

# ST OLIVER POST PRIMARY SCHOOL OLDCASTLE, CO MEATH



## **CODE OF BEHAVIOUR** **2023-24**

**August 2023**

## Table of Contents

1. Introduction and Objectives .....	4
1.1. Mission Statement .....	4
2. Objective of the Code of Behaviour .....	5
3. What the Code of Behaviour does. ....	5
4. Principles Underpinning the Code of Behaviour .....	5
5. Whole School Approach .....	6
6. Application of the Code of Behaviour .....	6
7. Understanding Behaviour .....	6
8. Setting Standards of Behaviour .....	7
8.1. Values and Standards .....	7
8.2. Students .....	7
8.3. First Year Students .....	8
8.4. Parents/Guardians.....	8
8.5. Teachers and Other School Staff.....	8
9. Promoting Good Behaviour .....	9
10. School Rules .....	11
10.1. Fundamental Principles .....	11
10.2. Behaviour.....	11
10.3. Uniform .....	11
10.4. Student Application and Effort.....	12
10.5. Respect.....	12
10.6. Mobile Phones and other devices .....	13
10.7. Substance Use.....	13
11. How St. Oliver Post Primary School responds to unacceptable behaviour. ....	14
11.1. Responsibilities of the School .....	14
11.2. Responses and sanctions.....	14
11.3. Disciplinary Ladder .....	14
11.4. Scale of intervention and involvement .....	15
12. Detention Procedures .....	17
13. Suspension Policy .....	18
13.1. Policy Statement.....	18
13.2. Legal framework.....	18
13.3. Suspensions .....	18
13.4. Inappropriate use of Suspension.....	21
13.5. Procedures in respect of Suspension. ....	21
13.6. Implementing the suspension .....	21

13.7.	Section 29 Appeal against Suspension .....	22
14.	Expulsion Policy .....	23
14.1.	Authority to Expel .....	23
14.2.	Factors to Consider before proposing to expel a student.....	24
14.3.	Procedures in respect of expulsion .....	24
14.4.	Conduct of hearing .....	25
14.5.	Board of Management deliberations and actions following the hearing	26
14.6.	Consultations arranged by the Educational Welfare Officer .....	26
14.7.	Confirmation of the decision to expel.....	27
14.8.	Section 29 Appeal against Expulsion .....	27
14.9.	Review of use of Expulsion .....	27
14.10.	Implementation and Review of Policy .....	27
15.	Procedures for notifying the school about student absences. ....	29
15.1.	General.....	29
15.2.	Absence through Illness.....	29
15.3.	Return after Absence .....	29
15.4.	Absence during School Hours .....	29
16.	BOM & LMETB Ratification for the Code of Discipline Policy .....	31

# 1. Introduction and Objectives

## 1.1. Mission Statement

- St. Oliver Post Primary School is committed to quality education. It seeks to enrich students' lives and empower them for life's many challenges. This is done in a caring atmosphere of good order and discipline and in partnership with parents.
- In our daily life we value the principles of justice, mutual respect, equality and tolerance leading to promotion of a positive self-image and the confidence to achieve the highest levels.

## **2. Objective of the Code of Behaviour**

- 2.1. The Code of Behaviour of St. Oliver Post Primary School expresses the vision, mission and the values of our school. It outlines the expectations of staff, parents, and students into every facet of education within the school. The aim of the Code is to foster and maintain an orderly, harmonious school community where high standards of behaviour are expected and supported in everyday life.
- 2.2. The goals include:
- Creation and maintenance of a school climate that encourages, supports and reinforces good behaviour.
  - Creating a positive and safe environment for teaching and learning.
  - Allowing students to understand behaviour and its consequences.
  - Encouraging students to take personal responsibility for their learning and behaviour.
  - Fostering the holistic development of all students within the school by creating relationships that are based on mutual respect among students, staff and parents.

## **3. What the Code of Behaviour does.**

- 3.1. St. Oliver Post Primary School, Oldcastle sets high standards and all members of the school community are expected to behave at all times in ways that show respect for others.
- 3.2. The school's Code sets out:
- The standards of behaviour expected in the school.
  - How the school approaches the promotion of good behaviour.
  - How the school responds to unacceptable behaviour.
  - How the Code is implemented.
  - Procedures for the use of incident reports, report cards, detention, suspension and expulsion.

## **4. Principles Underpinning the Code of Behaviour**

- 4.1. To ensure the successful achievement of our goals the following principles guided the development of the Code of Behaviour.
- Affirming that everyone's behaviour matters
  - Providing clarity.
  - Focusing on promoting good behaviour
  - Balancing needs
  - Recognising that relationships matter
  - Focusing on personal responsibility
  - Ensuring fairness and equity
  - Promoting equality
  - Recognising educational vulnerability

- Promoting a commitment to the emotional and physical welfare of every student on an individual basis
- Promoting a positive and safe working environment within the classroom and the school for all staff and students
- Attending to the welfare of staff.
- Promoting safety and freedom from threat.

## 5. Whole School Approach

5.1. Students' behaviour is influenced by the school's ethos, values, atmosphere, practices and relationships. The Code, on its own, cannot create the environment that makes it possible for students to learn and behave well. As such, St. Oliver Post Primary adopts a whole school approach to behaviour.

5.2. This includes:

- Consistency in ethos, policies and practices.
- School policies and practices that support the objective of the Code.
- A classroom environment that promotes positive learning behaviour and where students have a clear understanding of what is expected.
- Opportunities for the Board of Management, Principal, Deputy Principal, teachers and non-teaching staff, parents/guardians and students to live up to and understand their responsibilities.
- A school development planning process that helps the school to ensure that its policies and procedures work harmoniously to sustain a positive environment for teaching and learning.

## 6. Application of the Code of Behaviour

6.1. The Code of Behaviour will apply:

- Within the environs of the school during the school day and any after-hours activities.
- On all school and school-linked activities, including school tours, outdoor pursuits, field trips, sports activities, retreats, school visits/expeditions, official school charity collections and events.
- Any occasion when the student is in the school uniform.
- The school may also apply the Code of Behaviour to student's online activity in cases of inappropriate use.

## 7. Understanding Behaviour

7.1. Understanding the context of behaviour is central to understanding behaviour. The responses to a student's behaviour influence the choices a student makes about how he / she behaves. These influences are within the person, external and interpersonal. The Code aims at responding to unacceptable behaviour in ways that are likely to work and attempts to avoid responding in ways that may cause the misbehaviour to escalate.

