



Presentation College, Headford

POLICY ON BEHAVIOUR

Academic Year 2017/18

1. INTRODUCTION

Rationale

1. As a Catholic school in the Presentation tradition, our school endeavors to prepare our young people for Christian living by guiding their development as individuals who are capable of self-direction, choosing freely and following an informed conscience.
2. All our policies are rooted in our Mission Statement, which emphasizes education as the holistic development of the individual, partnership and harmonious relationships, inclusiveness and a particular regard for the vulnerable and disadvantaged.

Our Mission Statement

Presentation College, Headford is a voluntary Catholic, secondary school which opens its doors to all.

Its aim, in partnership with parents, is to facilitate the education of its students for Christian living, by developing each one morally, socially, culturally, spiritually, intellectually, emotionally and physically.

We seek to promote a caring and committed school community where learning is nurtured, where gifts are recognised and the dignity of each person is valued.

3. Our school ethos fosters mutual respect, positive teacher-student relationships, a sense of justice and fair play, self-discipline, good order, cooperation between home and school and loyalty to our college.
4. When a parent/guardian chooses PCH for girl's/boy's education it is assumed that the ethos of the school and its Code of Discipline are accepted. By enrolling Parents/Guardians and student are implicitly accepting the ethos and standards of the school.
5. Everyone in the school will be treated with care and respect. This included fellow students, teachers, administrative, secretarial and maintenance staff and all who visit the school. Good student behaviour is expected to be the norm at all times. Students are expected to behave in a manner that reflects well on themselves and on the school both inside and outside of school time.
6. This policy has been prepared with regard to the legal requirements of the *Education Act 1998* and the *Education (Welfare) Act 2000* and in accordance with the document, *Developing a Code of Behaviour: Guidelines for Schools*, issued by the National Educational Welfare Board.

Scope of Policy

This policy statement outlines, among other things:

- the standards of behaviour required of each student attending our school
- how we strive to promote positive behaviour among our students
- the measures that may be taken when a student fails or refuses to observe the required standards of behaviour
- procedures for the use of suspension and expulsion
- procedures relating to notification of a child's absence from school

The policy is addressed to both students and parents. All partners in the school community are involved in creating and reviewing this policy and procedures outlined in it.

Aims and Objectives of the Policy

The objective of our Behaviour Policy is that our students mature into civic-minded, caring adults who are motivated, in a Christian spirit, to achieve their full potential. The policy aims

- To educate students towards behaving according to the values outlined in our Mission Statement.
- To ensure the safety, health and wellbeing of every individual in the school and of the school community.
- To promote and maintain a positive environment for learning and teaching.

2. PROMOTION OF GOOD BEHAVIOUR

- i. The main aim of this policy is to encourage our students to behave well and thus to create a positive learning environment in which each student can achieve to the best of their ability.
- ii. Animated by our Behaviour Policy, all teachers use a variety of means to motivate students, engage them in the learning process and encourage them to realise their potential. These may include verbal praise; positive comment by teacher to year head / tutor / principal / deputy principal; giving a student extra responsibilities; exhibition of students' work; sending a letter home to parents highlighting a student's positive behaviour, special achievement or improvement.
- iii. Official recognition of students' positive behaviour at Assembly time on a regular basis.
- iv. Year Head to send 20 letter of commendation home acknowledging students positive behaviour.
- v. The school acknowledges and celebrates students' special achievements by publicising them to the school community in different ways – for example, on intercom, in newsletters, on public display boards, on the school website or in the school magazine.
- vi. The school aims to reward students of all aptitudes and abilities for their efforts. An Award System is in place which recognises and celebrates students' efforts and achievements in a variety of areas.
- vii. Our Prefect System acknowledges the special contribution of senior students to the school and fosters greater responsibility and leadership among them.
- viii. The 'Big Brother, Big Sister' mentoring programme also promotes an active concern among senior students for the welfare of those younger than themselves.
- ix. If it becomes apparent that a student is suffering from personal or emotional difficulties, the issue may be referred to the Pastoral Care Team.

