

**ABBAY VOCATIONAL SCHOOL
DONEGAL TOWN**



CODE OF BEHAVIOUR

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Mission Statement

Abbey Vocational School is dedicated to the holistic development of students in a caring environment where tolerance and respect are nurtured and valued.

1.2 School Ethos

1. The aim of the School is to allow the students to develop their spiritual, moral, intellectual, emotional and physical potential and become fully mature human persons.
2. While respecting and acknowledging the rights of the students, our school also seeks to promote a safe and harmonious working environment for all our staff members.
3. This spirit of cherishing the personal welfare of each individual will not take from the social and community development of the students and the importance of their becoming caring and responsible citizens.
4. As reflected in the Motto and Mission Statement of the School, the School acknowledges and undertakes to cherish the Religious, Cultural and Historical Heritage of its students.
5. The quality of relationships between teachers and students is crucial and is a powerful influence on behaviour in a school. The school code fosters relationships of trust between students and teachers. Adults have more responsibility than students for building these relationships.
6. In acknowledging the primary rights and duties of parents as educators of their children, the school will seek to work in close partnership with parents. We also see the School as an integral part of the local community and will follow the educational programmes of the Dept. of Education & Skills under the direction of Donegal Education & Training Board.

1.3 Rationale

The following *Code of Behaviour* aims to provide a safe and nurturing environment wherein students can learn and develop to their full potential.

The Code aims to provide a school where each and every student is given an equal opportunity to learn to the best of their ability and to benefit from such a positive learning environment.

In drawing up this Code the principles of the *School Ethos* have been carefully observed and preserved. Our Code of Behaviour which is embedded within the school ethos emphasises the importance of positive relationships and good communication. We assist our school community in maintaining an atmosphere of mutual respect, we use various strategies to encourage students and staff to look at behaviour and its effects on others and the wider school community, based on the principles of **Restorative Practices**. Through this approach students get the opportunity to learn more about their behaviour and how best to work through issues. We bring people together in a structured and agreed way to discuss concerns as they arise. In this way everyone is heard, valued equally and relationships are strengthened. Some of the strategies used involve;

- listening approaches
- restorative questioning
- helping them to recognise the effect of their actions and their behaviour on others
- helping them to learn to take responsibility for their behaviour

Furthermore, special care has been taken to ensure that all sections are in compliance with all recent Education Acts, namely:

The Education Act 1998;

The Education (Welfare) Act 2000;

The Equal Status Act 2000;

The E.P.S.E.N. Act 2004

Health and Safety Act 2005

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

1.4. Preparation/Evaluation of Code

The teaching staff, pupils and their parents were involved in the development of this policy. It was reviewed under the NEWB guidelines for schools during the school year 2010/2011. Once again, all parties were involved in this review process. The National Behaviour Support Service also provided some guidance and support during this review process. The code has been amended annually up to and including May 2016.

In the Abbey Vocational School, it is our practice to review this Code of Behaviour regularly. Such reviews may take the form of discussions about the effectiveness of the code during staff meetings and other interested parties. If required, slight adjustments may be made to the code before the beginning of each academic year. However, school management, working in consultation with the Board of Management reserves the right to make adjustments to the code during the school year if such adjustments are deemed to be necessary.

1.5. Roles / Responsibilities

Board of Management

The Board of Management will ensure that an appropriate Code of Behaviour is in place. They will oversee the preparation / review of the code and only ratify it when they are satisfied that it lawfully meets the needs of the school. They will monitor the implementation of the code.

Principal & Deputy Principal

The Principal and Deputy Principal working under the direction of the Board of Management will consistently apply the agreed Code of Behaviour. They will oversee the implementation and teaching of the code by the teaching staff in the school. They will record and deal with all breaches of the code reported to them. School management will also establish procedures to regularly evaluate and review the code.

Year Heads

Year Heads working under the direction of the Principal and Deputy Principal will apply the agreed Code of Behaviour.

Teachers

Teachers will implement the Code of Behaviour consistently. They will deal with, record and if required report any breaches of the code. They may teach the Code of Behaviour to the students.

Class Tutor

The Class Tutor will teach the Code of Behaviour to their tutor class and discuss its meaning and how it is implemented. They may also discuss breaches of the Code of Behaviour with students and try to help the student recognise where they are having difficulty.