## 8. Setting Standards of Behaviour

### 8.1. Values and Standards

- 8.1.1. The school promotes values and standards including:
- Respect for self and others.
  - Principles of natural justice.
  - Fairness.
  - Kindness and willingness to help others.
  - A readiness to use respectful ways to reduce difficulties and conflict.
- 8.1.2. In promoting high standards, the school recognises that certain kinds of behaviour are not acceptable and will incur sanctions. For example:
- All behaviour that is hurtful.
  - All forms of bullying, harassment, sexual harassment, discrimination and victimisation by word, deed or act, including improper use of any form of technology or media.
  - All forms of behaviour that discriminate or reflect negatively on a person's race, ethnic background, nationality, religion, disability, culture or sexual orientation.
  - Behaviour that interferes with teaching and learning.
  - Threats or actual physical hurt to another person.
  - Damage to property.
  - Theft.
  - Possession, use, or being under the influence of alcohol, drugs, un-prescribed drugs or any other harmful, dangerous or illegal substance.
  - In the current Covid-19 context, any behaviour that undermines public health advice, and school-generated guidelines and protocols to manage this public health situation.

### 8.2. Students

- 8.2.1. The school undertakes to explain and clarify the Code to students. By giving students an insight into their own and others' behaviour the school can equip them to think and understand what influences people to behave in a particular way. This builds their capacity to take responsibility for their behaviour and to help each other behave well.
- 8.2.2. The school provides opportunities, inside and outside the classroom for students to think, talk about behaviour, learning and rules and what their school means to them. These opportunities are to be found especially, but not exclusively, in discussion with individual and class teachers, during C.S.P.E., Assemblies, S.P.H.E. and Religion classes and in the involvement of the guidance counsellor, Year Heads and Tutors. They are also available under the mentoring programme provided by Leaving Certificate students for 1st Year students.
- 8.2.3. Students must be committed to their own learning and to that of their peers. This commitment includes:
- Regular and punctual attendance at school.
  - Doing one's best in class and at all school related activities.
  - Taking responsibility for one's work and actions.
  - Wearing the correct uniform and having a neat and tidy appearance.
  - Keeping the school rules.
  - Helping to create a safe and positive environment.

- Respecting all school staff.
- Respecting all fellow students and their learning.
- Active participation in school activities.
- Complying with and actively supporting public health advice, and school-generated guidelines and protocols to manage this public health situation.

### 8.3. First Year Students

- 8.3.1. St. Oliver Post Primary School recognises the enormity of the change that students experience when transferring from primary to post primary education. In order to minimise the stress and anxiety experienced by students at this pivotal junction in their educational journeys, the school takes the following additional measures:
- 8.3.2. Organises information meetings of First Year parents before the start of the school year and towards the end of September.
- 8.3.3. Organises a three-day Induction Programme for incoming First Year Students on the first three days of term.
- 8.3.4. Organises a mentoring programme where each First Year student has a 6th Year Prefect responsible for them throughout First Year. Students meet with their Prefects at designated times and discuss issues of concern with them.

### 8.4. Parents/Guardians

- 8.4.1. The school believes the full support of parents/guardians for the Code is essential. Values at home and parental attitude make a positive contribution to student's learning and behaviour. Parents/guardians are expected to model the standards that students are asked to respect.
- 8.4.2. The school provides many opportunities for parents/guardians to be familiar with the standards and to understand the importance of expecting students to behave in accordance with these standards. The school provided parents with the opportunity to become involved in Parenting Programmes on an annual basis.
- 8.4.3. The school maintains regular communication with parents/guardians and if necessary, parents/guardians will be invited to discuss their child's behaviour, with the objective of achieving an agreed common approach.
- 8.4.4. The school needs parents full support in promoting public health advice, and school-generated guidelines and protocols to manage the Covid-19 public health situation.

### 8.5. Teachers and Other School Staff

- 8.5.1. The example set by teachers and all school staff has a direct bearing on learning for students. They have a responsibility to model the school's standards of behaviour in their dealings both with students and each other.



## 9. Promoting Good Behaviour

- 9.1. Promoting good behaviour is the main objective of the school's Code of Behaviour. Through its ethos, policies and practices, St. Oliver Post Primary actively promotes positive behaviour and seeks to prevent inappropriate behaviour.
- 9.2. The Code is made to work in a fair and consistent way. Standards are clear, consistent and widely understood and high expectations are set.
- 9.3. The school climate and atmosphere are created by the actions of everyone who is connected to the school: teaching staff, other staff, parents/guardians and students.
- 9.4. The school operates a positive Discipline Programme for Junior Certificate students, affirming and rewarding good behaviour.
- 9.5. Adults model the behaviour expected from students.
- 9.6. Clear boundaries and rules are set for students. Students are helped to recognise and affirm good behaviour.
- 9.7. Positive feedback is provided through the school Journal where merited.
- 9.8. The Code of Behaviour recognises that the dignity of all staff, students and parents/guardians must be afforded the utmost priority and emphasises the right of all student and staff to work in an educational environment free from disruption.
- 9.9. The school expects all students to abide by the Code of Behaviour and to live up to the standards expected. Central to promoting good behaviour is the quality of relationships between staff and students. All teaching personnel in St. Oliver Post Primary strive to develop good relationships. To help foster good relationships, the school acknowledges, promotes and rewards good behaviour in a variety of ways. This includes the following:
  - Access to a member of school personnel from 8.40a.m. onwards.
  - Individual expression of encouragement, thanks and appreciation.
  - Positive feedback entered into the student's Journal.
  - Regular contact with parent/guardians, especially when there is a concern about a student's work or behaviour.
  - At Junior Certificate level, a Positive Discipline programme is used to reward class groups for good behaviour.
  - Acknowledgement at the Prize Giving Day at the end of each school year mark student's achievements.
  - Where necessary close co-operation with outside bodies such as H.S.E., N.E.W.B, N.E.P.S. and Gardaí.
  - Annual Parent/Teacher meeting for all year groups.
  - Parents' Association Meetings and Board of Management Meetings.
  - Class Teachers/Year Tutors regularly meet students and discuss matters of interest or concern at morning registration.
  - Regular meetings of Student Council.
  - Encouragement of healthy eating and healthy lifestyle as part of the school's Healthy eating Policy.
  - House Examination and School Reports, Halloween (exam classes), at Christmas (all classes), Easter (exam classes) and the end of the school year (all other classes).
  - Congratulatory postcards sent home to recognise high achievement in various areas.
  - Strong encouragement of participation in socially worthwhile activities and fundraising.

