

Mountmellick Community School



Code of Behaviour

Our Motto is "Respect is Our Strength"

INTRODUCTION

The Board of Management of Mountmellick Community School has agreed this Code of Behaviour to reflect the positive behaviour of its students and as a means to adopt a co-ordinated response to student behaviour. It is intended to illustrate the usual minimum standards of behaviour and co-operation exhibited by of all students and to inform students, their parents and guardians how the school will respond to positive behaviour. In the unusual case that students may not reach these standards or display some negative behaviour this code of behaviour outlines the sanctions that may need to be followed.

The Board of Management recognises, with pride, that student behaviour in this school is very positive. Our students respect themselves, the school staff and the world around them and display maturity and concern for others in their dealings within and for the school.

This Student Code of Behaviour was developed and approved by the Board of Management, as a result of an on-going review of current policy and practice and bearing in mind the views of internal school management, school teaching staff, the Parents' Council and the Student Council.

As part of the enrolment, both the student and his / her parent(s) / guardians(s) will be given a copy of this Code of Behaviour. Furthermore, they will be expected to sign a statement that they accept the Code of Behaviour and that they respect and support the rights of the school to reward positive behaviour and respond to negative behaviour in accordance with the Code itself. The parent(s) / guardians(s), in signing their acceptance of the Code, agree to make all reasonable efforts to ensure compliance with the code by the child involved. It is important that parents/guardians sign and return the aforementioned form and accept the conditions attached in order to enrol their child in the school.

SCOPE OF CODE OF BEHAVIOUR

This Code of Behaviour deals exclusively with student behaviour while in school, on the way to and from school, on the school premises and on all school related activities, while students are under the care and instruction of any member of school staff, in both Ireland and abroad. However, the school hopes that all students would behave in an appropriate way at all times, in line with our holistic approach to personal development.

AIMS OF CODE OF BEHAVIOUR

This Code of Behaviour aims to inform students of the expected behaviour and how the school rewards this behaviour. It, also, aims to inform parents / guardians of how students are expected to behave and how those who breach this code may face sanctions imposed by teachers, Year Heads, the Deputy Principal, the Principal and, in some cases, the Board of Management.

SECTION 1: SCHOOL RULES

The School Rules as outlined below are the minimum standards the school expects all of its students to adhere to.

1. GENERAL

Students must cooperate promptly and courteously with all school staff, obeying all instructions as soon as they are given.

2. APPLICATION

Students owe it to themselves and to their parents / guardians to strive to achieve their full potential. To do this, they must pay attention and work hard in class; make a sincere effort to do their homework and present it when it is due and contribute positively to school activities.

3. UNIFORM

- Students must observe the school's uniform and dress code when in school and when representing the school. Please note the relevant provisions from the school's **Dress Code** which are as follows:
- Uniform must be kept clean, tidy and in good condition.
- Students in 1st – 6th Year must purchase and wear a school jacket or top, approved by the school management, with the school crest.
- Changes: If a student wants to wear a jacket over their uniform they must wear the school crested jacket or top, approved by school management.
- Runners or boots are not acceptable; students must wear flat black or navy shoes, with non-marking soles.
- Changes: Student's must wear footwear from the following list: Completely black flat traditional school shoes, Completely black flat runners with no other colour visible, black or navy AV8 style shoes that may have a white sole.
- The only acceptable item of jewellery that students may wear is a watch. (The provision regarding jewellery will be strictly enforced in the light of increasingly stringent Health and Safety legislation).
- Wearing make-up is not acceptable for Junior students. Senior girls may wear foundation only. Wearing any other items of make up (e.g. mascara, eye liner, lip gloss, fake tan, etc.) is not acceptable. Teachers, Year Heads, Deputy Principal, Principal can ask students to remove make-up, nail varnish, fake tan etc if it is seen to have breached the code. Failure to follow instruction in this regard is considered a breach of Rule 1.
- Girls, who wish to do so, may purchase school slacks.
- Student's must be in full uniform at all times unless instructed otherwise by a staff member.
- Hair, including facial hair, must be clean and tidy and in the student's natural colour range. Long hair must be tied back. Shaved heads or designs shaved into the hair are not permitted.
- Students must be clean and tidy in relation to facial hair. Hair must be clean, tidy and in the student's natural colour range. In particular, students with long hair must tie it back in all classes.

