ST. PATRICK'S CLASSICAL SCHOOL

SUSPENSION AND EXPULSION POLICY

ST. PATRICK'S CLASSICAL SCHOOL - POLICY ON SUSPENSION AND EXPULSION

St. Patrick's Classical School strives for excellence by creating an environment which fosters the development of each student in all aspects of the human person – spiritual, intellectual, moral, physical and social. Students are encouraged to set personal goals, take ownership of their learning and to initiate positive change. A sense of values and a commitment to the service of others together with a deep understanding of the Catholic faith is central to the mission of St. Patrick's Classical School.

It is the policy of the St. Patrick's Classical School Board of Management, in keeping with Section 23 (2) of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000, to ensure a school Policy on Suspension and Expulsion is drawn up and developed in consultation and collaboration with students, staff and parents in St. Patrick's Classical School and in accordance with the Guidelines issued by the National Educational Welfare Board (NEWB).
Cognisant of its legal obligations, the Board of Management will ensure that the policy is consistent with good practice and is accompanied by a transparent process of accountability. As a school with a Catholic ethos, St. Patrick's Classical School aims at providing an atmosphere in which personal growth (intellectual, spiritual, emotional, cultural and social) is fashioned, and quality relationships with others are nurtured in accordance with Christian virtues. All students have the right to learn in an orderly and caring environment free from disruption, intimidation, harassment and discrimination. The expectations governing student behaviour and the procedures for dealing with unacceptable behaviour are clearly set out in the school's Code of Discipline. There may be cases of unacceptable behaviour where it will be in the best interest of the school community and/or the student involved, for the student to be removed from the school for a period of time or completely. Suspension and Expulsion are the options available to the Principal and/or the Board of Management in these situations. When proposing to suspend or expel a student, the school will apply fair procedures based on the principles of natural justice. Fair procedures have two essential requirements:

- The right to be heard
- The right to impartiality

SUSPENSION

Suspension is one strategy within the School's Code of Discipline. Suspension is defined as requiring the student to absent himself from school for a specified, limited period of school days. The Board of Management empowers the Principal, or in the absence of the Principal, the Deputy Principal or Year Head to suspend a student. As stated in the Code, a student may be suspended for persistent misbehaviour, for a serious incident of indiscipline or for some other breaches of the Code which Management deem serious enough to warrant suspension e.g. smoking on the school premises, bullying, breaches of dress and appearance rule, refusal to follow instruction from a member of staff etc. (these are some examples). Suspension allows a student time to reflect on his behaviour, to acknowledge and accept responsibility for the behaviour which led to the suspension and to accept responsibility for altering his behaviour to meet the school's expectations in the future. The Principal has authority to suspend any pupil for a limited period (max. 5 school days) and to report any such suspension to the Board of Management at its next meeting. The Board of Management and the Principal will exercise this authority having regard to their responsibilities to the whole school community and to the Principles of Natural Justice. If a student is suspended for a period of six days or more, the Principal must inform the Education Welfare Officer.

Procedures for Suspending a Student:

- The Principal, in consultation with the Deputy Principal and/or Year Head, makes a decision to suspend on the basis of the reasons set out in the Code of Behaviour and the parameters set out by the Board of Management.
- Parents/Guardians are asked to come to the school for a meeting during which they are informed of the precise grounds for suspension. The student may also be required to attend this meeting. If the suspension is to be immediate (e.g. in the interests of health and safety or in the interests of maintaining an orderly environment), Parents/Guardians will be informed by phone with a written follow-up.
- Students are supervised in class until suspension takes place.
- Parents/Guardians receive a written confirmation of the suspension by hand/post. This formal letter of notification includes notice of suspension, the effective date and duration of suspension and the reasons for suspension. It also includes a statement, where appropriate, that the Education Welfare Officer has been informed. This letter also states the requirements which need to be in place when the student returns.
- Parents/Guardians are also informed of their rights of Appeal to the Board of Management of the school and/or the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Science (Section 29, Education Act 1998).
- Parents/Guardians are also informed, in accordance with the Code of Discipline, of the procedures for the formal re-introduction of the student into the school.

