



**SAINT VINCENT'S
CASTLEKNOCK COLLEGE**

CODE OF BEHAVIOUR



The purpose of the Code of Behaviour

The Code of Behaviour has the following purpose:

- *To ensure that prospective parents of students in the College have a clear picture of:*
 - *the Vincentian ethos of our College, based on respect, trust and tolerance,*
 - *why we expect the behaviour of our students to be excellent,*
 - *the standard of behaviour required from the students,*
 - *the sanctions that may be applied and*
 - *the input required from parents in ensuring the highest standards of behaviour from the students.*

- *To create a positive, orderly, respectful and structured atmosphere where teaching, learning and personal development may occur.*

- *To encourage students to take a personal responsibility for their learning and their behaviour.*

- *To ensure that each individual is respected and that he is free to develop his own particular gifts and talents.*

- *To clarify the behaviour expected for a student attending this College and to set out roles, rights and responsibilities.*

- *To create a comfortable environment by identifying and supporting good behaviour while also identifying, recording and supporting means of correcting misbehaviour.*

- *To create a safe and healthy environment for students and staff.*

- *To encourage a structure of effective communications between home and College to the betterment of a student's behaviour.*

- *To make sure that the spirit of St Vincent is lived out in the day-to-day way in which boys conduct themselves in our Vincentian school.*



College Mission Statement

To have a College which is concerned with the development of the whole person in a Christian atmosphere; which encourages involvement in a balance of religious, intellectual, cultural and sporting activities; and which promotes the growth of self-worth and respect for others in the spirit of St Vincent de Paul.

The Role of the Board of Management

The Board of Management takes responsibility for drawing up the Code of Behaviour, in consultation with key stakeholders: the parents (through the Core Groups and the PRA), the students (through the Student Council) and the staff (by direct consultation). The Code of Behaviour is revised from time to time, to keep up with the ever-changing society in which we live.

The Board of Management reserves the right of interpretation and revision of the Code of Behaviour.

This Code of Behaviour is drafted in the spirit and meaning of the Education Act 1998, the Education (Welfare) Act 2000 and the Equal Status Act 2000. Cognisance has also been taken of DES Circulars M 34/91, M 33/91 and The Report of Committee on Discipline in Schools.

This policy document has been updated to reflect the most recent requirements as set out in the Department of Education and Skills' *Roadmap for the Full Return to School* in September 2020. A full policy in relation to Covid-19 and our response plan can be found on the school's website under the Covid-19 tab.

Updated requirements to this policy regarding Covid-19 can be found under section 11: **"Health"**.

The Role of Staff Members

The College through its staff offers a variety of means and opportunities to support good behaviour: we treat students with respect in order that they may learn to treat others with respect. We avoid shouting at students, as it runs counter to our ethos, is contrary the 'Dignity at Work' policy and gives students bad example. We aim to be authoritative without being authoritarian. We aim to persuade rather than frighten. We notice and praise good behaviour. We can write 'events' to the Year Heads, recording incidents in which good behaviour (or misbehaviour) was witnessed. There are prizes each year for the 'Spirit of St Vincent' to encourage students to bear witness to our ethos and to follow in the footsteps of our patron saint, St Vincent de Paul. There are also prizes for having an excellent record of punctuality and attendance.



PROMOTING POSITIVE BEHAVIOUR

In line with the College Mission Statement we embrace and encourage positive behaviour. Towards this end the College recognises and rewards achievements in all facets of school life.

At assemblies of year groups or of the entire school the opportunity may be taken to commend publicly achievements by students. Examples of these are:

- academic or sporting achievements nominated by a member of staff
- 'events' sent by teachers to the Year Head in recognition of a student's good behaviour. [An 'event' is a positive or negative electronic report by a teacher of a student for a particular action (good or bad) by that student.]
- any major positive contribution by a student or group of students to the life of the College.
- after examinations those who have demonstrated standards of excellence and those who have shown significant improvement since the last examination.

The public-address system, the Headmaster's Weekly Bulletin, the 'news' section on our website and the 'Castleknock's Got Talent' notice board in the foyer are also used on a regular basis to commend achievement. During the year competitions are held in the College and against other schools in debating, sports, maths, science, essay-writing, film, coding, etc. Successes in these are noted and acclaimed.

At the end of the academic year a range of prizes and awards are made as part of the Graduation ceremonies, Sports Day and Prize-giving Ceremonies. These prizes include contribution and participation in the above-named areas as well as winners' prizes.

Examples are:

- Prizes for examination results
- Prizes for the 'spirit of St Vincent' in each year group
- Prizes for art or project work
- Literary prizes
- Prizes for contribution to specific co-curricular areas
- Sports prizes
- Music and Drama awards
- Public Speaking and Debating Awards
- Chess prizes
- Prizes for an exemplary attendance and punctuality record



COLLEGE RULES

1) THE RELIGIOUS LIFE OF THE COLLEGE

The Catholic Faith is central to the life of the College. Consequently, great emphasis is placed on the worship of God, the spiritual growth of the students, participation at Mass, the regular use of the Sacraments and the development of the moral life in accordance with the word and example of Jesus Christ. Cognisance is taken of students from other Christian Churches.