1.6. Communication of Code

Prior to enrolling in the school, parents of perspective students will be given a copy of the Code of Behaviour. It will also be available to view online on our school website - www.avsdonegal.com. Our students and their parents will also have direct access to the code as it will form the initial part of their school journal.

If a student or parent has a concern relating to the code they may communicate it through a member of the school management. Likewise if a parent has concerns or is considering bringing a complaint about a behaviour matter he/she may contact the Year Head, Deputy Principal or Principal.

2. EXPECTED STANDARDS OF BEHAVIOUR

2.1. General Policy Regarding Behaviour

A Learning Community

It will be the function of the Abbey Vocational School to establish behavioural procedures so that the right to learn is realised and the need to ensure that the values of mutual respect, self-discipline and social responsibility permeate the life of the school community. The school recognises the need to protect the rights of students and to ensure the creation and maintenance of an atmosphere where effective learning and teaching can take place.

Safe School for Students

Every student attending the Abbey Vocational School has the right to enjoy school life. The school promotes positive habits of self-respect, self-discipline and responsibility among all of the school community. The school must be safe and secure for everyone. Therefore verbal abuse, physical abuse and other anti-social activities are forbidden. Please also refer to the Anti Bullying Policy on the school website - www.avsdonegal.com.

Everyone will be expected to move throughout the school in an orderly manner and comply immediately with any instructions given by any member of staff.

Health Promoting School

Parents, students and staff at the Abbey Vocational School are entitled to have a healthy and safe school environment. The school promotes and supports positive mental health. Consequently, smoking, consumption of alcohol and substance abuse are all prohibited. We encourage all our students to become

involved in sport and other physical activities including PE Class. Students are also encouraged to eat healthily and our canteen has due regard to this.

Discipline and Sanctions

In order to achieve a healthy and safe school environment, self-discipline is required of all members of the school community. All students are therefore expected to subscribe to the school's Code of Behaviour as outlined in this document.

If and when required, the school will apply sanctions in a fair, transparent and consistent manner. In the application of sanctions, the school will make a clear distinction between minor and major misconduct (see *Section 6 – Misbehaviour and Appropriate Sanctions*) and will keep all parties informed where appropriate.

When dealing with misbehaviour the school will endeavour to help the student understand the nature of the problem behaviours involved and work towards a satisfactory and lasting solution.

Attendance

Students are expected to be in attendance daily, to be punctual and to participate in all aspects of school life so that each student can maximise his/her potential. Please refer to our Attendance Policy available on the school website - www.avsdonegal.com.

Students who fail to have a satisfactory attendance record will be reported to the relevant state authorities in accordance with the Education (Welfare) Act 2000.

2.2 Teaching the Code of Behaviour

Reading Age

While compiling this Code of Behaviour the school management was conscious of the varying degrees of literacy that those who were required to become familiar with it may have. Tests have shown that this document has a reading age of 12.5 yrs. (Flesch Kincaid scale).

Students

Every student attending the Abbey Vocational School will have a copy of the Code of Behaviour included in their school journal. Teaching and discussing the code of behaviour will be undertaken as part of the pastoral care policy of the school. The form teachers will do this at various times throughout the year. However class teachers may also highlight various aspects of the code as the opportunity may arise.

Staff

The present cohort of staff was involved in the preparation and review of this code of behaviour. At the beginning of every academic year each member of staff is given an updated version of the code.

All new staff, including substitute teachers will be given a copy of the code of behaviour and asked to make themselves familiar with its contents.

Students with Special Educational Needs

The Abbey Vocational School is committed to supporting the diverse learning needs of all its students, and recognises that some accommodations may be required to implement the Code of Behaviour for students with special educational needs in order to foster behaviour for learning. Students with special educational needs may need support to conform to the behavioural standards and expectations of the school. To facilitate this, class teachers and onsite specialist personnel will check that standards and rules are communicated in a way that students with special education needs can understand. Not every student with special educational needs will need support in this area, but where it is deemed appropriate, the student's understanding of the codes of behaviour will be checked to ensure comprehension. In incidents where it has been established that the Code of Behaviour has been breached in such a manner that is not related to the student's special educational needs, that student may be subject to the same sanctions as any other student.

3. PROMOTING POSITIVE BEHAVIOUR

All members of the school community will be expected to display positive behaviour throughout the school. School management and staff will endeavour to lead by example, by displaying the expected standards of punctuality, courtesy, efficiency and compassion and general demeanour.