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Please note that students may be excluded from normal classes for non-compliance with the above Dress Code and that internal school management will have the final say on determining what is or is not acceptable under this code.

4. ATTENDANCE

First Years:

From August 2016, incoming first years, or students that subsequently join that year group, cannot leave the premises during the school day without being collected by a parent/guardian or one of the named people on the registration form, until they become Senior Students.

All Other Students:

Students cannot leave the premises during the school day without first presenting a note to school management to be signed and then sign out in the front office.

All students:

- Students should attend school regularly and be on time for school. School begins at 9.00 a.m. each day.
- Every student who is late must provide written explanation from his/her parents/ guardians. The written explanation must be presented at the school office, where each latecomer must sign in before they attend class.
- Students who expect to be absent on a given day must present a note explaining that absence to their year head in advance.
- Unexpectedly absent students must bring a written explanation from their parents / guardians on their return to school. This note must be presented to the Year Head.
- Each May, the school awards “Certificates of Attendance” to students who have a record of at least 95% attendance during the school year. The school liaises closely with and makes regular reports to the National Educational Welfare Board (N.E.W.B.) about student absenteeism.
- All Junior Certificate students must stay in the school at lunchtime every day. Senior students are allowed to leave the premises but loitering on the streets or causing a nuisance to the community is strictly forbidden. The school has the right to take action against students who break this rule.

5. CONDUCT IN SCHOOL

- Students must walk quietly and at a reasonable pace along stairs and corridors – keeping to the left hand side.
- Students must show respect for the rights of others. Bullying of any nature will not be tolerated.

Any parent or guardian wishing to obtain the anti-bullying policy, please contact the school office.

- Students are not allowed to engage in Chewing / Drinking and / or Eating in class or non-designated areas. Food and beverages may only be consumed in

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the lunch hall/locker room at break and lunch times and immediately after school.

- Students are not allowed the possession or use of aerosol sprays, tippex or similar products.
- Theft, damage and or interference with the property of the school, any staff member, school visitor or that of another student is not allowed
- Disruptive behaviour, which prevents a teacher teaching and / or students learning is not accepted.
- Possession / Distribution of offensive material, e.g. magazines, videos, etc. Will not be tolerated
- Any action that puts others at risk of injury is not tolerated.
- The rules also prohibit: (i) smoking and (ii) consumption of alcohol in school uniform, on school premises and / or on school activities.
- Having, passing, selling or taking illegal substances or the property of others in school uniform, on school premises and / or on school activities may lead to permanent exclusion. It will be automatically reported to the Board of Management for consideration and the local Gardai will be immediately informed. This is the case even in the first attempt.

6. P.E.D. (Personal Electronic Devices) USAGE

Any parent or guardian wishing to obtain a copy of the P.E.D. policy, please contact the school office.

7. COVID 19

Mountmellick Community School is committed to providing a safe and healthy workplace for all our staff and a safe learning environment for all our students. To ensure that, we have developed a COVID-19 Response Plan (available on the school website) The BOM and all school staff are responsible for the implementation of this plan and a combined effort will help contain the spread of the virus. This plan is designed to protect all members of the school community and their extended families, friends and close contact from the virus. In this regard it is of the utmost importance that all aspects of this plan is adhered to at all times.

Non-compliance with this plan has the potential to lead to:

- Spread of the virus
- Illness of members of the school community and their extended families
- Closure of portions of the school / the entire school
- Potential Hospitalisation
- Possible long term health issues
- Possible bereavement

As a consequence, we will have no option but to deal with any breaches of our COVID 19 response in a very serious fashion and with great speed. Any on-going non-compliance

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will be addressed by the Board of Management due to the serious nature of this matter and may lead to serious sanctions up to and including expulsion from school.