3. CODE OF BEHAVIOUR

Students must comply with the rules and required standards of behaviour outlined below. The ten 'School Rules' are a summary of the behaviour required of students, which is outlined in greater detail under various headings in the following section.

School Rules

1. Take part respectfully in school liturgies and prayers.
2. Treat others with respect and courtesy.
3. Cooperate with teachers and other school staff.
4. Attend school regularly and punctually and be on time for class.
5. Work to the best of your ability.
6. Behave in an orderly way in class, on corridors and on the school grounds.
7. Present yourself in a clean and tidy way and wear full school uniform.
8. Keep the school free of unhealthy and illegal substances.
9. Respect school property and the property of others and keep our school clean and tidy.
10. Uphold the good name of our school.

Required Standards of Behaviour

(i) Care for Others

1. Students are expected to be kind to other people and to look out for their welfare. If it is noticed that somebody is isolated or left out, students are urged to try to include them. We ask all our students to keep a special eye out for younger students and people with special needs.
2. Every pupil is entitled to an education free from intimidation, harassment or abuse, and bullying is not tolerated in the school. A specific Anti-Bullying Policy is available on request. It is part of our Anti-Bullying Code that:

3. There should be no unwelcome name-calling, mocking, teasing, verbal abuse, physical abuse or fighting, and no unwelcome comments about a pupil, their family or any member of staff;
4. Any incident brought to the attention of teachers or the school authorities will be taken seriously and investigated. If the problem persists, the perpetrator(s) will face serious disciplinary sanctions;
5. Any student who is being bullied, who is the subject of unwelcome attention, or who is aware that someone else is being ill-treated, is urged to tell a member of staff immediately.

(ii) Attendance

1. Students must attend school on a daily basis, unless ill or excused for exceptional reasons.
2. While in school, students must attend and participate in all classes assigned to them. Students may not absent themselves from class, or part of a class, without prior permission.
3. On returning to school after an absence, students must place an Absence Explanation Note in the Year Box (outside Reception) and ask each of their teachers for permission to return to class.
4. In cases where absences have been planned, Absence Explanation Notes (available in booklet form from Reception) are required in advance from parents.
5. *Current Legislation requires parents to inform the school if their child is absent from school (whether for part of a day, a full day or a number of days) and the reason why. Schools are required by Law to record the reasons for absences.*
6. Students who have to leave early must wait at Reception to be signed out and sign back in on their return to school. Students may be signed out only by a parent or guardian.
7. Students are not permitted to leave the school grounds during breaks, with the following two exceptions:
8. Leaving Certificate students have permission to go down town at lunch time, subject to good behaviour; and
9. Students who live in town are allowed to go home at lunch time, with their parents' written permission.
10. *School Attendance Records are kept in accordance with the Education Welfare Act 2000, section 21.4 (b). The National Education Welfare Board will be informed, as required by law, when a student's total absences exceed twenty days in a school year.*

(iii) Punctuality

1. Getting to school, and to class, on time is essential if students are to optimise their learning, avoid disrupting class and develop good habits of time-keeping.
2. Students must be in the school building by 9.00 am each morning and ensure that they are in class before 9.10 am.
3. Students who are late for school must report to the office on arrival at school where their name and time of arrival will be recorded in a book kept for this purpose. They must bring a note, signed by a parent or guardian, explaining their late arrival.
4. It is essential that students move briskly between classes to ensure punctuality for all class periods.
5. Students may visit their lockers only at the appointed times: (1) before 9.05 in the morning; (2) morning break; (3) lunch time; (4) before and after P.E.
6. Students must not loiter at locker areas or in toilets.

(iv) General Conduct

1. Students must have a positive approach to class and homework and come to school prepared to learn (i.e., having the appropriate attitude, and the necessary books and equipment).
2. Students are normally expected to take part in extra-curricular activities and are encouraged to take as full and active a part in school life as they can.