Positive behaviour will be recognised as often as possible by staff. This recognition may take the form of:

- verbal praise
- display of students work
- positive comments written in the school journal
- positive comments recorded on the student record

3.1 Rewards System

The school is committed to a policy of recognition, encouragement and reward of positive behaviour. Pupils will be given recognition for:

- Outstanding achievements
- Sporting accomplishments

Extra-curricular success

Good manners and demeanour

Acknowledgment may take the form of:

Praise from staff members, privately and/or publicly

An affirmative note in student's journal or exercise book

A positive letter home

Announcements made on the intercom

Class rewards such as outings

School Prize-giving

Using local media

Our school aims to encourage each student to fulfil his/her educational potential, academically and in every other respect.

4. RULES AND GUIDELINES FOR STUDENTS

Students will be required to comply with the following:

4.1 Respect and Order

- A. Respect for all fellow students
- B. Respectful behaviour towards all staff members both inside and outside of school hours
- C. Good behaviour when travelling to and from school
- D. Respect for property of staff and fellow students
- E. Respectful language at all times
- F. Cigarette smoking, alcohol, illicit drugs and substances are prohibited
- G. The possession of catapults, knives, stink bombs, bangers, laser pens and other weapons are forbidden
- H. Mobile phones must be switched off on entering school buildings
- I. It is expected that students will respond positively and respectfully to correction from all staff members both inside and outside the classroom. It is particularly important that students will respond respectfully and instantly to any direction given by any teacher supervising during breaks
- J. Students are expected to move in an orderly and sensible fashion about the school

4.2 Uniform and Appearance

The complete school uniform will be worn at all times and shall be:

Boys:

Grey V-neck sweater with school crest

Maroon shirt

Grey trousers

Black shoes

Girls:

Grey V-neck sweater with school crest

Maroon shirt

Grey skirt or trousers

Black shoes

Incoming first years 2016/2017

Grey shirt for incoming first years 2016/2017.

Maroon jumper for incoming first years 2016/2017.

Otherwise as above.

P.E: Runners, shorts and sports top.

School Jackets are now considered to be part of the school uniform but must not be worn throughout the school building. The school reserves the right to specify what jewellery, accessories, fashion trends are acceptable or appropriate as part of the school uniform. Parents will be informed of this periodically by letter.

Please note that facial piercings are NOT permitted in the school. Only one set of studs in the ears is permitted.

4.3 Attendance and Punctuality

Regular attendance at school is expected (i.e. all day every day). A student absent from school for a day or days must bring a note of explanation written in the School Journal and the note must be written and signed by the parent. This note must be presented to the office.

It should be noted that the school has a legal obligation under the Education (Welfare) Act 2000 to notify the Education Welfare Board where a student has been absent on a cumulative basis of more than twenty days in any one academic year.

Students are not permitted to leave the school during the course of the day without written permission from a parent or school management. The note from the parent must be written in the School Journal. This note must be signed by the Principal or Deputy Principal or the Year Head and must then be presented at the office when signing out. Notes allowing students to sign out should only be written in exceptional circumstances such as an unavoidable medical appointment. Notes must not be written to allow students to avoid certain lessons or for non-essential activities.

Any student leaving the school during the school day must sign the “Signing-out” book.

Visits to toilets, lockers, etc., must be confined to specific breaks. In exceptional circumstances the subject teacher may give permission to make such visits outside of specified breaks.

Students must be punctual for all classes. Anyone who is late three times (morning or afternoon) will be detained at lunchtime. In cases of persistent lateness to any particular class, the subject teacher will complete a referral form for the relevant Year Head. For insurance and indemnity reasons students at Junior Cycle (years 1, 2 and 3) are not permitted to leave school at lunch-time. (No students may leave at morning break.) In exceptional circumstances parents may sign an indemnity form for Junior Cert students to leave the school at lunchtime but on the understanding that these students go home for lunch.

Mitching or scheming from school or class is regarded as a serious breach of school discipline and will be dealt with accordingly. (See *Section 3* for sanctions.)

Students are not allowed outside the school grounds during the morning or lunchtime break without permission.