EXPULSION

The Board of Management of a recognised school has the authority to expel a student. As a matter of best practice, that authority should be reserved to the Board of Management and should not be delegated. Expulsion is the ultimate sanction imposed in extreme cases of indiscipline, gross misconduct or repeated breaches of the Code of Behaviour. A decision by the Principal to recommend to the Board of Management the expulsion of a student will occur only when such is the serious nature of an incident or incidents, or occasion(s) of misconduct that the Principal deems that the only course available to him is a recommendation to the Board of Management for the expulsion of the student. 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 safety
- the student is responsible for serious damage to property.

Expulsion for a first offence:

There may be exceptional circumstances where the Board of Management 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 but not limited to:

- a serious threat of violence against another student or member of staff.
- actual violence or physical assault against another student or member of staff.
- supplying or attempting to supply illegal drugs to other students in the school.
- acquiring or attempting to acquire illegal drugs from other students in the school.

- sexual assault.
- serious damage to school property

Any other serious offence or serious behaviour may result in the Board of Management forming the opinion that a student should be expelled for a first offence.

In advance of any hearing, which could result in expulsion, the school will investigate the matter in accordance with the Principles of Natural Justice.

A decision by the Principal to recommend to the Board of Management the expulsion of a student will only occur when the following procedures have been carried out:

1. Detailed investigation carried out under the direction of the Principal:

(Fair procedures based on the principles of natural justice- see NEWB 10.3 and 10.4)

- The principal must inform the student and parents of the misbehaviour/offence and that it could result in expulsion. This must be done in writing.
- The principal should give student and parents an opportunity to respond.
- The principal should have a meeting with parents and the student.
- If the student has been suspended for more than 6 days in the current academic year at this stage the E.W.O. (Education Welfare Officer) must be informed in writing immediately.

2. Recommendation to the Board of Management (B.O.M.) by the Principal:

- Inform the parents and student that B.O.M. is being asked to consider expulsion.
- Ensure the parents have all records of investigation (e.g. Incident Reports) and written notice of grounds on which B.O.M is being asked to consider expulsion.
- Ensure B.O.M. gets the same records.
- Notify the parents of the date of the hearing and invite them to that hearing.
- Advise the parents that they can make a written or oral submission to the B.O.M.
- Give the parents enough notice so that they can prepare for the hearing.

3. B.O.M. considers the Principal's recommendation:

- B.O.M must hold a hearing.
- The Principal and parents put their cases to the B.O.M. in each other's presence.
- The parents may be accompanied at the hearing.

4. B.O.M. deliberations and actions following the hearing:

- B.O.M. decides whether or not expulsion is appropriate.
- If expelling the B.O.M. must notify the E.W.O. (Education Welfare Officer) of the decision and the reasons.
- A student cannot be expelled until 20 days have passed from the time the E.W.O has been notified. [*Education (Welfare) Act* 2000,
- The Board may consider it appropriate to suspend the student during this twenty day period to ensure that good order is maintained and that the safety of other students is secured.
- B.O.M. now notifies the parents that the B.O.M. will notify the E.W.O.

5. Consultations arranged by the E.W.O.

- Within 20 days of notification the E.W.O. must make all efforts to hold individual meetings with the Principal, parents and the student.
- Convene a meeting with those parties who agree to attend.
- If expulsion cannot be avoided E.W.O. must now focus on alternative educational possibilities.
- To ensure good order in the school the B.O.M. may decide to suspend the student during this time.

6. Confirmation of the decision to Expel:

- When the 20 days following the notification to the E.W.O. have elapsed and where the B.O.M. still feels the student should be expelled, the B.O.M. must formally confirm the decision to expel. This task may be delegated to the Chairperson and the Principal.
- The parents must be notified immediately.
- Parents and the student should be told of the right to appeal and should be supplied with the standard Appeal Form. (Education Act 1998, Section 29).