- Regular updating of the website to publicise instances of achievement.
- Contacting local/national media to publicise events and achievement.
- Acknowledgement of achievements by the Principal and Deputy Principal over the P.A. system.
- Where appropriate, special public display in the foyer of the school of photographs, art work and relevant documents on students achievements.
- Regular promotional events, such as Seachtain Na Gaeilge, Friendship Week, fun activities during Positive Mental Health Week, Sports Day.
- Inviting experts and other speakers to talk to students and parents about matters that relate to a healthy and constructive life within and outside the school.
- This list is not exhaustive.

## 10. School Rules

### 10.1. Fundamental Principles

- 10.1.1. All students attending St. Oliver Post Primary are expected to respect school management, teachers, staff, their fellow pupils, school property and the property of their fellow pupils.
- 10.1.2. As a school community we aim to create a positive learning environment. While recognizing the individuality of each student, the Code of Behaviour aims to ensure the right of each student to a relatively disruptive-free learning environment. In trying to achieve this we encourage good order, combined with responsible and caring attitudes, based on mutual respect.
- 10.1.3. Good and attentive behaviour is expected. Every student must have the freedom to learn, to concentrate and to participate. He/she must have the freedom to do this without being inhibited in any way by his/her fellow students and so that an atmosphere of learning is maintained.
- 10.1.4. All members of the school community need to demonstrate full support in promoting public health advice, and school-generated guidelines and protocols to manage the Covid-19 public health situation.

### 10.2. Behaviour

- 10.2.1. Students are expected to co-operate fully with all members of staff in a spirit of mutual respect and courtesy. This means that:
  - Students are expected to behave with courtesy and good manners towards others.
  - Students are expected to treat their fellow students in a fair and respectful manner.
  - Students should cultivate a sense of responsibility towards their own property.
  - Students should treat the school property and that of fellow students with respect.
  - St. Oliver Post Primary does not tolerate bullying or harassment in any form.
  - Students comply with public health advice, and school-generated guidelines and protocols to manage the Covid-19 public health situation.

### 10.3. Uniform

- 10.3.1. Students must wear full uniform at all times during the school day and while representing the school in activities outside the school. This means:
  - The official school uniform must be worn at all times – the uniform consists of:
  - Boys: grey trousers, girls: green trousers or school skirt (knee length), plain black tights are optional.
  - Shirt (grey for boys, green for girls)
  - School jumper.
  - Black leather school shoes (trainers are not permitted).
  - All items of clothing to be purchased at Mc Dermott's, Oldcastle.
  - Coats/hoodies must be removed on entering the school building.

- One pair of sleepers/stud earrings may be worn in the lower ear only. No other facial or oral piercings are allowed. Where facial piercings cannot be removed, they must be kept covered at all times.
- In the Junior School make-up is not allowed.
- No extreme hair colours allowed. Only natural looking hair colour is allowed. Particular hair fashion trends may be deemed to be inappropriate for school.
- Students may wear P.E. gear to school on a morning that their base class (regular class) is time-tabled for P.E. at 9.05am. At the end of PE they change into their full uniform. In all other instances students must bring in their P.E. gear in a gear bag.
- Each item of uniform should be clearly labelled with the student's name
- Full school uniform should be worn for all school related activities.

#### 10.4. Student Application and Effort

10.4.1. Students should do their best to work both in class and at their homework. This means:

- Students listen to and co-operate with their teachers.
- Students do the assigned homework each night.
- Students do not disturb the learning process of fellow students.
- Students carry the school journal with them to all classes and to registration.
- Students come properly prepared for their subject.
- Students have to adhere to health & safety guidelines in particular with practical activity based classes. Because:
  - ✓ Every student has a right to learn in an environment that supports the learning process.
  - ✓ Every teacher has the right to teach in an environment which is conducive to learning.
  - ✓ Every student has the right to an education free from fear and intimidation.
  - ✓ Homework is an essential part of the learning process.

#### 10.5. Respect

10.5.1. Students must show courtesy, consideration and good manners in their behaviour while travelling to and from school, in school and on school trips. This means:

- Students must show politeness, respect and courteous co-operation to all school staff, fellow students, visitors to the school, local residents etc. at all times. Because:
  - ✓ This is the embodiment of our Mission Statement.
- Students must respect the school environment. This means:
  - ✓ Keeping the school and school grounds clean and free of litter and graffiti
  - ✓ Placing recyclable waste in the recycling bins provided
  - ✓ Chewing gum is forbidden
  - ✓ Actively supporting the school's Green Code.
- Respecting all school property. Because:
  - ✓ Everybody benefits from working and learning in a pleasant and clean environment.
  - ✓ The school enhances the environment as active participants in the Green Schools Programme.

#### 10.6. Mobile Phones and other devices

- 10.6.1. The use of Mobile Phones and Digital recording & playing devices are not permitted within the school grounds unless instructed to do so by a teacher for educational purposes. This means:
- 10.6.2. Any student found using any type of mobile phone, recording or playing device within the vicinity of the school grounds, during a school day will have the device confiscated immediately. The phone will then be handed over to the Deputy Principal.
- 10.6.3. The phone will generally be available for collection at the end of the school day from the Deputy Principal. However, if there are aggravating factors (refusal to hand over the device, objectionable content on the device) – a parent may be requested to come in and collect the phone.
- 10.6.4. If the device is confiscated by a member of staff for a second (or more) time during a school year a parent will be requested to come in and collect the phone or the phone will remain in the Deputy Principal's office until the end of the next school day.
- 10.6.5. With the permission and under the instruction of a teacher, students are allowed to use their mobile phone in class for educational purposes.
- 10.6.6. Students found to have recorded and/or distributed images of members of the school community will face serious sanctions.

#### 10.7. Substance Use

- 10.7.1. The school forbids the possession and/or use of cigarettes/any smoking paraphernalia/E- cigarettes/ Vaping devices on the school premises and grounds or while engaging in school activities. Not alone is there a concern around the student's health and safety in relation to this issue but it is a breach of Irish State law to smoke on the school premises and as a result the consequence will be suspension from school.
- 10.7.2. Illegal drugs/addictive substances/alcohol/un-prescribed drugs/legal drug substitutes are strictly prohibited in the school. The use of any necessary medication must be pre agreed with the Principal and in accordance with LMETB policy and procedures. In the event of a breach of this rule the school is obliged to inform parents/guardians and / or the relevant authorities. Consequences for breaches of this rule are dealt with through the Suspension and Expulsion policies.