The College also accepts a number of students of other faiths and creeds or none. In accepting a place in this College those parents and students are aware that St Vincent's Castleknock College is a Catholic school. All students attend Religious Education (RE) classes from 1st to 6th year. Those who are not baptised Catholics do not have to participate, but may do so if they wish. They must, however, attend all RE classes and rites.

It is good that we have students of many faiths at our school. It reflects in a real way the society in which we live. It enables all of us to learn about other faiths. It shows us what all religions have in common. It teaches us to respect those who have different beliefs. It teaches tolerance and openness. Our College is one in which all students should be free to express their views and to be heard and respected.

- 1.1. Students are required to participate fully in organised prayer, and in all formal liturgical services of the College. The Headmaster may make exceptions for members of non-Christian faiths.
- 1.2. Behaviour in the Chapel and at all liturgical services should be respectful and should not disturb others.
- 1.3. Students must show respect and tolerance for other creeds and faiths.

2) DUTIES TOWARDS OTHERS

The dignity of the individual must be recognised in all our dealings with others. This is traditionally summed up in the Gospel precept, "Treat others as you wish them to treat you." – Matthew 7:12.

- 2.1. Students shall respect their parents and shall speak with respect of the parents of other students and show them every courtesy when they visit the College. Students should never speak about the parents of another student in a disrespectful way; in particular, students should never mention the parent or sibling of another student in a sexual context.
- 2.2. The College has a pro-active Anti-bullying Policy and an Anti-Cyber-Bullying Policy, which may be read on the College website and should be read in conjunction with this Code of Behaviour. When any bullying arises, it should be referred to the Year Head who will investigate it. The Year Head will then report to the Headmaster and/or Deputy, who will deal with the matter. Bullying in any form is forbidden.



Bullying, since it can have a devastating effect on the victim and his family, is a serious matter and may lead to a suspension or even (if it is grave or persistent) expulsion.

2.3. Students should learn how to deal maturely with conflict. When interpersonal conflicts arise between students, there are several options:

- Resolve the matter by talking it through with the other person
- Refer the matter to a teacher, the Headmaster, or the Deputy Principal(s)
- Refer the matter to their parents who can then inform the College of the conflict – so that it can be resolved.

Students may not resolve a conflict through violence (or a threat of violence) of any kind. Possession of dangerous weapons, eg pellets guns, air pistols, knives, firearms, explosives, etc is forbidden. Violence (or the threat of violence) is a serious offence and may lead to a suspension or even expulsion.

2.4. Students shall respect all College personnel and shall treat with courtesy all visitors. When students are out of school (on a tour or sporting outing) they are expected to show respect to bus drivers, hosts, and all others whom they come across during their time away from the school. Students should not take for granted the work of cleaners, kitchen staff, ground staff, bus drivers – or any others who deliver them a service. Students should say, “Please” and “Thank-you” appropriately, and show courtesy to those who do our school a service. Students should co-operate with all staff placed in authority in the lawful discharge of their duties.

2.5. Students must learn to treat others with respect and consideration. It is not enough to treat those we like with respect, if we treat others without respect. We are called to treat all of our neighbours as we would have them treat us. That is what it means to be part of the Vincentian ‘family’ at St Vincent’s Castleknock College. Students should not pass remarks at others about their appearance, their intelligence, their race, their religion, their colour or their sexual orientation. At our school, we do not use the word ‘gay’ in a pejorative sense.

2.6. Good manners and courtesy must be shown at all times. Students should move about the College in a grown-up manner: they should stand back for adults at a doorway, avoid pushing in queues in the refectory or at buses, and speak politely to one another. Offensive habits are not acceptable. Gestures or comments, which may be construed as racially or sexually offensive, are expressly forbidden. Students should remember that this is the place of work for their fellow-students and staff. Hence, shouting or rowdy behaviour and the use of bad language are forbidden.

2.7. The taking, distribution or publication of intimate images is expressly forbidden.

3) TOBACCO, ALCOHOL, DRUGS, GAMBLING, LOANS

Since society faces major problems arising from the abuse of tobacco, alcohol and illegal drugs, restrictions and sanctions in these areas are essential. It is emphasised that the College Code of Behaviour applies also to all College excursions, field trips or tours.



- 3.1. Possession or smoking of tobacco (including vaping or e-cigarettes) is forbidden in the College, its buildings, and grounds. If students are caught smoking or vaping, or smell of tobacco, they may be subject to a fine of €10 (for smoking or vaping out of doors) or €20 (for smoking or vaping indoors). Any cigarettes or tobacco or vaping machines in their possession may be confiscated. When a fine is imposed, the student has until the following morning to pay the fine. If the fine is not paid at this point, the student may then be kept out of class until the fine is paid.
- 3.2. The possession or consumption of alcoholic drink is forbidden. Students who bring or buy or consume alcohol on school tours may be sent home, and the expense will be met by their parent(s) or guardian(s).
- 3.3. The possession, sale, assisting a sale, offering for sale, or use of illegal or unprescribed drugs is strictly forbidden as is the abuse of any such substance. Since this is such a serious offence, and since it endangers the health and lives of others, offences relating to drugs may lead to expulsion, even for the first offence. If the law has been broken in this regard names of offenders may be handed on to the Gardaí by the Headmaster or the Board of Management.
- 3.4. It is forbidden for a student to arrive at the College, or to return to the College, under the influence of alcohol or any illegal substance.
- 3.5. Gambling is dangerous: it can become addictive and lead to serious debt. Hence, gambling in any form is forbidden at the College. Students may not enter into a bet with another student, even for a small amount of money. Gambling online, whether during school hours or while on the College grounds, is also forbidden.
- 3.6. Students must not assist other students who are under 18 to gamble, whether online or otherwise.
- 3.7. Students may not lend money with interest to another student. Students are forbidden to ask other students for loans, except that it will be acceptable for students to lend small amounts of money in the day-to-day activities of the school, subject to a strict limit of €20.