4.4 School Property

- Dropping litter and chewing gum are forbidden.
- Damage to school property, equipment or buildings is forbidden. This includes books provided under the school’s Book Rental Scheme. Repair or replacement of property damaged by students must be paid for by them.
- The school cannot be held responsible for property lost or stolen. Money and valuables should not be left in schoolbags, lockers or unattended.
- All students may be requested on occasion to participate in the school’s “Combat Litter” Programme inside the school and within the school grounds.

4.5 Mobile Phones (

Please see mobile phone and AUP policy available in the school office and on the website.

4.6 Illegal Substances

Consumption of alcohol, smoking and substance abuse are all prohibited in the Abbey Vocational School. Any student found in possession of, using or distributing any such substances will be dealt with under the procedures used for serious misbehaviour, (see section 5.5). This also applies to students while they are in the vicinity of the school prior to the beginning of school and after school ends.

4.7 Application to studies

Students must have prescribed textbooks and equipment. All books and other materials required for class must be brought to class. Students will be provided with the School Journal. The use of the Journal is compulsory and it must be made available to all teachers at all times. Communications from parents regarding absences should be written into the area in the Journal designed for this purpose. The Journal must be kept neat, tidy and in good condition. If graffiti or other unnecessary writing is found on the School Journal, it must be replaced immediately and the student will be responsible for the cost of replacement. Good behaviour is expected in class, in the general school environs and in all school-related activities. All homework must be attempted and a genuine effort made to complete it.

5. MISBEHAVIOUR & APPROPRIATE SANCTIONS

The following subsections do not represent an exhaustive list of inappropriate or unacceptable behaviour and each individual case will be dealt with on its merits by the school authorities. When dealing with students who have breached the code of behaviour the school will always apply the principles of natural justice, i.e.

- The right of all sides to be heard
- The right to impartiality
- The right to know and defend any case that one has been accused of.

Although every case will be dealt with on its merits the school management may take account of previous records of good and/or poor behaviour in the school.

Bearing this in mind, unacceptable behaviour and sanctions that may apply in each case include the following;

5.1 Misdemeanours

Misdemeanours include isolated minor breaches of school regulations and isolated infringements related to school work, homework, discipline, general order (both within the classroom and externally). Where

such behaviour is noted by the teaching staff or referred to them by caretaking or administrative staff, standard sanctions in general use may be applied, such as:

- Separation within the classroom
- Additional homework such as essays
- Extra questions or work appropriate to the subject area
- Report to the Class Tutor
- Supervised detention by the teacher
- Report to Year Head by completing referral form (See appendix D)
- Parental contact by Year Head

5.2 Isolated Incidents of Misconduct

Isolated incidents of misconduct may include the following:

- A. Use of abusive language
- B. Misbehaviour in class of an isolated nature
- C. A fight between students in the school and its environs
- D. An outburst of bad behaviour in class

Sanctions for such offences may include suspension, lunchtime detention, after-school detention and/or any of the sanctions listed in section 5.1.

5.3 Continuous Misconduct

Continuous misconduct includes repeated misdemeanours or repeated breaches of good order. Examples of this type of behaviour include:

- Continuous disruption of classes
- Failure to present homework on a continuous basis
- Failure to bring necessary books, equipment and resources on a continuous basis
- Bullying or harassment of other students,(the school also operates a separate anti-bullying policy)
- Offensive language to fellow students
- Offensive or abusive language to any staff member
- General behaviour inappropriate to the smooth operation of the school, both in the classroom and in the corridor

Sanctions for such offences include detention, carrying out school-related tasks, the placing of the student “on report”, lunchtime detention, after-school detention or suspension. Repeated continuous misconduct can bring further sanctions including exclusion of the student from the school or other such appropriate sanction as may be deemed reasonable.

It should be noted that a suspension will result in the student being excluded from school-related activities during the term of the suspension.