## 11. How St. Oliver Post Primary School responds to unacceptable behaviour.

### 11.1. Responsibilities of the School

11.1.1. It is the responsibility of the school authorities:

- To maintain a classroom and school environment which is safe for students, teachers and other school staff.
- To maintain a classroom and school environment that is supportive of the learning of every student and ensures continuity of education.
- It is the policy of the school to intervene early and positively when a student's behaviour does not meet the standards expected.

### 11.2. Responses and sanctions

11.2.1. The school implements a graded response to student misbehaviour.

The strategy adopted by the school is to intervene early and positively and this strategy prioritises the early involvement of parents/guardians.

11.2.2. The following responses and sanctions are in use in St. Oliver Post Primary

- Journal
- E-Portal
- Report
- Calls home to parents
- Detention (lunch time and after school)
- Suspension
- Expulsion

### 11.3. Disciplinary Ladder

11.3.1. Teacher: Misconduct will be dealt with by individual subject teacher.

The teacher can choose from possible sanctions such as – reprimand, record keeping, and note in Student Journal to parent, penalty sheet, detention, extra work etc. Detention may be used as a last resort at this stage and only for one day.

11.3.2. Tutor: Where misbehaviour or misconduct persists despite sanctions in Stage 1 being imposed, the subject teacher then refers the matter to the Class Tutor.

11.3.3. Yearhead: Where 3 lunchtime detentions have been imposed and there is no evident improvement in behaviour, the student will receive an after-school detention (15.30 – 16.30). Parents will be informed of this by journal, telephone, email or letter.

11.3.3.1. Having completed an afternoon detention, the student's behaviour will be monitored for the week by all subject teachers using the Progress Report Form in the student's journal. A record of detentions is kept by the Tutor and Yearhead and is also recorded in the student's journal.

11.3.3.2. Where the Progress Report has found no evidence of improvement, the Year Head may organize an interview. Parents will be informed of this. The student can be interviewed by Tutor, Year Head and Deputy Principal. Parents will may be invited to attend. Alternatively, feedback will be sent to parents by letter / phone,

11.3.3.3. Following interview, student's behaviour will be monitored for a further week using the Progress Report Form. Where the progress

attained is not satisfactory, the student may then be interviewed by the Deputy Principal.

11.3.3.4. Where satisfactory progress is deemed to have been attained, this will be affirmed by Year Head.

11.3.4. Deputy Principal and Principal: Parents are invited to attend a meeting with the Yearhead and Deputy Principal (the Principal may also attend the meeting). History of misbehaviour will be outlined to parents at this meeting. The student signs a Contract of Behaviour. This is co-signed by the Yearhead and Deputy Principal.

11.3.4.1. The student's behaviour will be monitored by teachers and management using the Progress Report Form.

#### 11.4. Scale of intervention and involvement

##### 11.4.1. Subject Teacher

11.4.1.1. The vast majority of behavioural matters are dealt with promptly and efficiently by the subject teacher and have no long term consequences.

##### 11.4.2. Tutor and Year Head. Involved where:

11.4.2.1. Subject Teacher believes student has not responded positively to his/her intervention.

11.4.2.2. Student's conduct has consequences beyond the class of an individual teacher

11.4.2.3. Breaches of school rules outside of the classroom

11.4.2.4. Accurate records of behaviour and interventions are filed by both the Tutor and Yearhead.

##### 11.4.3. Deputy Principal. Involved where :

11.4.3.1. Where there are serious breaches of school rules.

11.4.3.2. Persistent failure over lengthy period to achieve standard of work or behaviour expected.

11.4.3.3. Detention (punctuality related issues).

11.4.3.4. Possible suspension (matter needs to be discussed with the Principal who has the power to suspend).

##### 11.4.4. Principal. Involved where :

11.4.4.1. There are very serious breaches of school rules.

11.4.4.2. The sanction is suspension up to and including 3 days; and up to and including 5 days in consultation with the Chairperson of the Board of Management.

##### 11.4.5. The Board of Management. Involved where:

11.4.5.1. The sanction is suspension of greater than 3 days.

11.4.5.2. There is an appeal to a suspension.

11.4.5.3. The sanction is expulsion.

##### 11.4.6. Parent/Guardian. Involved where :

11.4.6.1. On a daily and weekly basis by reviewing students behaviour in their journal (specifically notes from staff; and the pink behaviour section in the middle of the journal – which needs to be signed every week by parent / guardian).

11.4.6.2. There is a persistent failure to achieve the necessary standards with a view to seeking their assistance and co-operation in dealing with the matter.

11.4.7. Records/Files

11.4.7.1. A record of all serious breaches of the school rules is kept, along with Incident Reports, Report Cards, detention slips etc. in the student's file.

11.4.7.2. Records are safely stored and may only be accessed by the Principal/Deputy Principal/Year Head /Tutor / subject teachers.



## **12. Detention Procedures**

- 12.1. Detention is organized and administrated by the Year Head and Tutors of each individual year group. Students are generally only put on detention by their own Tutor and Year Head. However individual teachers may use this sanction as a last resort before engaging the assistance of the class Tutor and/or Yearhead.
- 12.2. Detentions will be given for consistent infringements of the Code of Behaviour and / or more serious misbehaviour.
- 12.3. Detention takes place once a week during lunch breaks for approximately 20 minutes. If students miss their lunchtime detention, they will have to do two lunchtime detentions and may be put on an afterschool detention.
- 12.4. Lunchtime detention is generally supervised by the Tutors of that year group on a rotating basis. After-school detention is generally supervised by the Year Head of that year group.
- 12.5. Parents will be contacted in order to organize after-school detention.

## 13. Suspension Policy

### 13.1. Policy Statement

- 13.1.1. The suspensions and expulsions policy applies to all schools established and maintained by Louth and Meath Education and Training Board.