4) APPEARANCE

Dress and personal appearance are indicative not only of self-esteem but also of consideration for others. We aim to look smart and be smart.

- 4.1. Dress shall be clean and tidy, be well presented and fit the student.
- 4.2. It is disrespectful to others to arrive at school giving off body odour; it is not fair to those sitting nearby. Hence, a reasonable standard of personal appearance and hygiene is required.
- 4.3. Clothes specified in the uniform list, as on the College website, must be worn in College or on College-related activities. Shirts must be tucked in, with all buttons



buttoned and the knot of the tie covering the top button. Particular attention should be paid to ensure that clothes are the correct colour, that socks are dark and shoes made of plain black leather and are polished. On special occasions, and when students visit other schools or travel abroad, the blazer will be worn. If students wear hoodies, or other unauthorised clothing, the College may confiscate the unauthorised clothing, which will be left at reception for collection by a parent or guardian. Students should wear the proper school uniform on the way to and from school, as they are walking advertisements for our Vincentian school when they are seen by others.

- 4.4. Slogans or badges must not be worn on clothing. Jewellery (such as rings, earrings, eyebrow studs, etc) is prohibited. This is also for safety reasons: jewellery presents added danger during PE and sporting activities.
- 4.5. Hair must be kept clean, neat and tidy, in its natural colour. Exotic hairstyles are not allowed. Students shall be clean shaven - beards and moustaches are not allowed. Students who come to school with unacceptable hairstyle or facial hair will be given until the next morning to put things right. Thereafter, they will be excluded from class.
- 4.6. Students are not allowed to use earphones inside the school buildings unless instructed by their teacher. Earphones unless otherwise instructed should be kept out of sight.

5) PROPERTY

Students are expected to take reasonable care of their property. They should label all of their clothes and books, in case they are lost. The College provides facilities for storing property, but it will not be responsible for loss or damage. Until further notice, students will not be allocated a locker for storage use.

- 5.1. An enormous amount of property gets lost each year in our school. It helps us to find the owner if property is well labelled. Personal property shall be stored as directed by teachers and staff.
- 5.2. Students shall respect the property of the College and of other students. They must not damage the property of the College or of others. Reckless behaviour (such as using a football indoors) should be avoided as it can lead to damage. All breakages or damage to property should be reported immediately to the Year Head / Deputy Principal. Students may be asked to pay for any damage that they do, even if it is not deliberate.
- 5.3. Vandalism, where damage is done to property deliberately, is regarded as a serious offence, which may lead to a suspension or (if it is grave) to an expulsion. Students and their families will be asked to make good any damage and to pay for the repairs.



- 5.4. A student must not take without permission any property of others. Theft is regarded as a serious offence. It can lead to a suspension or, in the case of a serious theft (such as a smartphone) to an expulsion.
- 5.5. The unauthorised possession of College keys is strictly forbidden.
- 5.6. The possession of knives, matches, or lighters or any other instruments that might injure others or damage property, is forbidden.
- 5.7. Bicycles must be stored in the bicycle shed and should be locked as directed in the areas specified.
- 5.8. Students are prohibited from driving any motor propelled vehicle into or within the College grounds or on College-related activities except in the case of a senior student who has the prior permission of the Headmaster to drive a specific vehicle. This permission will be considered on production of the applicant student's current full driving licence, current insurance certificate covering the applicant driving the specified vehicle, written permission from the specified vehicle's owner to drive the vehicle and a letter from the specified vehicle's owner absolving the College from any liability for any loss or damage to the vehicle while on College grounds. The use of the specified vehicle will be subject to the conditions as laid down by the Headmaster, eg to park their car in a designated place/area.
- 5.9. Cyclists must follow the designated routes when entering and leaving the College grounds. Cyclists not wearing helmets or using unsafe bicycles or riding dangerously may be subject to sanction as decided by the College and may be prohibited from using the school grounds to park their bicycle.
- 5.10. The appointed paths and gates shall be used when walking to or from the College.
- 5.11. The College has signed franchises with certain companies to sell food and official school clothing. Students must respect these legal agreements. Hence, it is forbidden to engage in the sale of food, clothing or any other goods, without the express permission of the Headmaster.

6) CLASS and EXAMINATIONS

The rules for class seek to create a situation in which teachers and students can work together in a helpful environment. Teachers must be allowed to teach and students to learn; that is the golden rule. Hence, students are expected to work to the best of their ability to realise their academic potential. Students must contribute to an atmosphere where academic achievement is a communal objective. The following rules apply to normal classes and to evening study.

- 6.1. To be punctual is to show respect for others and for the College. Students must be punctual for all classes. Students must not enter the classroom until permitted by



teacher. In the event of a teacher being absent, students must report promptly as directed to an alternative room or lecture hall for supervised.