Procedure and rules for students

1. Any deliberate coughing or spitting attempt or similar behaviour will be treated as a serious breach of the school code of behaviour.
2. Students are not permitted to share equipment, books or any other items of belongings
3. Face coverings must be worn when a physical distance of two metres cannot be maintained. This means face coverings as opposed to visors should be worn by all students throughout the day while indoors (with the exception of while eating) See section 4.6 of our COVID 19 Response Plan for further details
4. No loitering or congregating around toilets or lockers is permitted. The number of students permitted in a toilet at any one time is equal to the number of individual cubicles in that particular toilet. Toilets will be open at various regular times during the school day to facilitate student access. When closed for cleaning / maintenance etc emergency access will be available to a separate toilet facility.
5. Students are required to follow the access to locker protocol which ensures that students at the locker are a minimum of 1.5 metres apart at all times. (Details to be given to students in school)
6. Students are expected to go to their lockers at designated times only. Students are not permitted to go to their lockers at any other times to reduce interaction.
7. Students must walk on the left hand side of corridors/stairwells while following the one-way route where relevant so as to maintain social distancing.
8. A hand sanitiser dispenser is inside every classroom along with other specific areas. Students must sanitise their hands upon entering the classroom. Students must also observe hand hygiene guidelines in practical classes particularly if sharing of equipment is necessary. All students must sanitise their hands before and after use of specialised equipment.
9. The symptoms for COVID19 are:
 - fever (high temperature)
 - coughing
 - shortness of breath
 - loss or change to your sense of smell or taste

It can take up to 14 days for symptoms to show. They can be similar to symptoms of cold and flu.

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If you are feeling unwell and have any of the above symptoms it is advised you do not attend school. If in school and you are experiencing any of the above symptoms you must inform a member of staff immediately.

10. Student Absence

- If a student is ill or cannot attend school, parents/guardians must contact the school via email office@mountmellickcs.ie or by text to 087-1994554 to outline the nature and expected duration of absence.

11. Student Late Arrival or Early Departure

- If a student arrives late to school, they must report to the office upon arrival.
- If a student needs to leave the school early, parents/guardians must contact the school via email office@mountmellickcs.ie or by text to 087-1994554

12. Items cannot be handed into the office for collection by students.

13. All students must ensure they have access to their school email account as electronic communication will be used to aid teaching and learning for a number of reasons including the reduction in reliance on paper handouts, student submission of work in hard copy etc. Please note that electronic communication will reduce rather than replace hardcopy communication.

14. Students should remain at least one metre apart at all times. Social distancing guidelines must be adhered to at all times especially when queueing for various services / facilities / classrooms.

15. When in the classroom, students must remain in their seats at all times unless permission to move / leave has been given by the teacher. This extends to the period between classes where a class is remaining in the classroom and awaiting the arrival of the next teacher.

During these unprecedented times, the Board of Management of Mountmellick Community School will take necessary steps to provide a safe learning environment for students and staff. In this regard there can be no level of non-compliance with the necessary safety measures that have been put in place to address the challenges and dangers associated with COVID 19. As a result, engagement in any of the following will result in a student being the following behaviours may result in student being immediately removed from / not allowed into class, the corridor etc and put in the care of his Parents / Guardians until the matter can be addressed by school management.

- Refusal to wear a mask or use other PPE as appropriate
- Interfering with any other persons PPE / Mask
- Deliberate misuse of other COVID 19 related materials
- Deliberately coughing / sneezing in the direction of another person

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- Deliberately wearing masks / PPE in an inappropriate fashion for amusement or other purposes
- Availing of the opportunity to disrupt class / other students by shouting, making noises etc while one's mouth is hidden by a mask
- Refusal to comply with hand washing / sanitisation or other related requirements
- Refusal to follow any other COVID 19 related instructions as issued

As you are aware, due to the very high level of student compliance in relation to our school rules, we expect that these measures will rarely need to be referred to. However, if necessary they will be used to ensure the safety of all members of the school community. In the rare occurrence of a repeat offender, the matter will be addressed by the Board of Management as more serious measures may be required to address the matter.

The co-operation of all members of the school will be appreciated in relation to compliance with this section of the Code of Behaviour for the duration of the pandemic. Please see our COVID 19 Response Plan for further details. As our COVID 19 Response Plan is subject to change following Department of Education and other on-going advice this portion of the Code of Behaviour is also subject to change.