5.4 Serious Misbehaviour

As a guide for parents and pupils, here is a list of some of the offences which will be regarded as serious:

- Assault, threat or abuse of a member of staff by a student
- Assault, threat or abuse of a fellow student
- Damage to property of staff or students
- Putting a teacher's or fellow student's health or safety at risk
- Possession of drugs or alcohol. Sale, consumption or distribution of such alcohol or drugs
- Possession of knife or any other offensive or dangerous devices, including catapults, bangers, laser pens, stink bombs, etc.
- Repeated instances of bullying and harassment
- Defiance of and confrontation with any member of staff which could seek to undermine the authority of that person
- Attempts to intimidate, bully or harass any member of staff
- Use of social media to intimidate, bully or harass another student or any member of staff
- Malicious damage to property
- Theft within the school
- Smoking
- Serious misbehaviour on school-related activities or outings

Students who become involved in serious misconduct, whether inside or outside the school grounds, which may reflect adversely on the good standing and reputation of the school in the local community may be liable to sanction. The school reserves the right to invoke the code of behaviour to deal with such incidents and impose the full range of sanctions up to and including expulsion,

Serious misbehaviour may warrant instant suspension or possible expulsion. The school operates formal procedures in relation to suspensions and expulsions (including Appeals Procedures) which may be obtained on request from the school.

It should be noted that in all instances of misbehaviour and in the use of sanctions students will be advised and encouraged to correct their behaviour and be encouraged to participate more positively within the school.

Interventions for students in need of support:

- Meetings with NBSS support team
- Meetings with members of Pastoral Care Team

- Meetings with Guidance Counsellor
- Support around behaviour targets and behaviour plan
- Reward system for improved behaviours
- Behaviour support card
- Adult mentor check and connect approach
- Link with outside agencies such as TUSLA, Foróige, Jigsaw etc.
- Programmes such as Anger Management, Friends For Life etc. implemented
- Regular meetings with parents /guardians
- Link with school psychologist around proposed mental health support where deemed appropriate
- Incases of suspension - The student will be given the opportunity and support for a fresh start.
- Support is offered to the student in the re-integration process following suspension.

5.5 Procedures for Dealing with Serious Misbehaviour

5.5.1 Lunchtime Detention

A student can only be placed on lunchtime detention by the Principal, Deputy Principal or his / her Year Head. In normal circumstances lunchtime detention will only be applied after the student has received a number of verbal reprimands. A student may be placed on lunchtime detention for one day, however, depending on the severity of the misbehaviour he / she may need to serve a number of consecutive days in detention. Normally a student will be informed a day in advance of their detention. However management may impose an immediate detention if the situation warrants it.

Detention lasts for 30 minutes. Students are allowed 10minutes at the beginning of their lunch break and 5 minutes at the end. The detention room will be supervised by a teacher who will record all who are present in the detention book and assign work for them to complete. This work must be attempted and handed back up to the teacher. Students who fail to turn up for detention, or arrive late, or do not follow the directions of the teacher in charge, or in any way disrupt the detention room may be faced with after school detention, suspension or expulsion.

5.5.2 After-School Detention

A student can only be placed on after-school detention by the Principal or Deputy Principal. In normal circumstances after-school detention will only be applied after the student has served a number of lunchtime detentions or that the student has been “on report” for some time, or in cases where it is deemed by the Principal more suitable than a suspension. When a student is placed on after-school detention his / her parents will be notified. They will be informed why their son / daughter has received

this sanction and when it will take place. They may also be invited to the school for a meeting to try to help resolve the poor behaviour being displayed by their child.

After – school detention lasts for 1 hour 15 minutes and begins 15 minutes after the end of the school day. The detention room will be supervised, the names of those present will be recorded and work will be assigned for them to complete. This work must be attempted and handed back up to the person in charge. Students who fail to turn up for after-school detention, or arrive late, or do not follow the directions of the person in charge, or in any way disrupt the detention room may be faced with suspension or expulsion.

5.5.3 Suspension / Expulsion

In the Abbey Vocational School the Board of Management formally delegated the authority to suspend to the Principal. Therefore, only the Principal can suspend a student. The Abbey Vocational School operates separate suspension and expulsion policies which are available from the school office on request or can be viewed on our school website; www.avsdonegal.com

However the following is a summary of the content of each policy

Suspension or possible expulsion will be applied, following an enquiry by the Principal, a staff member or disciplinary committee delegated by him/her to do so.

5.5.4 Procedures in cases of immediate suspension

The student will be suspended immediately.

The parents will be notified in writing or by phone informing them of the reason for and duration of suspension.

The parents may discuss the decision with the Principal by meeting him/her or his/her representative.

Parents may appeal the decision of the Principal to the Board of Management where they may present a case to the Board.

If the Board of Management upholds the decision of the Principal, the parents may appeal the case to a sub-committee of Donegal Education and Training Board within fourteen days of the Board of Management meeting at which the case had been heard.