When a student arrives late for morning or afternoon class, he must sign the late-comers book at Reception. If a student fails to enter his name in the late-comers book, he may be marked down as absent, and his parents may receive a text message to say that he is not at the school. Hence, it is the student's responsibility to sign in.

In accordance with the Education Welfare Act (2000), if a student is late for school, his parents must send in a note, explaining why he was late. Students who are late three times in a calendar month will receive a detention.

6.2. Students must be respectful and courteous to their teachers and act in a co-operative manner. It is customary to rise when a teacher enters the classroom. A student shall sit in the desk appointed by his teacher. Any disruptive behaviour or offensive behaviour is a serious offence, as it breaks the golden rule that teachers must be allowed to teach and students to learn. A student may not leave the classroom without specific permission from his teacher.

6.3. Students must come fully prepared for each day's class with Homework Journal, the necessary books, necessary equipment (including gym kit for PE when timetabled).

Students will require a note from their parents to their Year Head if they wish to be excused from any classes.

6.4. A student excused from PE must present himself at class time to the PE teacher and remain with the class unless otherwise directed.

6.5. The College regards homework as a critical component of learning. Hence, each student must enter his homework in his Homework Journal and present this Journal for inspection when requested. If a student fails to do his homework (whether it is written, oral, electronic or reading), the teacher will:

- on the first occasion, re-set the homework and keep a record
- on the second occasion, re-set the homework and write a note in the student journal to the parents
- on every subsequent occasion, enter an 'event' online and send it to the Year Head who may contact the parents by webtext.

6.6. Orderly behaviour is expected in the College corridors and stairways, especially between classes. Running and jostling must be avoided. If students arrive at a classroom before their teacher, they should wait outside in an orderly fashion. Precedence should always be given to members of staff or visitors when passing through doorways.

6.8 Mobile phones and smartphones must be switched off from 8.30am until the end of classes each day. Phones may be used in the classroom only in exceptional circumstances: when the teacher taking the class has given specific permission, or



when the lesson requires phones for apps such as Kahoot. In such circumstances, it is the student's responsibility to turn his phone off before he leaves the classroom. Where specific permission has not been given, it is an offence to have a mobile phone switched on at school. Students who have an urgent need to use a phone may do so either in the presence of a member of staff or in the room in front of reception.

6.9 The camera and recording applications on phones or cameras must not be used, except in the exceptional circumstance where permission has been received from the Headmaster and then only for the purpose specified by the Headmaster. This is to protect the privacy of others. Phones and cameras may never be used in a changing room or toilets. Specific permission from the Headmaster is also required to use a video camera. Video games are not permitted on College computers.

6.10 When rules governing phones are broken, the phone (or electronic device) may be impounded and left at reception. In such circumstances, the phone may be collected by a parent calling to reception. Following serious or repeated offences, a student may be banned from having a mobile phone or smartphone in the College.

6.11 Parents are asked to educate their sons on the dangers of mobile phones and on the safe use of social media. They should make sure that mobiles are turned off when homework or study is being done at home. In the case of emergency, parents can always contact their son by ringing the school reception 01-8213051.

6.12 Students will keep the College tidy and free from litter. It is not permitted to eat or drink in the classrooms or corridors. Chewing gum and bubble gum are forbidden in College buildings and grounds, as they are particularly difficult to remove.

6.13 Students must wear the dress prescribed for class. Instructions on practice and safety must be carried out in practical classes. Scarves and overcoats/anoraks must not be worn in class. Students must observe Laboratory Rules as displayed in the laboratories.

6.14 Students must observe the College Internet Usage Policy and the rules as displayed for the use of the Computer Room. Accessing pornographic sites is forbidden. Offensive use of e-mail is a serious offence. Any attempt to subvert the operation of the Computer Room, particularly attempts to bypass the filters and firewall installed for educational purposes, is forbidden.

6.15 Examinations are an integral and important part of the student's education. Students must attend all examinations for which they are scheduled. Any absence not authorised by the College may result in the student being refused readmission until the issue has been resolved to the satisfaction of the College. The College Code of Behaviour applies to all examination periods including State examinations.

6.16 Students are required to observe the College Rules for Examinations. These are published for each examination and are displayed in Examination Centres.



6.17 A student will not be entered for any public examinations where that student cannot meet the State Examinations Commission's regulations for that subject.

6.18 A student may be required to repeat examination(s) in circumstances as outlined in the College Rules for Examination (for example, when a student's lack of effort shows contempt for the exam process). The time for the repeat exam may be scheduled out of term.

7) ATTENDANCE and PUNCTUALITY

The Education (Welfare) Act, 2000, Section 18 states that "Where a child is absent from the school at which he or she is registered during part of a school day, or for a school day or more than a school day, the parent of such child shall, in accordance with procedures specified in the code of behaviour prepared by the school under section 23, notify the principal of the school of the reasons for the child's absence."

7.1. The school day commences at 8:40am each day and ends at 3:45pm on each day except Wednesday when class ends at 1:00pm and Monday when class ends at 3:30pm. Students should arrive at the College by 8:35am each day.

7.2. In the event of absence from class, students are required to submit an explanatory note to their Year Head signed by their parents/guardians on their return to school.