8. STUDENT LEADERSHIP

- The school recognises the integral part of school leadership within the student body. The Student Council play an active role in our school and liase between teachers/ management and students on issues that arise. They are also involved in the consultation for policy development with relevant policies.
- Meitheal also play an integral part of our school. Carried out by Leaving Certificate students after and outside interview process they help first year settle in and succeed throughout first year.
- Prefects play a role in the Community aspect of our school. They assist in whole school programmes such as clean-up. They are also Leaving Certificate students chosen from an interview process.
- Transition Years are involved in The Gaisce awards, a national initiative that promotes leadership and development in our young people.

Parents / Guardians and students should note:

Students who persistently breach school rules are liable to exclusion from the school, which may be permanent. In the case of vandalism, bullying, possession of illegal substances and other grave misbehaviour, a student may be permanently excluded by the Board of Management for a single offence.

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SECTION 2: REWARDS

An important part of the school's Code of Behaviour is the effort made to acknowledge the good behaviour and commitment to their studies of the vast majority of our students.

At the end of every half-term, e.g. in the weeks before Halloween, Christmas, February mid-term and in mid-May, teachers will award a credit (per subject) to students who deserve it. The decision to award / not to award a credit will be made by the class teacher alone on the basis of continuous hard work, good behaviour, project work, practical work, etc. There will be a credit available, also, to the Year Head, the Year Head can award this credit to recognise the student or a teacher can recommend to a Year Head that a student should be recognised for their involvement in an extra, co or curricular area. These credits will then be added up and the total credits for the person involved will be recorded in the student's journal / diary. The maximum number of credits at Junior Cycle is 15 and at Senior Cycle is 12.

At the end of the year, a number of students agreed by senior management in each class with the most credits will be considered, by the teaching staff, for the Student of the Class Award. A number of students will receive a certificate in recognition of their achievements, while the winner will receive the Class Student of the Year Award. The top one hundred or so students throughout the school will be recognised by awards, trips etc. The Board of Management will normally contribute towards the cost of this day / event.

Section 3: SANCTIONS

All students are expected to comply with the school's Code of Behaviour both inside and outside the school building. By keeping to these standards they are ensuring that the rights of all students and staff are being respected. They are also showing that they are aware of their responsibilities and as such will be a credit to their school, parents and family and, of course, themselves.

If in the unusual case a student breaches the school rules the following sanctions can be imposed.

SANCTIONS THAT MAY BE IMPOSED BY A TEACHER

The range of sanctions open to a teacher for individual and repeated offences is as follows:

1. To issue a verbal warning to the student;
2. To assign extra work, relevant to the specific subject area, to the student;
3. To send the student to another teacher for the rest of that class, by prior arrangement.
To put the student on detention, at break-time and / or at lunchtime, supervised by a teacher.
4. To confiscate an offending /distracting/non-compliant item. The item involved may be returned to the student/parent/guardian as appropriate after a time approved by management.
5. Having communicated with parents/guardians a cleaning duty may be assigned to the student, where the offence relates to litter, chewing gum, damage, unhygienic actions, vandalism, etc in lieu of other sanctions as appropriate.

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6. To issue a Discipline Report Sheet to the student. The report sheet must be signed by the student. A student who refuses to sign is in breach of the school's code of discipline. The report sheet will be forwarded, by the teacher, to the student's parents / guardians. It also must be signed by the relevant Year Head.
7. To advise relevant personnel of behavioural issues that may have implications on co/extra-curricular involvement. (e.g. Health and safety) In this instance, participation will be at the discretion of management following appropriate consultation with organising teacher, Year Head etc.
8. To contact in writing or by phone the parents / guardians of the student involved;
9. To report the matter immediately to Year Head, Deputy Principal and / or Principal, depending on the seriousness of the matter.