A Parent, together with the suspended student may be asked to meet with the Principal or his/her representative before the student is re-admitted to the school.

Any work in preparation for state examinations missed through suspension is the responsibility of the student.

5.5.5 Procedures in cases of expulsion

The student will be suspended immediately pending a decision on expulsion.

Parents will be notified in writing, informing them of the reason and advising them of the Principal's recommendation for expulsion.

Parents may present a case to the Principal by meeting him/her. Following such a meeting the Principal will inform them of the decision/recommendation made.

If the Principal recommends an expulsion, the Board of Management will meet to make a decision on the matter.

Parents will be advised in writing of their rights to present a case to the Board of Management of the school before a decision is reached.

Parents may appeal the decision of the Board of Management to a sub-committee of Donegal Education and Training Board within fourteen days of the Board of Management meeting at which the case has been heard.

Appendix A

DECLARATION

Student Declaration

I, _____, of _____
_____ (address),

Having read *Abbey Vocational School's Code of Behaviour* and having discussed it with my Parents, will abide by all its conditions as outlined.

Signed: _____
Student Date

Parents/Guardians Declaration

I/We the Parent(s) / Guardian(s) of:

Student's Name: _____ Class: _____

Having read the *Abbey Vocational School's Code of Behaviour* and discussed it with our son/daughter, undertake to support the Board of Management, School Management and Staff in the implementation of school rules and disciplinary procedures as outlined for the duration of his/her education at *Abbey Vocational School*.

Signed: _____
Parent/Guardian Date

Parent/Guardian Date

Appendix B

SUSPENSION POLICY

In the Abbey Vocational School the Board of Management formally delegated the authority to suspend to the Principal. (This needs to be formally ratified by our BOM)

This policy and its procedures are approved by the Board of Management having been developed in consultation with all the educational partners i.e. parents, students, staff and the wider community. The policy has been developed in line with the NEWB Guidelines and in consultation with the NBSS.

What does suspension mean in the Abbey Vocational School?

“Suspension is defined as requiring the student to absent himself/herself from the school for a specified period of school days.”

The grounds for suspension:-

In the Abbey Vocational School, we recognise suspension as a proportionate response to the behaviour that is causing concern.

Normally a range of other interventions will have been tried before a decision to suspend is made.

A decision to suspend requires serious grounds such as

The student's behaviour has had a seriously detrimental effect on the education of other students.

The student's continued presence in the school at this time constitutes a threat to safety

The student is responsible for serious damage to property.

Any serious incident of misconduct.

The use or possession of illicit drugs (including alcohol and cigarettes).

Fighting

The reasons for suspension in the Abbey Vocational School are clearly defined.

Suspensions can provide a respite for staff and the student. A suspension will give the student time to reflect on the link between their actions and its consequences. A period of suspension will also give staff time to plan ways of helping the student to change unacceptable behaviour. Therefore in the Abbey Vocational School, suspension may form part of a Behaviour Management Plan, thus enabling the school to set goals with the student and their parents, allow staff an opportunity to plan other interventions and to impress on the student and their parents the seriousness of the behaviour.

Forms of Suspensions in the Abbey Vocational School

Suspensions can be in one of two forms

- (1) A suspension which is imposed as an ultimate sanction after a series of interventions involving student, parents, and staff.
- (2) An immediate suspension as a result of a serious misbehaviour.

Procedures in Respect of Suspension.

(1) While it is possible for the Principal or his/her representative to suspend immediately in some exceptional cases, normally suspension will be linked to the Abbey Vocational School Code of Behaviour. Copies of the Code of Behaviour were given to, explained and signed by each student and their parent(s)/guardian(s) on enrolment.

Suspension normally occurs only after (a) all disciplinary options under the Code of Behaviour have been applied and documented and (b) when all appropriate support services within the school have been either offered or involved. (c) When discussion with the parent(s)/guardian(s) relating to specific misbehaviours has taken place.

The following procedures will be followed.

Suspension can only take place after consultation with and under the authority of the Principal. Parent/Guardian must be informed in writing of the reason for the suspension and the length of suspension must be made clear. Parents will be made aware of their right to appeal the suspension. A record of all actions taken and correspondence must be kept.

Immediate Suspension: - A student may be suspended immediately in some circumstances: fighting or aggressive behaviour or threatening physical or verbal behaviour towards any member of staff. Fighting between students will result in an immediate suspension.