7.3. Prior written notice must be given to the Year Head from the parent for all planned absences. In other circumstances involving more than one day, parents are required to request in writing to the Headmaster that their son be given permission to be absent.

7.4. Requests for a student to leave the College during a school day (eg for a medical appointment) must be made in writing to the Year Head, Deputy Principal or Headmaster by a parent before 8:40am on the same day. The note should specify the reason, the proposed time of departure and return, and the address for the appointment. The letter will be filed for later reference. The student should be collected at the College and signed out by the parent or guardian. Only students who are aged 18 or over may sign themselves out.

8) RECREATION, GAMES and SOCIETIES

Sport and recreational activities play an important and integral role in the lives of college students and are a significant feature of College life. They provide a necessary outlet for the development of individual talent, creativity and self-esteem, strengthening social bonds and promoting character qualities of loyalty, co-operation and dependability. It is considered an honour for a student to be selected to represent St Vincent's Castleknock College at an event and such students are obliged to attend.

8.1. Students shall be punctual for all activities and have the proper equipment with the appropriate College gear.



- 8.2. It is College policy that students participate in sport. There is a large range of sports to choose from: something for everyone. We expect all students in first and second year to participate in rugby. The only exceptions are when parents have written to the Headmaster and he has excused their son from rugby.
- 8.3. Spiked or studded boots must not be worn on the College corridors. It is forbidden to change for games in the classrooms, corridors, etc. Rather, the College changing rooms must be used. Students must keep changing areas and shower areas clean and tidy.
- 8.4. When selected to play for a College team a student must attend unless he has prior permission from his coach or Year Head. In the exceptional circumstances where a student is unable to attend, he must immediately advise his coach. A formal note (or email message) is also required from the student's parents. A verbal message via another student is not enough.
- 8.5. When travelling to and from matches, especially when travelling by coach, students must wear full College uniform with blazer and behave in a respectful manner.
- 8.6. A player shall wear a clean and complete College kit on the field of play when representing the College. He must wear any safety equipment prescribed by his coach, e.g. mouth guard in rugby, shin guards in soccer, helmet and box in cricket, etc.
- 8.7. Players must behave respectfully towards referees and games officials. We expect students to maintain a high standard of sportsmanship in dealing with opponents. Supporters must behave in an orderly and sporting fashion and avoid any action that may risk injury to others or words or chants that offend others. Supporters must stay off the field of play.
- 8.8. Students must avoid placing themselves or others at risk in sport, e.g. in the weights room, shot and javelin, water sports, etc. Students must avoid any action that may endanger the comfort or safety of others. As a matter of health and safety, students may use sports facilities such as the weights room only when there is a qualified adult present.
- 8.9. The College shall have a Student Council, set up in accordance with Section 27 of the Education Act 1998 and the relevant subsequent guidelines from the DES. There will be one representative from each class, elected by Proportional Representation. The Student Council will meet once a week and will be consulted by the school management on relevant matters. Representatives of the Student Council will meet with the Headmaster at least once a month.

9) SOCIETIES & CLUBS

Societies are an integral part and central to the character of College life. They provide opportunities to develop skills and positive attitudes. Societies are an extension of the



academic programme, providing practical experiences in a participative setting. Language clubs, Debating Societies, Drama Societies, Chess Club, College Band or Choir, etc have a vital role in providing opportunities to develop for personal skills, self-confidence and working with others.

- 9.1. Members of College societies will abide by the rules and conventions of their society/club.
- 9.2. A student commissioned to represent the College as a participant in a society or club activity must attend unless he has prior permission from the College.
- 9.3. When travelling to and from events, students will wear full College uniform and behave in an orderly fashion. Students must avoid any action that may endanger the comfort or safety of others.

10) MEALS

Meals are taken in the refectory, at picnic tables, or at other places outside. At all meal or snack times students are asked to remember those of their age who are less fortunate and for whom food is scarce.

- 10.1. Students shall queue in orderly fashion and in the order directed by the staff on duty. Students must never jump the queue.
- 10.2. Students shall exercise the accepted norms of politeness and good manners at mealtime. It is not appropriate to mess with food, to throw it, or to leave a mess behind at the table for others to clear up: this is disrespectful to the kitchen and cleaning staff.
- 10.3. Students shall always co-operate with the refectory staff. At the end of meals tables are to be left neat and tidy. Each student shall take responsibility for clearing his place and stacking his tray.
- 10.4. No food, drink (apart from water in bottles) or tableware may be removed from the refectory.

11) HEALTH

In the interest of all the students the College staff should be given every co-operation and assistance in maintaining a high level of health care. Parents are required to inform the College in writing of any circumstances of infectious or contagious illnesses in the family, or of any medical diagnosis of the student about which the College must be made aware.

- 11.1. We expect parents to inform the College if there is any reason why their son is not able to attend school. Any person coming into Ireland (apart from Northern Ireland and individuals arriving in Ireland from locations with a security rating of normal precautions "Green List") is required to restrict their movements for 14 days.



For full details regarding the procedure of dealing with a suspected case of Covid-19 that may arise please see the school's Covid-19 response plan.