3. Students are expected to take part respectfully in school liturgies and prayers, with due regard for constitutional rights.
4. Students must, at all times, show respect to staff, fellow students and visitors to the school.
5. Students must obey staff at all times.
6. Students are expected to speak politely to others and to talk in a low voice. (Shouting is always discourteous.) Foul or obscene language is forbidden.
7. Students must act in a courteous, orderly and sensible manner. Violence, physical aggression, fighting, unruly behaviour and bad language are strictly forbidden.
8. Students must move between classes briskly, quietly and in an orderly manner. This involves following the one-way system on the corridors, standing back to let people pass and waiting patiently for the people ahead to move on. Students should stand aside to let staff members or visitors pass.
9. In the canteen, students should take their place quietly in the queue and wait patiently to be served. After they have eaten, each student is responsible for returning their cutlery and dishes to the service area and tidying up after themselves.
10. Students must behave appropriately on buses in order to ensure the safety of all students.
11. Smoking, the possession/consumption of tobacco or alcohol, solvent abuse, the use/trafficking of illegal drugs/substances or the use of any substance that alters behaviour are strictly forbidden, within school grounds or on school outings/occasions, under penalty of immediate suspension. (See Substance Misuse policy.)
12. Students must not use mobile phones during the school day for any purpose. Any phones taken to school by students must remain switched off and out of sight for the duration of the school day. Phones used or sounding during the school day will be confiscated and returned at the discretion of the school authority.
13. MP3 Players, i-pods and similar electronic equipment, cameras and ear-phones / headsets may not be used on the school grounds, except under the guidance of a teacher. The posting of videos or photographs to social media sites is totally forbidden without prior school approval.
14. Possession or use of matches, lighters, laser lights, fireworks, fire crackers, catapults, penknives, pellet guns, stink bombs or any hazardous materials is strictly forbidden and will result in automatic suspension.
15. Students are expected to behave in a manner which reflects well on them and on the school, both inside and outside the school, throughout the school year. Behaviour which brings the school into disrepute is not tolerated.

(v) Property / Environment

1. Students are required to keep the school clean and tidy, so that it is a welcoming place of which we can all be proud, and a pleasant environment in which to work and learn.
2. Students are required to put all litter in correct bins.
3. Chewing gum and the use of corrective fluids (e.g. Tippex) are not permitted.
4. Eating is allowed only in designated areas and at break times.
5. School buildings, furniture and the property of others must be treated with care. Defacing of school property (e.g. graffiti) is a serious offence. Deliberate damage to school property must be paid for by the students involved.
6. Students must report any damage to school property immediately to a staff member.
7. Lockers are the property of the school. Students are expected to take responsibility for the locker assigned to them for the school year and to report immediately any damage to it.
8. In the interest of the health and safety of the school community, school management reserves the right to open lockers or bags and inspect their contents.
9. Students must take care of their own property. Books, school bags coats and other belongings must be stowed in lockers. Students are responsible for placing padlocks on their lockers and ensuring that they are locked at all times.
10. Sports bags should be placed on top of lockers. Sports gear should only be taken into school on the day it is required and should be taken home again that evening.

11. Valuables / money should never be left in bags or lockers. Any valuables which students are unable to carry on their person should be left in reception.
12. School Management cannot be responsible for loss or theft of students' belongings.

(vi) Uniform

1. Students must wear full school uniform to school each day. Students who present without full uniform will not be admitted to class.
2. Full uniform must also be worn coming to and going home from school, and on all school occasions.
3. All students are expected to be clean and neat in dress and appearance.
4. Students must be dressed in appropriate clothing and footwear for P.E. and games.

(vii) Student Journal

1. All students are issued with a Student Journal at the start of each school year. The Journal is school property and any damage to or defacing of it is a serious offence. Lost or defaced Journals must be replaced immediately at a cost of €20.
2. The Student Journal is an important tool in helping students to organise their work; and a means of communication between parents and teachers in relation to homework, academic progress and behaviour.
3. The Journal is each student's passport around the school and students will not be admitted to class without their Journal.
4. Parents should regularly check Journals to ensure that homework is completed and to note any comments made by teachers.
5. Parents of First Year students are requested to examine and sign the Journal each night; parents of all other students should check and sign the Journal each weekend.
6. In checking the Journal, parents are asked to examine and sign both the main homework section and the behaviour section towards the back.