A preliminary investigation must be conducted to establish the case for the imposition of the suspension. The formal investigation should immediately follow the imposition of the suspension. Having due regard for our duty of care, once parents have been notified the student may be sent home from school.

Immediate Suspension can only take place after consultation with and under the authority of the Principal.

Parents must be informed in writing of the reason for the suspension and the period of the suspension. Parents in the suspension letter are informed of their right to appeal the suspension and the procedures to be followed in respect of making that appeal.

Reasons for the suspension of a pupil must be linked with the Code of Behaviour, of which the student and Parents/Guardian must have copies, be familiar with its contents, and preferably have signed that they have read and understood the Code.

In accordance with the National Educational Welfare Board, a student will not normally be suspended for poor academic performance, poor attendance or lateness and minor breaches of the Code of Behaviour.

The period of suspension: - A student may be suspended from school for a period of one day, two days or three days depending on the severity of the misbehaviour.

In exceptional circumstances the Principal may choose to extend the period of suspension to five days with the approval of the Chairperson of the Board of Management. The Board of Management shall place a ceiling of ten days on any one period of suspension imposed. The Board of Management shall formally review any proposal to suspend a student where the suspension would bring the number of days for which the student has been suspended in the current year to twenty days or more.

If a student during the course of any one academic year reaches an accumulated total of six days suspension the Principal will notify the Education and Welfare Officer of this in writing.

After the suspension ends; - A period of suspension ends on the date given in the letter of notification to the parents about the suspension. The student will be given the opportunity and support for a fresh start and the same standard of behaviour will be expected from the returning student as all the others. Support should be offered to the student in the re-integration process.

Appeals

Where the total number of days for which the student has been suspended in the current school year reaches twenty days, the parents, or a student aged over 18 years, may appeal to:-

1. Board of Management of the Education & Training Board and
2. Secretary General of the Department of Education and Science (Education Act 1998 section 29).

An appeal may also be brought by the Tusla on behalf of the student

Review of suspension policy. To ensure that the Suspensions Policy in the Abbey Vocational School is consistent with other school policies, natural justice and changes in education, this policy will be reviewed on a two yearly basis.

Appendix C

EXPULSION POLICY

This policy and its procedures are approved by the Board of Management having been developed in consultation with all the educational partners i.e. parents, students, staff and the wider community. The policy has been developed in line with the NEWB Guidelines and in consultation with National Behaviour Support Service.

What does expulsion mean in the Abbey Vocational School?

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

The grounds for expulsion:-

In the Abbey Vocational School, we recognise expulsion of a student is a very serious step and will only be taken by the Board of Management in extreme cases of unacceptable behaviour.

Normally a range of other interventions to address the misbehaviour will be tried before a decision to expel is made:-

- Meeting with parents and the student to try to find ways to help the student to change his/her behaviour.

- Making sure that the student understands the possible consequences of his/her behaviour, if it should persist.

- Ensuring all other possible options had been tried.

- Seeking the support of NEPS, NBSS, NCSE and others.

A decision to expel requires serious grounds such as:-

- A 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

The reasons for expulsion in the Abbey Vocational School

The grounds for expulsion may be similar to the grounds for suspension but the seriousness and the persistence of the behaviour are the key difference. All possibilities for changing the student's behaviour have been exhausted.

Forms of expulsion in the Abbey Vocational School

Expulsion can be in one of two forms

(1) The ultimate sanction after

(a) All disciplinary options under the Code of Behaviour have been applied and documented and

(b) When all appropriate services within the school and outside have either been offered or involved.

(c) Discussions with parent/s or guardian/s relating to the serious misbehaviour have taken place.

If none of the above produce any positive results then expulsion may be recommended by the Principal to the Board of Management.

(2) Automatic expulsion:- a Board of Management may decide, as part of the school's policy on sanctions, and following the consultation process with the principal, parents, teachers and students, that particular named behaviours incur automatic expulsion as a sanction. The kinds of behaviour that might result in a proposal to expel on the basis of a single breach of the code could include:-

A serious threat of violence against another student or member of staff

Actual violence or physical assault

Supplying illegal drugs to other students in the school

Sexual assault

In the case of automatic expulsion, due process and fair procedures will be followed by the Board of Management.