### 13.2. Legal framework

- 13.2.1. Louth and Meath ETB acknowledges the duty of schools under its control to publish their policy concerning admission and participation in the school, including the policy of the school relating to the expulsion and suspension of students pursuant to Section 15 (d) of the Education Act 1998 and Section 23 of the Education Welfare Act 2000. The Code of Behaviour in St Oliver Post Primary specifies:
- 13.2.2. The standards of behaviour that shall be observed by each student attending the school
- 13.2.3. The measures that may be taken when a student fails or refuses to observe those standards
- 13.2.4. The procedures to be followed before a student may be suspended or expelled from a school
- 13.2.5. The grounds for removing a suspension imposed in relation to a student
- 13.2.6. The procedures to be followed relating to notification of a child's absence from school.
- 13.2.7. St Oliver Post Primary affirms that its Code of Behaviour is prepared in accordance with the Guidelines issued by the Education Welfare Board 2008. The Code of Behaviour addresses:
- The standards of behaviour expected in the school
  - The plan for promoting good behaviour
  - The ways in which a school responds to unacceptable behaviour
  - The plan for implementing the code of behaviour
  - School procedures for the use of suspension and expulsion
- 13.2.8. St Oliver Post Primary recognises the Right to Appeal pursuant to Section 29 of the Education Act.
- 13.2.9. In regard to informing the Education Welfare Board, St Oliver Post Primary affirms its statutory obligation pursuant to section 21 (4) (a) of the Education Welfare Act.
- 13.2.10. St Oliver Post Primary affirms that data collected in relation to students and parents is in compliance with the Data Protection Acts 1988 and 2018.

### 13.3. Suspensions

- 13.3.1. The Board of Management of St Oliver PP holds the authority to suspend a student. This authority is devolved under Section 44 (11(a)) of the Education and Training Boards Act 2013 by Louth and Meath ETB to the Boards of Management of each of the schools under its control.
- 13.3.2. Louth and Meath ETB recognises that the Boards of Management St Oliver Post Primary may delegate this authority to the Principal of St Oliver PP. The Board of Management should make a formal delegation arrangement taking due account of the provisions of the Education and Training Boards Act 2013
- 13.3.3. St Oliver Post Primary recognises that suspension is only one strategy within the St Oliver PP Code of Behaviour in response to inappropriate behaviour.

- 13.3.4. St Oliver PP recognises that when all other strategies have been exhausted, suspension affords a student time to reflect on their behaviour, to acknowledge and accept responsibility for their behaviour and to accept the need for the behaviour to change. St Oliver PP works closely with parents to assist a suspended student to re-join the school community successfully.
- 13.3.5. St Oliver PP acknowledges that suspension should be a proportionate response to the behaviour that is causing concern. The decision to suspend a student requires serious grounds such as that:
- 13.3.5.1. The student's behaviour has had a seriously detrimental effect on the education of other students.
- 13.3.5.2. The student's continued presence in the school at this time constitutes a threat to safety.
- 13.3.5.3. The student is responsible for serious damage to property.
- 13.3.5.4. The student breaches the Code of Behaviour (at the discretion of the Principal).
- 13.3.6. St Oliver PP affirms that all suspensions must be notified to the Board of Management of St Oliver PP.
- 13.3.7. St Oliver PP affirms that the Education Welfare Services of the Child and Family Agency (TUSLA) should be Informed of suspensions in the following circumstances:
- Where the period of suspension is for 6 or more consecutive school days.
  - Where the aggregate number of days on which a student has been suspended /absent in any school year is 20 or more days.
- 13.3.8. St Oliver PP affirms that suspension may occur after the following factors have been considered:
- The nature and seriousness of the behaviour.
  - The impact and context of the behaviour.
  - The interventions tried to date.
  - That all discipline options under the St Oliver PP Code of Behaviour have been applied and documented.
  - That all actions /decisions taken are recorded and all correspondence copied.
  - Discussion has occurred with the student and parent(s) regarding the specific behaviour which the school considers unacceptable, and which may lead to suspension.
- 13.3.9. The Board of Management of St Oliver PP affirms that students attending St Oliver PP may be suspended as follows pending investigation and /or discussion with parents. The following list is not exhaustive:
- 13.3.9.1. Continued disruption of Teaching and Learning. For example - repeatedly refusing/failing to participate in class and/or repeatedly failing to bring material to class (books, copy, and exam papers).
- 13.3.9.2. For refusing/failing/being unwilling to follow the direct instructions of members of staff
- 13.3.9.3. For serious misbehaviour
- 13.3.9.4. For refusing/failing/being unwilling to assist staff in the investigation of incidents of misbehaviour
- 13.3.9.5. For an unacceptable level of repeated misbehaviour. For example – disruption to teaching and learning.
- 13.3.9.6. For threatening, bullying, insulting, aggressive or violent behaviour towards others whether in person, by mobile phone or via

- social media or other electronic means; in the school, or within the vicinity of the school. For example – becoming involved in a physical altercation with another student.
- 13.3.9.7. For the supply/possession /use of alcohol, cigarettes/ any smoking paraphernalia /E cigarettes/Vaping devices and /or illegal drugs.
- 13.3.9.8. For the supply /possession /use of weapons/ hazardous materials
- 13.3.9.9. For behaviour that may be a danger to self or others. For example smoking cigarettes/e-cigarettes/vaping devices in the vicinity of the school.
- 13.3.9.10. For behaviour that undermines public health advice, and school-generated guidelines and protocols to manage the Covid-19 public health situation. For example,
- 13.3.9.10.1. Failing or refusing to wear a face covering.
- 13.3.9.10.2. Failing or refusing to follow cleaning and hygiene etiquette such as washing hands, hand sanitiser, cleaning surface.
- 13.3.9.10.3. Failing or refusing to practice social distancing.
- 13.3.9.10.4. Failing or refusing to follow etiquette around coughing, sneezing, spitting etc.
- 13.3.9.10.5. Damage or interference with PPE belonging to the school or other members of the school community
- 13.3.9.11. For racist behaviour /supply of racist behaviour/use of racist material
- 13.3.9.12. For behaviour that is contrary to the terms of the Equal Status Act 2000
- 13.3.9.13. For sexual harassment/abuse and/or the possession/supply /use of pornographic material.
- 13.3.9.14. Serious damage to school or personal property.
- 13.3.9.15. Gross disrespect towards a member of staff.
- 13.3.9.16. Truancy from class or school (including leaving the school without permission during break times).
- 13.3.9.17. Bringing the good name of the school in to disrepute through either actions or words (including online).
- 13.3.10. St Oliver PP acknowledges that a single incident of serious misconduct may be grounds for suspension. Such grounds may include where the continued presence of the student in the school at the time would represent a serious threat to the safety or welfare of students, staff of the school or any other person.
- 13.3.11. A student may be suspended during a state examination and such suspension should normally be approved by the Board of Management of St Oliver PP. This type of suspension should only be used where there is:
- A threat to good order in the conduct of the examination
  - A threat to the safety or welfare of other students and personnel
  - A threat to the right of the other students to do their exam in a calm atmosphere.
- 13.3.12. Louth and Meath ETB recognises that the Board of Management of St Oliver PP may decide as part of the school's policy on sanctions and following consultation process with the Principal, parents, teachers and students, that particular named behaviour incur suspension

as a sanction. This does not remove the duty to follow due process and fair procedures in each case.

