of expulsion

9.2 Expulsion would not be appropriate for the following:

- Poor academic performance
- Poor attendance or lateness
- Minor breaches of the Code of Behaviour

However, any behaviour that is persistently disruptive to learning or 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.

10 Procedures in respect of expulsion

10.1 A detailed investigation will be carried out under the direction of the Principal. The Principal should ensure that no party who has had any involvement with the circumstances of the case is part of the investigation.

10.2 The Principal should inform the student and his/her parents about the specific details of the alleged breach of behaviour, how it will be investigated and that it could result in expulsion. The Principal must ensure that the student and parents are given every opportunity to respond to the complaint of serious misbehaviour. The Principal should communicate this in writing to ensure that parents have a permanent record of having been informed.

10.3 A meeting should be arranged between the student and their parents and the Principal of Ó Fiaich College before a sanction is imposed.

10.4 Should a student and their parent(s) fail to attend a meeting the Principal should write advising:

- the seriousness of the matter
- the importance of attending a re-scheduled meeting

- Failing that, the duty of the school authorities to make a decision to respond to the inappropriate behaviour
 - Record all correspondence
- 10.5 Where the Principal of Ó Fiaich College forms a view, based on the investigation of the alleged misbehaviour, that expulsion may be warranted, the Principal shall make a recommendation to the Board to consider expulsion.
- 10.6 The Principal should:
- Inform the student and parents in writing that the Board of Management is being asked to consider expulsion.
 - Ensure that parents have written records of (a) the allegation, (b) the investigation, (c) written notice of the grounds on which the Board of Management is being asked to consider expulsion.
 - Provide the Board with the same comprehensive records as are given to the student and the parents.
 - Notify the parents in good time of the date of the hearing with the Board of management and invite them to that hearing.
 - Advise the parents that they can make a written and oral submission to the Board of Management.
 - Ensure parents are given enough notice to allow them to prepare for the meeting.
- 10.7 It is the responsibility of the Board of Management of Ó Fiaich College to review the initial investigation and satisfy itself that the investigation was properly conducted in line with fair procedures.
- 10.8 The Board of Management should undertake its own review of documentation and all circumstances of the case.
- 10.9 The Board of Management should ensure that no party who has had any involvement with the circumstances of the case is part of the Board's deliberations.
- 10.10 Where the Board of Management of Ó Fiaich College decides to expel a student it must hold a hearing and this meeting should be properly conducted in accordance with Board procedures.
- 10.11 Parents may be accompanied at the Board hearing but, as this is a lay forum; legal representation is not the normal practice, however it may be allowed due to the potentially serious consequences for the student. The Board Secretary should be informed in writing who shall be attending this meeting at least two days prior to the meeting taking place.
- 10.12 At the start of the meeting the Chairperson shall enquire whether any member has an objective bias in respect of the matter being considered by the Board. Where the Board is satisfied that an

objective bias exists, the member(s) involved shall withdraw from the meeting.

- 10.13 At the hearing the Principal and the parents, or a student aged 18 or over, put their case to the Board in each other's presence and will be available to answer questions from Board Members. Each party should be allowed question the evidence of the other party. Questions should be directed through the Chairperson at the end of each presentation.
- 10.14 Once the Principal and the Parents have made their cases, they will withdraw from the meeting.
- 10.15 Should the Board require the professional advice of the Principal, the Principal may be invited to return to the meeting briefly for that purpose. While the Principal is present, there will be no discussion on the merits of the particular case being considered.
- 10.16 In the conduct of the hearing the Board must take care to ensure they are and are seen to be impartial as between the Principal and the student. Parents may wish to be accompanied at hearings and the Board should facilitate this in line with good practice and Board procedures.
- 10.17 When both sides have been heard the Board should ensure that the Principal and Parents are not present for the Board's deliberations.
- 10.18 In hearing and considering a proposed expulsion the Board shall have regard to:
 - (a) the nature, scale and persistence of any behaviour alleged to have given rise to, or contributed to, the decision made by or on behalf of the Board,
 - (b) the reasonableness of any efforts made by the school to enable the student to whom the appeal relates (the 'student concerned') to participate in and benefit from education,
 - (c) the educational interests of the student concerned and the desirability of enabling the student as far as practicable to participate in and benefit from education with his or her peers,
 - (d) the educational interests of, and the effective provision of education for, other students of the school and the maintenance of a classroom and school environment which is supportive of learning among the students of the school and ensures continuity of instruction provided to students in any classroom concerned and the school,
 - (e) the safety, health and welfare of teachers, students and staff of the school,
 - (f) the code of behaviour under section 23 of the Education (Welfare) Act of 2000 and other relevant policies of the school and —
 - (i) in the case of that code of behaviour, the extent to which it is in compliance with that section 23 and any guidelines issued under subsection (3) of that section, and

- (ii) in the case of those other policies, the extent to which each of them is implemented, promotes equality of access to and participation in education and is in compliance with —
 - (I) any enactment that imposes duties on schools or their boards,
 - (II) any relevant guidelines or policies of the Minister,
- (g) the duties on schools or their boards imposed by or under any enactment,
- (h) guidelines issued pursuant to section 22(7) of the Act of 2000, and
- (i) such other matters as the Board considers relevant.