(viii) Homework

1. Homework must be recorded by students in their Journal before the end of each class and must be carried out diligently. Each item of homework recorded in the Journal should be ticked off as it is completed.
2. When requested to do so by teachers, students must ask their parents/guardians to sign work or tests.
3. A persistent failure/refusal to perform assigned homework is a breach of school discipline.
4. In the event of a student being absent from class (including absences for extra-curricular activities and trips), responsibility rests with the student to obtain any notes given, to complete any class-work missed and to do the homework assigned.
5. Students are advised to maintain a balance between academic work and extra curricular activities. It is important that parents ensure that this balance is achieved.

(ix) Part-time Work

Part-time work, in the evenings or at weekends during term, can seriously interfere with a student's learning and potential achievement, and is therefore contrary to our learning and teaching policy.

The Code of Behaviour as outlined above applies to all school related events. This is not an exhaustive definition of acceptable/unacceptable behaviour.

The school's Code of Behaviour and may be amended from time to time.

4. PROCEDURES FOR BREACHES OF SCHOOL RULES

(i) The Class Teacher

All teachers work to maintain good classroom management and to build positive relationships with their students. Most incidents of student indiscipline are dealt with informally by the teacher. The class teacher has a number of options available to him/her, depending on the seriousness of the misbehaviour. These include the following:

- Verbal warning or assignment of extra work should be sufficient in most cases
- Note in student's diary to inform parents/guardians. Alternately, teacher may decide to send a *pro-forma* note ('Home-School Link') to parent/guardian to comment on positive or negative behaviour (for example, non-completion of homework; or improvement in student's work).
- **A referral sheet will be issued** if any of the following should occur
 1. Student fails to attend class on a day the student presents for school
 2. Student refuses to accept reasonable instruction /defies the teacher
- Using the tick system in the Homework Journal.
- Detaining a student for part of a break
- Assigning a cleaning duty
- Consulting with the relevant Class Tutor
- Consulting with a member of the Pastoral Care team.
- In extreme situations the class teacher may refer a student to the study hall in which case the student is automatically assigned 3 points, (the teacher will escort students to the hall after enlisting the help of an adjacent teacher to supervise their class). Alternatively the teacher may by local agreement refer the student/s to a neighbouring teacher in an adjacent classroom. The original class teacher will document the incident and pass the relevant paper work directly to the student's Year Head.

(ii) Sanctions

Sanctions will be issued immediately if any of the following should occur:

1. Student disrupts a class to the extent that the teaching and learning of other students in that class is affected
2. Student leaves or does not return to a class grouping in protest against a reasonable instruction by the teacher or as an act of defiance
3. Student leaves or does not return to the school grounds with permission from the Principal/Deputy Principal/Year Head and Parent.

(iii) Class Tutor

Having exhausted the previous procedures the Class Teacher will report any persistent misbehaviour using the standard referral form to the relevant Class Tutor. The Class Tutor will consult with the Class Teacher and talk to the student about this incident. If deemed necessary, the referral is passed on to the appropriate Year Head immediately.

The Class Tutor will liaise with the Pastoral Care Team to establish a broader understanding of the young person and his/her needs. When a Class Tutor has received three referrals about a particular student, the Tutor automatically refers the student to the Year Head.

(iv) The Year Head

Each Year Group has a teacher assigned as Year Head who will deal with any serious breaches of discipline. The Year Head will discuss with the student any misbehaviour brought to their attention and decide what action, if any, is to be taken. In the case of more serious misbehaviour, the Year Head will consult with the Deputy Principal and/or Principal before a sanction is imposed.

The Year Head will liaise regularly with Class Tutors and the Pastoral Care Team so that each will have a rounded picture of the individual and his/her needs. In some cases, the student may be referred for counselling, or the support of an external agency (e.g. NEPS; NEWB) may be sought.