#### 13.4. Inappropriate use of Suspension

- 13.4.1. Rolling suspension. A student should not be suspended again shortly after they return to St Oliver PP unless they engage in serious misbehaviour that warrants suspension, that fair procedures are observed in full and the standard applied to judging the behaviour is the same as that standard applied to the behaviour of any other student.
- 13.4.2. Informal / unacknowledged suspension. Exclusion of a student for part of the school day as a sanction is a suspension.
- 13.4.3. Open-ended suspension. Students should not be suspended for an indefinite periods. Any such suspension would be regarded as a de-facto expulsion.

#### 13.5. Procedures in respect of Suspension.

- 13.5.1. The school will investigate the complaint thoroughly (the Deputy Principal, with Year Head assistance, generally leads the investigation).
- 13.5.2. Louth and Meath ETB affirms that St Oliver PP is required to follow fair procedures when proposing to suspend a student. The school should observe the following procedures
- 13.5.3. The student and parent(s) should be informed about the complaint
- 13.5.4. The student and parent(s) should be given the opportunity to respond
- 13.5.5. In the case of 'immediate' suspension, a preliminary investigation should be conducted to establish the case for the imposition of the suspension. Parents must be notified and arrangement made for the student to be collected from the school. The school must have due regard for its duty of care for the student.
- 13.5.6. On completion of the investigation the findings are given to the principal who then decides on what course of action to take.
- 13.5.7. A student should not be suspended for more than 3 days except in exceptional circumstances. Louth and Meath ETB recognises that the Board of Management of St Oliver PP should provide guidance to the Principal concerning the kinds of circumstances under which suspensions of longer than 3 days might be approved. If a suspension of longer than 3 days is being proposed the matter should be referred to the Board of Management for consideration and approval. However Louth and Meath ETB recognises that the Board of Management of St Oliver PP may wish to authorise the Principal, with the approval of the Chairperson of the Board of Management, to impose a suspension of up to 5 days in circumstances where a meeting of the Board cannot be convened in a timely fashion.
- 13.5.8. Louth and Meath ETB affirms the Boards of Management of St Oliver PP should 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 school year to 20 days or more. Any such suspension is subject to appeal under section 29 of the Education Act 1998.

#### 13.6. Implementing the suspension

- 13.6.1. The Principal of St Oliver PP should notify the Parent(s) and the student in writing of the decision to suspend. The letter will confirm:
  - The period of the suspension and the dates on which the suspension will begin and end.
  - The reasons for the suspension.

- Any study programme to be followed.
- The arrangements for returning to school, including any commitments to be entered into by the student and the parents.
- The provision for an appeal to the Department of Education, in the case of a suspension which would bring the days suspended in once academic year over 20 days.

13.6.2. In the case where Parents do not agree to meet with the Principal, Louth and Meath ETB confirms that written notice will serve as notice to impose a suspension.

13.6.3. A suspension may be removed if the Board of Management of St Oliver PP decides to remove the suspension for any reason.

#### 13.7. Section 29 Appeal against Suspension

13.7.1. Where the total number of days for which the student has been suspended in the current school year reaches 20 days, the parent(s) or a student aged over 18 years, may appeal the suspension under Section 29 of the Education Act 1998.

13.7.2. Parents An appeal may be made by the parent of the student concerned, or by the student concerned where the student has reached the age of 18 years. In accordance with section 26 of the Education (Welfare) Act, 2000, the Child and Family Agency (Tusla) may appoint a person, independent of that Agency, to appeal a decision of a board of management or person acting on behalf of the board of management to permanently exclude a student from a school.

13.7.3. An appeal must be made within 42 calendar days from the date of the decision of the board of management or a person acting on behalf of the board of management.

13.7.4. Appeals must be made in writing on the Section 29 Appeal Form and submitted to the Section 29 Appeals Administration Unit which has been established within the Department of Education to provide administrative support to enable appeals committees perform their functions. The Section 29 Appeal Form may be downloaded from the Department's website or obtained directly from the Section 29 Appeals Administration Unit. Contact details for the Unit are available on the Department's website [www.education.ie](http://www.education.ie) .

## 14. Expulsion Policy

### 14.1. Authority to Expel

14.1.1. Louth and Meath ETB has the authority to expel a student. This authority may be delegated under Section 44 (11(a)) of the Education and Training Boards Act 2013 by Louth and Meath ETB to the Board of Management St Oliver Post Primary School

14.1.2. Expulsion should be a proportionate response to the student's behaviour. St Oliver Post Primary School acknowledges that expulsion of a student is a very serious step and one that should only be taken by the Board of Management of St Oliver PP in extreme cases of unacceptable behaviour.

14.1.3. The Board of Management of St Oliver PP affirms that St Oliver PP needs to have taken significant steps to address the misbehaviour and to avoid expulsion.

14.1.4. Such measures may include:

- Meeting with parents and students to try and find ways of helping the student to change their behaviour.
- Making sure that the student understands the possible consequences of their behaviour should it persist
- Ensuring that all possible options have been tried.
- Seeking the assistance of relevant support agencies, e.g. Child and Family Agency Education Welfare Services, HSE Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services. National Behavioural Support Service JLO, NEPS, NCSE.

14.1.5. 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 the safety and welfare of others.
- The student is responsible for serious damage to property.

14.1.6. Before expulsion is considered schools authorities must satisfy themselves that all possibilities have been exhausted for changing the student's behaviour.

14.1.7. 'Automatic Expulsion'

14.1.7.1. The Board of Management of St Oliver PP may decide in consultation with the principal, parents, teachers and students that particular named behaviours would result in 'Automatic' expulsion. This does not remove the duty to follow due process and fair procedure.