- 11.2. Social distancing, hand hygiene and good respiratory etiquette should be observed by all students. Good respiratory etiquette means covering your mouth and nose with a tissue or your bent elbow when you cough and sneeze.
- 11.3. Hand sanitisers are to be used before entering every room.
- 11.4. Students are required to bring two cloth masks (plain colours, no logo or offensive slogans) to school, masks to be worn when in class and walking throughout the school building. The spare cloth mask is to be kept in a plastic bag. ALL personal items including bags to be labelled.
- 11.5. Students are to carry earphones, tissues, and a small bottle of hand sanitiser in their bag always. No sharing of equipment.
- 11.6. Students are to follow seating arrangements and requirements as set out by their individual teachers.
- 11.7. To assist in preventing the transmission of infectious illnesses, spitting is strictly forbidden.
- 11.8. If a student feels ill or has been injured, he should report to his Year Head. In the absence of the Year Head a student who feels ill or injured may report to another Year Head, Headmaster or Deputy Principal or to Reception. Permission to go home may be granted following consultation between the student's parents and the College. A student must never go home without prior permission.
- 11.9. In the event of injury sustained in a College game or activity, the student shall report to the teacher/coach in charge. The teacher/coach in charge must determine the appropriate action in line with school policy and all serious injuries should be logged. An injured student should not go home until there has been the relevant communication between his parents and the College.
- 11.10. Toilets may be used only for the purpose for which they are there. Using the toilets to meet, congregate, eat or study is not allowed. Students are to use their designated toilets as set out in the Covid-19 response plan.
- 11.11. Toilets should be treated well. Students are expected to leave the toilets the way they find them.

12) BOUNDS

Bounds are necessary confines within which the College can reasonably supervise the safety of the students.



- 12.1. The managers of the school are responsible for every student in their care; they must be able to account for each student on the campus. Hence, during the school day (including lunchtime) all students are to remain within College grounds.
- 12.2. The following areas are out of bounds:
- (a) the Vincentian community areas, community gardens and staff rooms
 - (b) the hill and water tower
 - (c) the kitchen area
 - (d) the Castle and its environs, except with prior permission and under supervision
 - (e) the Concert Hall and Sports hall except with prior permission
 - (f) the steps into Dowley House (as this is the entrance for those who live there)
 - (g) behind Dowley House (except for 6th Year students who may use the Rugby Astro at lunchtime).
- 12.3. Students should be within eyesight of the supervising teachers during break times. Hence, during breaks, students may not go behind Dowley House, onto the upper pitches, or along the driveway beyond the tennis courts or other places where they cannot be seen by supervising staff. Students are not allowed to be on the first or second storey of the school from 1:05pm until 1:35pm on Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays.
- 12.4. Students staying for evening study, for sport or recreation, may not leave the College grounds.
- 12.5. The Alton Library is open every day from 8:00am until 5:00pm.
- 12.6. Students who are caught out of bounds may be given a detention slip by a teacher. Repeated offences may lead to suspension.

13) FIRE and SAFETY

Fire can have fatal consequences. A high standard of fire precaution is vital to ensure the safety of all. Offences in the area of fire safety are also covered by the Criminal Law.

- 13.1. A student must not engage in any activity which endangers himself or others. It is a serious offence to endanger the lives or safety of others.
- 13.2. Every student shall be familiar with the fire regulations of the College, how to exit during a fire-drill and where to line up. Each student should know who is in front of him and who is behind him as they line up in alphabetical order. Failure to cooperate with fire-drill will be treated as a serious offence.
- 13.3. Interference with fire-fighting equipment, alarm systems or emergency keys is strictly forbidden.



- 13.4. Possession of flammable substances, e.g. lighter fluid, fireworks, and bangers is a serious offence. Fireworks are illegal in our country; it is forbidden to bring fireworks into school or to deal in fireworks.
- 13.5. Students must not indulge in activities likely to injure others, eg throwing stones or gravel or other objects.
- 13.6. Students must observe all safety instructions for sports activities.
- 13.7. As spectators at College events a student must behave in a manner which will avoid placing himself or others at risk of injury.
- 13.8. Students must ensure that there is clear access on all corridors. When queuing for a class or event students must not sit on the floor outside a room nor crowd the corridor at the doorway. They must not leave a bag where it can cause a danger to others or block access to a fire exit. For safety reasons students must not run, jostle or indulge in horseplay on corridors.
- 13.9. Students travelling on buses must observe College Rules. They must co-operate with the driver or teacher in charge in ensuring the comfort and safety of all passengers. They must always sit down and keep their safety belt fastened .
- 13.10. In the event of a liquid spillage or a glass breakage on a corridor the first student on the scene should
- alert others to the risk
 - take reasonable precautions to prevent injury to himself or others
 - notify relevant authorities.
- 13.11. Those students driving a motor vehicle on College roads must do so with the utmost care. Only students who have permission from the College may drive a motor vehicle on College grounds. They must park in the allocated areas.
- 13.12. All students must observe Laboratory Rules when in a laboratory. No student may enter a laboratory unless a teacher or supervisor is present. Students should handle chemicals only when the teacher is present and with the express permission of the teacher to do so.

14) STANDARD DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURES

A record is maintained for each student. When a teacher wishes to record a breach of discipline by a student, he/she records an 'event' in the student's record. The number of 'events' indicates that consideration of certain sanctions will be triggered. For sake of clarity in dealing with students these numbers are presented as automatic. However, in practice, all relevant information will be taken into account.