11 Board of Management deliberations and actions following the hearing

- 11.1 Having heard from all the parties involved it is the responsibility of the Board to decide whether or not the allegation is substantiated and if expulsion is the appropriate sanction.
- 11.2 When the Board of Management having considered all the facts of the case, is of the opinion that the student should be expelled, the Board must notify the Education Welfare Officer in writing of its opinion and the reasons for this opinion pursuant to section 24(91) of the Education Welfare Act 2000. The Board should refer to the Child and Family Agency (Tusla) Education Welfare Services reporting procedures for proposed expulsions.
- 11.3 The student cannot be expelled before the passage of 20 school days from the date on which the EWO receives this written notification.
- 11.4 The Board of Management should inform the parents in writing about its conclusions and where expulsion is proposed the parents should be informed that the Board of Management will inform the Education Welfare Officer.

12 Consultations arranged by the Educational Welfare Officer

- 12.1 Within 20 days of receipt of a notification from a Board of Management the EWO will make all reasonable attempts to hold individual consultations with the Principal, the parent and the student. The EWO

will convene a meeting of those parties. These consultations will focus on alternative educational arrangements for the student.

- 12.2 Pending the consultations in 12.1 the Board of Management may consider it appropriate to suspend a student during this time. This should only be considered where the continued presence of the student during this time would seriously disrupt the learning of others or represent a risk to the safety and health of students or staff.

13 Confirmation of the decision to expel

- 13.1 When the 20 day period following notice to the EWO has elapsed and the Board of Management remains of the view that the student should be expelled, the Board of Management should formally confirm the decision to expel. The Board of Management may delegate authority to the Chairperson and Secretary to review this decision of expulsion after the twenty days has expired.
- 13.2 Parents should be notified immediately that the expulsion will now proceed. Parents and the student must be informed of their right to appeal to the Minister for Education.

14 Section 29 Appeal against Expulsion

- 14.1 The parent(s) or a student aged over 18 years, may appeal the expulsion under Section 29 of the Education Act 1998.
- 14.2 Parents and the student should be informed about their right to appeal to the Minister for Education.
- 14.3 An appeal may be made by the parent of the student concerned, or by the student concerned where the student has reached the age of 18 years. In accordance with section 26 of the Education (Welfare) Act, 2000, the Child and Family Agency (Tusla) may appoint a person, independent of that Agency, to appeal a decision of a board of management or person acting on behalf of the board of management to permanently exclude a student from a school.
- 14.4 An appeal must be made within **42 calendar days** from the date of the decision of the board of management or a person acting on behalf of the board of management.
- 14.5 Appeals must be made in writing on the **Section 29 Appeal Form** and submitted to the Section 29 Appeals Administration Unit which has been established within the Department of Education to provide

administrative support to enable appeals committees perform their functions. The Section 29 Appeal Form may be downloaded from the Department's website or obtained directly from the Section 29 Appeals Administration Unit. Contact details for the Unit are available on the Department's website www.education.ie

15 Review of use of Expulsion

- 15.1 The Board of Management of Ó Fiaich College should review the use of expulsion in the school at regular intervals.

16 Implementation and Review of Policy

- 16.1 The Principal and Board of Management of Ó Fiaich College will be responsible for the implementation of this policy.
- 16.2 This policy shall be reviewed periodically, in light of emerging legislation and circulated Guidelines from the Department of Education from its official adoption by the Louth and Meath Education and Training Board and Ó Fiaich College Board of Management.

This policy was reviewed and adopted by Louth and Meath Education and Training Board on 15 November 2018 for incorporation into school's Codes of Behaviour.

This policy was reviewed in November 2020 in light of commencement of changes to the Section 29 Appeals procedures under the Education (Admission to schools) Act 2018.

This policy was ratified by the Ó Fiaich College Board of Management on

11th September 2024

Definitions under the Education Act, 1998

“parent” includes a foster parent, a guardian appointed under the Guardianship of Children Acts, 1964 to 1997, or other person acting in *loco parentis* who has a child in his or her care subject to any statutory power or order of a court and, in the case of a child who has been adopted under the Adoption Acts, 1952 to 1998, or, where the child has been adopted outside the State, means the adopter or adopters or the surviving adopter;

“Principal” means a person appointed under *section 23*;

“school” means an establishment which—

(a) provides primary education to its students and which may also provide early childhood education, or

(b) provides post-primary education to its students and which may also provide courses in adult, continuing or vocational education or vocational training, but does not include a school or institution established in accordance with the Children Acts, 1908 to 1989, or a school or institution established or maintained by a health board in accordance with the Health Acts, 1947 to 1996, or the Child Care Act, 1991;

“student”, in relation to a school, means a person enrolled at the school and in relation to a centre for education, means a person registered as a student in that centre;