14.1.8. Expulsion for first or once-off offence

14.1.8.1. There may be exceptional circumstances where the Board of Management of St Oliver PP decides 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 of Behaviour could include:

- A serious threat of violence against another student or member of staff
- Actual violence or physical assault
- Supplying illegal drugs to students in the school
- Sexual assault

- Serious breaches of public health advice and school protocols / guidelines in relation to Covid-19

#### 14.2. Factors to Consider before proposing to expel a student

14.2.1. The Board of Management of St Oliver PP should take the following factors into consideration before considering expelling a student:

- The nature and seriousness of the behaviour
- The context of the behaviour
- The impact of the behaviour
- The interventions already tried to change the student's behaviour
- Whether expulsion is a proportionate response
- The possible impact of expulsion

14.2.2. Expulsion would not be appropriate for the following:

- Poor academic performance
- Poor attendance or lateness
- Minor breaches of the Code of Behaviour

14.2.3. However, any behaviour that is persistently disruptive to learning or dangerous can be a serious matter. Behaviour must be examined in context to understand both the behaviour itself and the response or sanction that is most appropriate.

#### 14.3. Procedures in respect of expulsion

14.3.1. A detailed investigation will be carried out under the direction of the Principal. The Principal should ensure that no party who has had any involvement with the circumstances of the case is part of the investigation.

14.3.2. The Principal should inform the student and his/her parents about the specific details of the alleged breach of behaviour, how it will be investigated and that it could result in expulsion. The Principal must ensure that the student and parents are given every opportunity to respond to the complaint of serious misbehaviour. The Principal should communicate this in writing to ensure that parents have a permanent record of having been informed.

14.3.3. A meeting should be arranged between the student and their parents and the Principal of St Oliver PP before a sanction is imposed.

14.3.4. Should a student and their parent(s) fail to attend a meeting the Principal should write advising:

- the seriousness of the matter
- the importance of attending a re-scheduled meeting
- Failing that, the duty of the school authorities to make a decision to respond to the inappropriate behaviour
- Record all correspondence

14.3.5. Where the Principal of St Oliver PP forms a view, based on the investigation of the alleged misbehaviour, that expulsion may be warranted, the Principal shall make a recommendation to the Board to consider expulsion. The Principal should:

14.3.5.1. Inform the student and parents in writing that the Board of Management is being asked to consider expulsion.

14.3.5.2. Ensure that parents have written records of (a) the allegation, (b) the investigation, (c) written notice of the grounds on which the Board of Management is being asked to consider expulsion.



- 14.3.5.3. Provide the Board with the same comprehensive records as are given to the student and the parents.
- 14.3.5.4. Notify the parents in good time of the date of the hearing with the Board of management and invite them to that hearing.
- 14.3.5.5. Advise the parents that they can make a written and oral submission to the Board of Management.
- 14.3.5.6. Ensure parents are given enough notice to allow them to prepare for the meeting.
- 14.3.6. It is the responsibility of the Board of Management of St Oliver PP to review the initial investigation and satisfy itself that the investigation was properly conducted in line with fair procedures.
- 14.3.7. The Board of Management should undertake its own review of documentation and all circumstances of the case.
- 14.3.8. The Board of Management should ensure that no party who has had any involvement with the circumstances of the case is part of the Board's deliberations.
- 14.3.9. Where the Board of Management of St Oliver PP decides to expel a student it must hold a hearing and this meeting should be properly conducted in accordance with Board procedures.
- 14.3.10. Parents may be accompanied at the Board hearing but, as this is a lay forum; legal representation is not the normal practice, however it may be allowed due to the potentially serious consequences for the student. The Board Secretary should be informed in writing who shall be attending this meeting at least two days prior to the meeting taking place.
- 14.4. [Conduct of hearing](#)
  - 14.4.1. At the start of the meeting the Chairperson shall enquire whether any member has an objective bias in respect of the matter being considered by the Board. Where the Board is satisfied that an objective bias exists, the member(s) involved shall withdraw from the meeting.
  - 14.4.2. At the hearing the Principal and the parents, or a student aged 18 or over, put their case to the Board in each other's presence and will be available to answer questions from Board Members. Each party should be allowed question the evidence of the other party. Questions should be directed through the Chairperson at the end of each presentation.
  - 14.4.3. Once the Principal and the Parents have made their cases, they will withdraw from the meeting.
  - 14.4.4. Should the Board require the professional advice of the Principal, the Principal may be invited to return to the meeting briefly for that purpose. While the Principal is present, there will be no discussion on the merits of the particular case being considered.
  - 14.4.5. In the conduct of the hearing the Board must take care to ensure they are and are seen to be impartial as between the Principal and the student. Parents may wish to be accompanied at hearings and the Board should facilitate this in line with good practice and Board procedures.
  - 14.4.6. When both sides have been heard the Board should ensure that the Principal and Parents are not present for the Board's deliberations.
  - 14.4.7. In hearing and considering a proposed expulsion the Board shall have regard to:
    - the nature, scale and persistence of any behaviour alleged to have given rise to, or contributed to, the decision made by or on behalf of the Board,

- the reasonableness of any efforts made by the school to enable the student to whom the appeal relates (the ‘student concerned’) to participate in and benefit from education,
- the educational interests of the student concerned and the desirability of enabling the student as far as practicable to participate in and benefit from education with his or her peers,
- the educational interests of, and the effective provision of education for, other students of the school and the maintenance of a classroom and school environment which is supportive of learning among the students of the school and ensures continuity of instruction provided to students in any classroom concerned and the school,
- the safety, health and welfare of teachers, students and staff of the school,
- the code of behaviour under section 23 of the Education (Welfare) Act of 2000 and other relevant policies of the school and —
- in the case of that code of behaviour, the extent to which it is in compliance with that section 23 and any guidelines issued under subsection (3) of that section, and
- in the case of those other policies, the extent to which each of them is implemented, promotes equality of access to and participation in education and is in compliance with —
- any enactment that imposes duties on schools or their boards,
- any relevant guidelines or policies of the Minister,
- the duties on schools or their boards imposed by or under any enactment, (h) guidelines issued pursuant to section 22(7) of the Act of 2000, and such other matters as the Board considers relevant.

#### 14.5. Board of Management deliberations and actions following the hearing

- 14.5.1. Having heard from all the parties involved it is the responsibility of the Board to decide whether or not the allegation is substantiated and if expulsion is the appropriate sanction.
- 14.5.2. When the Board of Management having considered all the facts of the case, is of the opinion that the student should be expelled, the Board must notify the Education Welfare Officer in writing of its opinion and the reasons for this opinion pursuant to section 24(91) of the Education Welfare Act 2000. The Board should refer to the Child and Family Agency Education Welfare Services reporting procedures for proposed expulsions.
- 14.5.3. The student cannot be expelled before the passage of 20 school days from the date on which the EWO receives this written notification.
- 14.5.4. The Board of Management should inform the parents in writing about its conclusions and where expulsion is proposed the parents should be informed that the Board of Management will inform the Education Welfare Officer.