SANCTIONS THAT MAY BE IMPOSED BY YEAR HEAD

The range of sanctions open to an and / or Year Head for individual and repeated offences is as follows:

1. To issue a verbal warning to the student;
2. To assign extra work, relevant to any specific subject area, to the student;
3. To reassign the student to another area for a period of time in the case of persistent offences while the matter is being addressed.
4. To issue a Discipline Report Sheet to the student. The report sheet must be signed by the student. A student who refuses to sign is in breach of the school's code of discipline. The report sheet will be posted, by the teacher, to the student's parents / guardians.
5. To confiscate the offending item. The item involved will be given to the Principal and returned at the appropriate time.
6. To assign a cleaning duty to the student, where the offence concerned has to do with litter, chewing gum, damage, unhygienic actions, vandalism, etc;
7. To put the student on an official school detention, at lunchtime, supervised by another member of staff;
8. To refuse a senior student permission to leave the school at lunchtime.
9. To demand the student's attendance at a meeting with some or all of his / her teachers, at which the student's performance is discussed;
10. To put the student on an official school detention, after school and / or on days when classes are not in operation but the school is open.
11. To recommend to the relevant organising teacher that the student involved be excluded for a defined period from going to a match(es), trip(s), etc. The final decision in this regard will be made by the organising teacher, in consultation with the class teacher and the Year Head.
12. To contact in writing or by phone the parents / guardians of the student involved;
13. To report the matter immediately to the Deputy Principal and / or Principal, depending on the seriousness of the matter.

In relation to students who fail to come to school in the correct uniform, school management may confiscate the offending item of clothing/footwear, may demand that the student wear a replacement uniform (or part thereof) and return the item cleaned, may bring or otherwise arrange for the student to be brought home to change into the correct uniform and / or (for repeated offences) may refuse him / her permission to attend normal class until the correct uniform is worn.

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Please note that, in addition to the above measures, students who cause damage to the property of the school, a student, a member of staff or a visitor will be expected to pay for the cost of repairs. Additional penalties may, also, be imposed. Should the money involved not be paid within a reasonable period of time, this will be deemed to be a further offence and a further penalty will be imposed.

SANCTIONS THAT MAY BE IMPOSED BY THE DEPUTY PRINCIPAL/PRINCIPAL

The Principal or the Deputy Principal acting in the absence of the Principal may impose any combination of sanctions for individual and repeated offences similar to the sanctions referred to above. However, the Principal or the Deputy Principal have the authority (from the Board of Management) to use their discretion to apply other reasonable, measured, suitable and lawful sanctions to meet the needs of any particular unforeseen situation that may arise.

INSCHOOL SUSPENSION

In-school suspension provides another step on the ladder of intervention re student behaviour. A Year Head may recommend in school suspension to the Principal. This type of suspension will involve a student being excluded from some or all of his / her classes and may include lunchtime. Depending on the issues involved, the student involved may be allocated to the class(es) of another teacher(s) during the suspension and / or may be required to arrive later or leave earlier than other students or may be supervised in the front hall. In School Suspension may be imposed by the Principal/Deputy Principal or Year Head acting in the absence of the Principal.

SUSPENSION

For the purpose of this Student Code of Behaviour, suspension is defined as the school “Requiring the student to absent himself / herself from the school for a specified, limited period of school days.”

This is an extremely serious sanction. It is making a statement to the student that his / her behaviour and the refusal to respond to the requests and encouragement of the teachers, Year Head have placed that student outside the community of the school. The suspension may be appealed to the Board of Management, who may remove/reduce or increase the proposed suspension.

EXPULSION

A student is expelled from the school when the Board of Management makes a decision to permanently exclude him or her from the school, having complied with the provisions of Section 24 of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000.

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Further policy details relating to the contents of this Code of Behaviour policy are available on request. Any parent or guardian wishing to obtain the detailed policy of suspension and expulsion, please contact the school office.

SECTION 5: CONCLUSION

This Code of Behaviour aims to encourage positive behaviour in our students. Mountmellick Community School aims to provide a safe and happy place in which children learn both academically and emotionally. The school exemplifies positive behaviour and rewards students for their efforts. Students are encouraged to participate in school leadership programmes. In the unlikely event that students breach the Code of Behaviour the school follows the aforementioned sanctions in an attempt to help the student gain insight and modify their behaviour. The school reserves the right to modify this Code of Behaviour at short notice. Any change(s) made will be communicated to parents / guardians and students as soon as is realistically possible after the change(s) is made.

Note: a file is kept on each student from the day of enrolment, until at least one year after they leave. Written teacher records, written student records and written records of meetings/conversations between students/teachers/parents and/or other relevant parties may be included on this file. These may include relevant signatures for verification purposes.

Ratified by the Board of Management: 27th August 2020

Review Date: August 2021

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