The points scale below will inform the Year Head in deciding what action to take when a student is referred. In all cases, the Year Head will use the test of reasonableness. The Year Head may assign up to three penalty points for each offence. A referral by the class teacher to the class tutor will automatically merit **one** penalty point. A referral to the Year Head will merit three penalty points.

- **6 Points:** A formal warning is given by the Year Head. The student's parents are invited into the school by the Year Head and advised of the consequence of further points being incurred.
- **9 Points:** The student is given detention (lunchtime or evening) by the Year Head and parents are informed.
- **12 Points:** The Year Head requests the parents to come to the school to discuss the student's behaviour. It may be decided to monitor the student's behaviour on a class-by-class basis.
- **15 Points:** At this point the Year head refers the student to the **Board of Discipline**. The Board will consist of the Deputy Principal (Chairperson), a Year Head (not the student's year head) and a Class Tutor (again, not the student's Class Tutor). The hearing will be scheduled as quickly as possible and the student will be accompanied by his/her class tutor. In advance of the hearing the Year Head will have informed the student's parents of this latest development and outlined the reasons for such action. The year head is responsible for forwarding all documentation to the Board of Discipline. The Deputy Principal will inform the student and the parents of the outcome of the hearing. At this point the parents may request a meeting with the Deputy Principal.
- **18 Points:** Parents are informed that the student is being suspended from the school (1 day). Student's behaviour continues to be monitored.
- **21 Points:** Second suspension (2 days). Student's behaviour continues to be monitored.
- **27 Points:** Third suspension (3 days). Student's behaviour continues to be monitored.
- **30 Points:** Where a student has already incurred three separate periods of 1 – 3 days' suspension or in the case of a single very serious incidence of misbehaviour, the Principal may consult with the Chairperson of the Board of Management with a view to imposing an extended suspension.
- **35 Points:** The student is referred to the Board of Management, which considers all options up to and including expulsion.

Reinforcement of Positive Behaviour for Students on Penalty Points.

If a student on penalty points has no referral of any nature for one month his/her penalty points total will be reduced by three. Subsequent months of good behaviour (i.e. no referral) will also warrant a three penalty point reduction for each month. This may continue until the student reverts to no penalty points.

Automatic Suspension

Some instances of serious misbehaviour will result in automatic suspension. These types of misbehaviour include, but are not limited to, the following: bad language in class; verbal abuse of staff; direct challenge to the teacher's authority; physical assault; smoking, possession of tobacco, or giving a reasonable impression that one has been smoking; possession or consumption of alcohol.

Referral to Board of Management

A single instance of extreme misbehaviour may result in the student being referred to the Board of Management, which may consider all measures up to and including expulsion. Such misbehaviour may include but is not limited to: possession or use of illegal substances; direct verbal abuse of a staff member; assault of a staff member.

Notes

- In cases where it is deemed necessary to protect the education and/or health and safety of the majority, instant dismissal will be at the discretion of the Board or one acting on its behalf (which includes the Principal). In such cases, there will be regard for the current legislation regarding expulsions and/or suspensions and the provisions of natural and constitutional justice and fairness of procedure.
- In cases where the behaviour of a minority affects the education and/or health and safety of the majority, the greater good will take precedence.
- Deliberate damage to school property will result in the application of the school's procedures for breaches of school rules in addition to payment to repair the damage caused.
- In some cases, where it is deemed appropriate, a sanction may be imposed, whereby a student is required to perform an act of service to the school community, such as a cleaning duty.
- Evening Detention takes place on a stated school day from 4.00 p.m. to 5.00 p.m. Parents will be contacted beforehand to enable them to make suitable arrangements for getting pupils home.
- Lunchtime Detention entails the student being detained for up to 30 minutes. Parents will be notified, in advance where practicable.
- Exclusion from School Events will be used only for a serious breach of rules or where persistent indiscipline is interfering with the smooth running of school or learning environment. This may take the form of omission of the student from school teams, school tours, or other occasions where they may be representing or supporting the school.