- **Bullying Prevention and Bí Cineálta**

This policy shall be read alongside the school's Bí Cineálta Policy to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour. Reports of bullying behaviour will be addressed through the reporting, support, recording and review arrangements set out in that policy.

Where suspension or expulsion is being considered in connection with bullying behaviour, the procedures and safeguards in this Suspension and Expulsion Policy shall also apply

- **Child Protection and Safeguarding**

The welfare and protection of students shall remain central to the implementation of this policy. This policy shall be read alongside the school's Child Safeguarding Statement, associated risk assessment.

Where information arising during a disciplinary matter gives rise to a child protection concern, the concern shall be brought promptly to the Designated Liaison Person, or the Deputy Designated Liaison Person where appropriate, and addressed in accordance with the applicable child protection procedures. This does not remove or replace the individual statutory reporting responsibilities of mandated persons.

A disciplinary investigation, suspension, proposed expulsion or appeal shall not delay any required child protection report or safeguarding response. The school will continue to consider the student's welfare and support needs throughout the process.

- **Behaviours of Concern and Crisis Situations**

The school will prioritise prevention, early intervention, positive relationships and de-escalation when supporting students who display behaviours of concern. Responses to crisis situations shall follow the Department's Understanding Behaviours of Concern and Responding to Crisis Situations: Guidelines for Schools in Supporting Students, together with Circulars 0081/2024 and 0042/2026.

Physical restraint shall never be used as a disciplinary sanction. It may be used only as a last resort in a crisis involving imminent risk to physical safety, in accordance with the Guidelines, and must be proportionate and cease as soon as it is no longer necessary. Seclusion shall not be used.

Any incident involving physical restraint shall be recorded and reported to the Principal and Board of Management, and to the NCSE using the prescribed reporting form. Parents/guardians shall be involved at the earliest possible opportunity. Any associated child protection concern shall be addressed through the school's safeguarding procedures.

Following a crisis, the school will review the incident, the student's support needs and measures to prevent recurrence. Any subsequent proposal to suspend or expel the student shall be considered separately under this policy, with fair procedures and individual consideration of the circumstances.

- **Reduced School Days and Informal Exclusion**

A reduced school day or week shall not be used as a disciplinary sanction or as a means of avoiding the procedures governing suspension or expulsion.

Where a reduced timetable is considered necessary to support a student's attendance and participation, it shall be exceptional, time-limited and implemented in accordance with Circular 0047/2021 and the associated Guidelines. The school will document the rationale, supports already undertaken, agreed attendance arrangements, review dates and a plan for return to full attendance.

The informed consent of the parent/guardian, or the student where aged 18 years or over, shall be obtained before implementation. The required notification shall be submitted to Tusla Education Support Service.

- **Confidentiality, Records and Data Protection**

Records relating to disciplinary investigations, suspensions, proposed expulsions, decisions and appeals shall be accurate, relevant, securely maintained and handled in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation, the Data Protection Act 2018 and the school's Data Protection Policy.

Access shall be restricted to persons who require the information for an authorised purpose. Information shared with the Board of Management, statutory agencies or other authorised recipients shall be limited to what is necessary and proportionate for that purpose.

Records shall be retained and securely disposed of in accordance with the school's documented retention schedule and applicable legal requirements. Relevant records shall be preserved where required for an ongoing investigation, appeal or legal proceedings.

For further information:

St. Patrick's Classical School's Code of Behaviour
DES Best Practice Guidelines concerning Certificate Examinations
Education (Welfare) Act 2000
Education Act 1998.
National Educational Welfare Board-Developing a Code of Behaviour-guidelines for Schools
Understanding Behaviours of Concern and Responding to Crisis Situations: Guidelines for Schools in Supporting Students, together with Circulars 0081/2024 and 0042/2026

This policy will be reviewed and ratified every three years.

The Board of Management approved and ratified the School Policy on the 16/11/2026..

Signed:  Signed: 

Fr. Gerry Stuart
Chairperson of Board of Management
Date: 16/11/2026.

Mr. Harry Mc Garry
Principal/Secretary to the Board of Management
Date: 16/11/2026.