After five disciplinary events the Year Head will consider a Detention on Friday after school or on Saturday morning as a suitable sanction. A card indicating this is sent home with



the student for signing by the parent/guardian. This signed card is presented at Detention.

At ten events a copy of the record is sent by the Year Head to the student's parents/guardian stating that the student is required for detention and the student's parents/guardian are invited to contact the Year Head for consultation. The signed card is presented at Detention.

At fifteen events, in addition to detention the copy of the record is sent by the Year Head to the student's parents/guardian and they are required to contact the College Secretary for an appointment with the Deputy Principal. The signed card is presented at Detention.

At twenty events the student is faced with the prospect of suspension. The student's record is brought by the Year Head for discussion to the Headmaster. The Headmaster may at this stage suspend the student. The record is sent to the parents/guardian. Prior to the student's return the student and his parents/guardian are required to meet with the Headmaster to include signing a Letter of Undertaking.

The procedures above outline the sanctions policy arising from cumulative acts of indiscipline. Other sanctions may be used by class teachers for individual offences, eg penalty sheets, writing of text, repeating of homework, etc. The College considers the non-completion of assigned homework to be a serious offence as it does any other acts or omissions which disrupt the teaching/learning process in a class.

A detention may be issued at any time by the Year Head for a serious offence.

In extreme circumstances a student may face immediate suspension arising from a particular type of offence. These circumstances are outlined below in the section dealing with suspensions.

The detention policy involves a burden on supervising teachers and on parents. It does however have the major advantage of being highly visible and provides a stark reminder to students to improve their behaviour as they could be on a path to suspension.

15) SANCTIONS

Every effort is made in the College to explain the purpose of the rules to the students. When rules are broken the following sanction(s) will apply. They are listed below; more than one sanction may be imposed.

- a) Students may be reprimanded by the appropriate College official and, when necessary, they will be referred to higher authority.
- b) The infringement may be noted and the record will be consulted when making reports.
- c) Privileges may be withdrawn, extra work assigned or in specific cases (such as smoking) fines may be imposed. Students (or their families) may be asked to pay for breakages or damage.



- d) Detention may be imposed for all students. A standard detention time is after school on Friday afternoons or on half days. A student may be required to report to school out of term.
- e) Suspension from class may be imposed while still being required to remain within the College. Such 'internal suspensions' may be imposed only by the Headmaster or Deputy Principal.
- f) Parents may be asked to visit the College for consultation about matters of discipline or about the quality of their son's work.
- g) The Headmaster may suspend a student from the College for a period of up to three days. With the permission of the Chairman of the Board of Management, a student may be suspended for up to five days if a serious offence has been committed. When a student returns from a suspension, he and a parent (or guardian) should present themselves to the Headmaster to sign an undertaking of good behaviour.
- h) The right to expel a student is reserved for the Board of Management. Should the Headmaster consider the expulsion of a student to be justified, he will make recommendation to the Board of Management and the student will remain suspended while awaiting the decision. A hearing in front of the Board of Management will then be arranged.

GENERAL PRINCIPLES APPLYING TO SANCTIONS and SUSPENSIONS

- 1) All students and teachers have the right to be treated fairly and with dignity, in an environment free from disruption, intimidation, harassment and discrimination. To achieve this, the College needs to maintain high standards of student behaviour.
- 2) There will be cases of unacceptable behaviour where it will be in the best interests of the College community and/or the student involved, for the student to be removed from the school for a period of time or completely. A suspension may be imposed by the Headmaster to bring home to a student the seriousness of the offence. Expulsion may be imposed only by the Board of Management for serious offences.
- 3) Collaboration between Board of Management, school staff, students and parents is an important feature of behaviour management in schools. All should be fully aware of the procedures which precede any sanction.
- 4) Suspension is only one strategy within the College's Code of Behaviour. It is most effective when it highlights the parents' responsibility for taking an active role, in partnership with the College, to work with their child to enable the child's behaviour to change. The College will work with parents with a view to assisting a suspended student to re-join the College community as quickly as possible.
- 5) Suspension allows students time to reflect on their behaviour, to acknowledge and accept responsibility for the behaviour, which led to the suspension, and to accept responsibility for changing their behaviour to meet the College's expectations in the future. It also allows time for College personnel to plan appropriate support for the student to assist with successful re-entry.