Procedures in Respect of Expulsions:-

Step 1: A detailed investigation will be carried out by the Principal

Parents and students will be informed in writing about the details of the alleged serious misbehaviour and the proposed investigation.

Parents and students will be given every opportunity, including meeting with the Principal, to respond to the complaint. If parents refuse to meet with the Principal, they will be invited to a rescheduled meeting and advised that the school authority has a duty to make a decision to respond to inappropriate behaviour.

Step 2: A recommendation to the Board of Management by the Principal

When the Principal makes a recommendation to the Board to consider expulsion, the Principal will:

Inform the parents and the students that the Board of Management is being asked to consider expulsion

Ensure that the parents have records of the allegations against the student; the investigation; and written notice of the grounds on which the Board of Management is being asked to consider expulsion

Provide the Board of Management with the same records as are given to the parents

Notify the parents of the date of the hearing by the Board of Management and invite them to the hearing

Advise the parents that they can make a written and oral submission to the Board of Management and also that they may be accompanied at the hearing

Ensure that the parents have enough notice to allow them to prepare for the hearing

Step 3: Considerations by the Board of Management of the Principal's recommendations; and the holding of a hearing

It is the responsibility of the Board to ensure that the investigation is properly conducted. When the Board of Management decides to consider expulsion it will:

Hold a hearing

At the hearing the Principal, parents or a student over 18 years put their case to the Board in each other's presence. Each party should be allowed to question the evidence of the other party directly. The parents / student over 18 years can make a case for a lessening of the sanction. In the conduct of the hearing, the Board must take care to ensure that they are, and are seen to be, impartial as between the Principal and the student. After both sides have been heard, the Board should ensure that the Principal and parents/student are not present for the Board's deliberations.

Step 4: Board of Management deliberations and actions following the hearing

Having heard from all parties, it is the responsibility of the Board to decide whether or not the allegation is substantiated and, if so whether or not expulsion is the appropriate sanction.

If the Board of Management decides to expel the student, the chairperson will inform the principal and instruct him/her to communicate the decision to the parents, the Chief Executive of Donegal ETB and the Educational Welfare Officer. The Board of Management, through the Principal, must inform the Parent of the right to appeal its decision to the ETB and/or the Department of Education and Skills.

Expulsion Appeals Process

Parents will be informed in writing that expulsion will take effect 20 school days after the Educational Welfare Officer receives notification of expulsion.

Parents may appeal the decision of the Board of Management to a sub-committee of Donegal Education and Training Board within fourteen days of the Board of Management meeting at which the case has been heard. Parents will be advised in writing that they have right of appeal, if desired, to Donegal ETB, with the address of the C. E. provided.

- The ETB communicates decision to parents, Board of Management and Department of Education And Skills.
- Parent may appeal this decision to the Department of Education and Skills.

Step5: Consultations arranged by the Educational Welfare Officer

Within 20 days of receipt of a notification from the Board of Management of its opinions that a student should be expelled. The Education Welfare Officer will

Make all reasonable effort to meet with the Principal, parents and the student, and anybody else who may be of assistance.

Convene a meeting of those parties who agree to attend. These consultations may result in an agreement that would avoid expulsion, or it may focus on alternative educational possibilities

Pending these consultations the Board may decide to suspend the student, if his/her presence poses a threat to the safety of other students or would interfere seriously with the learning and teaching of other students.

Step6: Confirmation of the decision to expel

When the 20 day period following notification to the EWO has elapsed, and where the Board of Management is still of the view that the student should be expelled, the Board of Management should formally confirm the decision.

Parents should be notified immediately that the expulsion will now proceed

Parents and students should be told of their right to appeal and supplied with the standard form on which to lodge an appeal

A formal record will be made of the decision to expel the student

Appeals

A parent, or a student aged over 18 years, may appeal a decision to expel to:

1. The Education & Training Board,
2. The Secretary General of the Department of Education and Skills (Education Act 1998 section 29).

An appeal may also be brought by the Tusla on behalf of the student.

Appendix D

**Abbey Vocational School
Referral Form**

Teachers fill in this form when referring a student to the Year Head

Year Head: _____

Date: _____

Student's Name: _____

Class: _____

Reporting Teacher: _____

Class Tutor: _____

1. Describe the student's behaviour?

<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>

What action have you taken to date?

<hr/>

Signature of Reporting Teacher: _____