#### 14.6. Consultations arranged by the Educational Welfare Officer

- 14.6.1. Within 20 days of receipt of a notification from a Board of Management the EWO will make all reasonable attempts to hold individual consultations with the Principal, the parent and the student. The EWO will convene a meeting of those parties. These consultations will focus on alternative educational arrangements for the student.
- 14.6.2. Pending the consultations in 12.1 the Board of Management may consider it appropriate to suspend a student during this time. This should only be considered where the continued presence of the student during

this time would seriously disrupt the learning of others or represent a risk to the safety and health of students or staff.

#### 14.7. Confirmation of the decision to expel

- 14.7.1. When the 20 day period following notice to the EWO has elapsed and the Board of Management remains of the view that the student should be expelled, the Board of Management should formally confirm the decision to expel. The Board of Management may delegate authority to the Chairperson and Secretary to review this decision of expulsion after the twenty days has expired.
- 14.7.2. Parents should be notified immediately that the expulsion will now proceed. Parents and the student must be informed of their right to appeal to Louth and Meath ETB.

#### 14.8. Section 29 Appeal against Expulsion

- 14.8.1. The parents and the student should be informed about their right to appeal to the Minister for Education.
- 14.8.2. An appeal may be made by the parent of the student concerned, or by the student concerned where the student has reached the age of 18 years. In accordance with section 26 of the Education (Welfare) Act, 2000, the Child and Family Agency (Tusla) may appoint a person, independent of that Agency, to appeal a decision of a board of management or person acting on behalf of the board of management to permanently exclude a student from a school.
- 14.8.3. An appeal must be made within 42 calendar days from the date of the decision of the board of management or a person acting on behalf of the board of management.
- 14.8.4. Appeals must be made in writing on the Section 29 Appeal Form and submitted to the Section 29 Appeals Administration Unit which has been established within the Department of Education to provide administrative support to enable appeals committees perform their functions. The Section 29 Appeal Form may be downloaded from the Department's website or obtained directly from the Section 29 Appeals Administration Unit. Contact details for the Unit are available on the Department's website [www.education.ie](http://www.education.ie).

#### 14.9. Review of use of Expulsion

- 14.9.1. The Board of Management of St Oliver PP should review the use of expulsion in the school at regular intervals.

#### 14.10. Implementation and Review of Policy

- 14.10.1. The Principal and Board of Management of St Oliver PP will be responsible for the implementation of this policy.
- 14.10.2. This policy shall be reviewed periodically, in light of emerging legislation and circulated Guidelines from the Department of Education and Skills from its official adoption by the Louth and Meath Education and Training Board and St Oliver PP Board of Management.
- 14.10.3. This policy was reviewed and adopted by Louth and Meath Education and Training Board on 15 November 2018 for incorporation into school's Codes of Behaviour.
- 14.10.4. This policy was reviewed in November 2020 in light of commencement of changes to the Section 29 Appeals procedures under

the Education (Admission to schools) Act 2018.

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## 15. Procedures for notifying the school about student absences.

### 15.1. General

- 15.1.1. Any absence from school should be unavoidable and for a very good reason.
- 15.1.2. It is advisable that parents should not take students out of school for holidays, or for other non-essential reasons.
- 15.1.3. It is the duty of parents to inform the school, using the pull out Record of Absence Note in the student journal, if their child has been absent for any period, giving the reason for the absence.
- 15.1.4. If a student is absent and the school has not been informed, it reserves the right to contact the parents seeking a reason for the absence.
- 15.1.5. Parents/guardians maybe contacted in respect of periods of unexplained absences.
- 15.1.6. If a student is absent for twenty or more school days in one school year, the school is legally obliged to report this to the NEWB, and to give reasons for the absences.
- 15.1.7. The school may notify the NEWB at any time if it has concerns about a student's absence.
- 15.1.8. The NEWB has the right to investigate absence from school where it deems it appropriate.
- 15.1.9. The school keeps a daily attendance record of all students which is submitted to the NEWB at the end of the year.

### 15.2. Absence through Illness

- 15.2.1. If a student is absent for more than three days parents/guardians should phone/email the school with a progress report, to be given to the Deputy Principal, who will in turn pass this on to the Class Tutor.

### 15.3. Return after Absence

- 15.3.1. On a student's return from absence, parents/guardians should complete and sign the Record of Absence Note at the back of the journal, detailing dates absent, date of return, reason for absence and the number of days absent.
- 15.3.2. The student must present an absence note to his / her Tutor, who then files the note in the Tutor folder.
- 15.3.3. Where there has been an absence through illness requiring the intervention of medical personnel it is advised that the student gets a medical certificate. This certificate is then handed to the student's tutor. The tutor then passes the cert to the Deputy Principal for processing.

### 15.4. Absence during School Hours

- 15.4.1. If possible, all appointments, such as medical or dental appointments, should be outside of school hours.
- 15.4.2. If an appointment during school hours is unavoidable, a parent/guardian should enter the nature, date and time of the appointment in the student's journal, and ask the school to allow the student to leave. A parent/guardian must personally enter the school to sign their son/daughter out using the 'sign out book' from reception. The student also needs to sign the 'Sign out Book' before leaving. Students are not be allowed to leave the school alone.
- 15.4.3. If possible, the student should return to school after the appointment, signing him / herself back in on arrival.

15.4.4. If a student feels sick at school, he / she must report to the school reception, where a parent/guardian will be contacted. In all cases contact with the parent/guardian is made through the office as the school must be informed of a student's illness. When ill, students are usually only permitted to go home when a parent can come in and sign them out.

## 16. BOM & LMETB Ratification for the Code of Discipline Policy

### **BOM Ratification**

<b><i>Date Ratified by the Board of Management:</i></b>	<b><i>24<sup>th</sup> August 2023</i></b>
<b><i>Proposed By:</i></b>	
<b><i>Seconded By:</i></b>	
<b><i>Signed:</i></b>	<div><b><i>(Chairperson, BOM)</i></b></div> <div><b><i>(Principal)</i></b></div>
<b><i>Scheduled Date for Review of the Policy:</i></b>	

### **LMETB Ratification/Resolution of the ETB Board**

<b><i>Date of Resolution of ETB Board</i></b>	
<b><i>Signed</i></b>	<b><i>(Chairperson)</i></b>