- 6) The Headmaster has authority to suspend any pupil for a limited period, such suspension to be reported to the next meeting of the Board of Management.
- 7) If in the judgement of the Headmaster a pupil should be expelled, the Headmaster shall refer the matter to the Board of Management.
- 8) The Board of Management and the Headmaster will exercise this authority having regard to their responsibilities to the whole College community and the principles of procedural fairness.
- 9) In implementing these procedures, the Headmaster and Board will ensure that no student is discriminated against on any of the nine grounds specified in the Equal Status Act.
- 10) The Board will also ensure that the implementation of these procedures will consider such factors as:
 - a) the age and health of the student
 - b) the student's previous record at the College
 - c) any particular circumstances unique to the student which might sensibly be taken into account in connection with the behaviour, eg a difficult family background
 - d) the extent to which parental, peer or other pressure may have contributed to the behaviour
 - e) the degree of severity of the behaviour, the frequency of offences and the likelihood of its recurring
 - f) whether or not the behaviour impaired or will impair the normal functioning of the student or other students in the College
 - g) whether the incident was perpetrated by the pupil on his own or as a part of a group.
- 11) Depending on the nature and extent of the misbehaviour the support of other agencies such as the National Education Welfare Board or the National Educational Psychological Service may be sought by the Board.
- 12) The Principles of Natural Justice are fundamental to the implementation of these procedures. The student and his parents should be heard before a final decision is made as to the appropriate sanction. However, the student and his parents should ideally be warned that a particular offence might lead to a suspension or an expulsion, if this is the case.
- 13) The Principle of Forgiveness is an important part of a Code of Behaviour, especially in a Vincentian College. When a student has served a punishment, it is not appropriate for managers, Year Heads or teachers to refer back to the offence unless there is a re-offence by the same student. Rather, the student should be encouraged to go forward with a positive attitude that he will not commit the same offence again.



16) SUSPENSIONS

- 16.1. The Headmaster may suspend immediately in some circumstances, e.g. violence, threat of violence, presence of illegal drugs, presence of weapons, persistent refusal to obey an instruction, persistent disruption of class, the use of foul or abusive language to a supervisor or teacher or other member of staff, leaving the College premises without prior permission from the College, or any grossly inappropriate behaviour.
- 16.2. In other circumstances suspensions will occur only after the Headmaster has:
- a) ensured all discipline options under the Code of Behaviour have been applied and documented
 - b) ensured all appropriate support personnel have been involved
 - c) ensured that communication has taken place with the student and parent/guardian regarding the breaches of discipline which the College considers may lead to suspension.
- 16.3. When a student returns to school after being suspended, he will be required with a parent (or guardian) to meet the Headmaster to sign a Letter of Undertaking. The Headmaster and the student's parent will witness this. A student will not be allowed to return until this letter is signed.
- 16.4. If a student is suspended for six days or more consecutively, the Headmaster shall inform the Education Welfare Office. If a student is suspended for a cumulative total of 20 days or more in one school year, the Headmaster shall inform the Education Welfare Officer.

GROUND FOR REMOVING A SUSPENSION

Section 23.2(d) of the Education Act requires schools to publish the grounds for removing a suspension. Such grounds may include:

- a) new circumstances which come to the Headmaster's notice
- b) other factors such as an appeal by the parents (or guardians) to the Headmaster
- c) an act of clemency.

FORMAL APPEAL AGAINST A SUSPENSION

A parent, or student aged 18 or more, may appeal against a suspension. For an appeal against a short suspension the Headmaster shall invite the parent/guardian to a meeting. Where the suspension is under paragraph 1 of Suspension above, the Headmaster must also exercise his duty under the College obligations to provide a safe environment for other students and teachers. For an appeal against the cumulative misbehaviour of the student, the Headmaster will take due cognisance of the new information brought by the parent.



A student may be suspended, even though an appeal is in progress. If an appeal is successful, the suspension shall be expunged from the records.

17) EXPULSION

Expulsion is the ultimate sanction. Authority to expel is reserved to the Board of Management. It is a sanction to be used for an extreme case of indiscipline or a case of a student persisting in repeated disruptive behaviour even after warnings and short suspensions.

In the extreme case where the Headmaster considers that the student's indiscipline warrants a recommendation to the Board of Management that the student be expelled he shall:

- ensure that the Code of Behaviour has been applied and documented
- ensure that the parents (or guardians) know of his intention to recommend expulsion to the Board
- invite the parents to the Board Hearing
- invite the parents to make a written submission prior to the Board meeting
- provide the parents in writing with the allegations against the student and a summary of the case to be made at the Board Hearing
- make a formal expulsion recommendation to the Board with supporting documentation.

Expulsion may occur only after the Board has:

- a) heard the Headmaster's case for expulsion - this case must be made at the Board meeting to which the parents have been invited
- b) heard the parents' response, and the student's (if he is over 18) where he so desires
- c) examined all the documentation presented
- d) considered the student's total record in the College
- e) considered all the factors listed in 17.2 of 'Suspension' above
- f) made a final formal decision to expel
- g) communicated the decision in writing to the parents/guardians formally through the Board Secretary
- h) informed the Education Welfare Officer under Section 24 (1) of the Education Welfare Act.

18) APPEAL TO DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION and SKILLS AGAINST EXPULSION

Under Section 29 of The Education Act 1998 a parent or student over 18 may exercise the right of appeal to the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Science in a case where The Board of Management decides to expel a student. The Board shall advise the parents/guardian in writing of this right of appeal and shall furnish the parents/guardian with the Appeal Form.



If the Board of Management decides to expel a student from the school, it shall, before expelling the student concerned notify the relevant educational welfare officer or the National Educational Welfare Board in writing of its decision and the reasons for the expulsion. An expulsion shall not take effect before the passing of 20 school days following the above written notifications. The Board of Management is entitled to suspend the student during this process.

In all of its dealings, the Board of Management takes into consideration the rights of the individual student and balances these with the common good and rights of other students.

Updated and approved by the Board of Management, March 2021

Signed:



**Donal Hanlon,
Chair, Board of Management**

Date: March 2021