5. SUSPENSION

The Board of Management may suspend a student from school as a sanction. The Board has delegated to the Principal the authority to suspend a student for up to five days and up to ten days in consultation with the E.W.O. when the matter will be referred to the Board of Management.

Procedures regarding suspension:

- i. Where a preliminary assessment of the facts confirms that serious misbehaviour has occurred that could warrant suspension, the student and parents will be notified of the complaint, how it will be investigated and that it could result in suspension. A formal investigation will follow. Parents and students will normally be given an opportunity to respond before a decision is made and before any sanction is imposed.
- ii. In certain cases, immediate suspension may be warranted. In such cases, parents will be notified and arrangements made with them for the student to be collected. The formal investigation will follow the decision to suspend.
- iii. Parents will be notified in writing of the decision to suspend.

Grounds for Removing a Suspension:

A suspension may be removed if the Board of Management decides to remove it for any reason or if the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Skills directs that it be removed following an appeal under section 29 of the *Education Act 1998*.

6. EXPULSION

Only the Board of Management has authority to expel a student. Expulsion is reserved for extreme cases of unacceptable behaviour.

Procedures regarding expulsion

- i. Where a preliminary assessment of the facts confirms serious misbehaviour that could warrant expulsion, the following steps will be taken:
 - The student and their parents will be informed about the details of the alleged misbehaviour, how it will be investigated and that it could result in expulsion.
 - A detailed investigation will be carried out under the direction of the Principal.
 - Parents and student will be given every opportunity to respond before a decision is made and before any sanction is imposed.
- ii. Where the Principal forms the view, based on the investigation, that expulsion may be warranted, he recommends this action to the Board of Management. Parents and student are notified that the Board is being asked to consider expulsion.
- iii. The Board will consider the Principal's recommendation and a hearing will be held at which Principal and parents, or the student if aged 18 or over, present their case.
- iv. Having heard from all parties, the Board will then decide whether or not the allegation is substantiated and, if so, whether expulsion is the appropriate sanction.
- v. If the Board decides to expel the student, it will notify the Education Welfare Officer. The student cannot be expelled before the passage of 20 school days following receipt of written notification by the EWO from the Board.
- vi. The Board will inform parents in writing about its conclusions and the next steps in the process.
- vii. When the 20 day period has elapsed, if the Board still believes the student should be expelled, the Board will formally confirm the decision to expel. Parents will be notified immediately that the expulsion will now proceed.

7. APPEALS

- i. Any suspension may be appealed to the Board of Management.
- ii. In the case of expulsion or where a student has been suspended for twenty or more days, cumulatively, in any school year, appeals may be made to the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Skills under section 29 of the *Education Act 1998*.
- iii. In any situation where a dispute arises around a disciplinary issue, every effort shall be made between the parties directly involved to resolve the issue. If there is still no resolution, the appellant may present the case to the Board of Management, thereafter to the Trustees and finally to the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Skills as provided in Sections 28 and 29 of the *Education Act 1998*.

8. RECORD KEEPING

- A file is kept for each student, recording misbehaviour and all disciplinary procedures followed in relation to that student. This record is retained throughout the student's school career.

9. COMMUNICATION OF PROCEDURES

- i. In keeping with Section 23 (4) of the *Education (Welfare) Act, 2000* each child's parents will be provided with a copy of the school's Code of Behaviour before the child is registered at the school. The Code of Behaviour is also available on the school website www.presheadford.ie .
- ii. Parents/guardians must confirm that the code is acceptable to them by signing a contract form. We look forward to the active support of parents in implementing our Code of Behaviour.
- iii. Induction programmes take place in early September for all year groups, with particular emphasis on First Years, to ensure the inculcation of good social skills, a sense of responsibility for property, clarity about school rules and procedures, and the gradual taking on of the school's values.

This policy is due for review on *June 2017*

The Principal is responsible for the review.

Signed: _____ (Chairperson, Board of Management)

