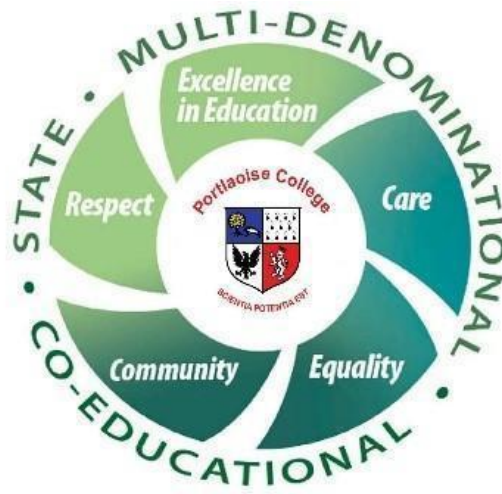


# Portlaoise College



## CODE OF BEHAVIOUR

1<sup>st</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup> Year

*June 2024*

## **1.0. Introduction**

The Code of Behaviour for Portlaoise College intends to illustrate the minimum standards of behaviour expected of all students, parents/guardians and teachers and to inform the school community on how the school will respond to both positive and negative behaviours.

It includes a set of practices and procedures that together promote a positive learning and teaching environment conducive to the growth and development of each person. In choosing Portlaoise College parents/guardians and students are committing themselves to accept, uphold and cooperate with our Code of Behaviour. Enrolment in the school is conditional upon acceptance of the Code of Behaviour.

In line with recommendations set out in the NEWB Developing a Schools Code of Behaviour Guidelines (2008), our Code of behaviour was reviewed and developed following a collaborative process involving students, parents, staff and the Board of Management. The NEWB Guidelines were also referred to throughout the process.

## **1.1. School Ethos**

Portlaoise College is a state, co-educational, multi-denominational school underpinned by five core values: Excellence in Education, Care, Equality, Community and Respect. These core values inform our ethos.

Our School Ethos helps us to ensure.

- That all students reach their potential and realise their talents
- That all students are supported in their learning
- That all students feel confident in their abilities and enjoy success
- That all students feel like they belong and are treated fairly and equally
- That all students are respected
- That all students are cared for
- That all students feel part of a community
- That all students understand the immense potential they have

## **1.2. Schools Mission Statement**

Portlaoise College is committed to providing all students with a high-quality holistic education that enables them to achieve their maximum potential in an engaging, challenging and student-centred environment that celebrates diversity in partnership with all stakeholders.

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## **1.3. Relationship to Mission Statement and Ethos**

A school's code of behaviour should express the vision, mission and values of its school.

In partnership with the Board of Management, teachers, parents/guardians and students the effectiveness with which this Code of Behaviour reflects the school's core values and mission statements were examined.

This Code of Behaviour reflects the schools mission statement and core values of care, respect, community, equality and excellence in education, when it ;

- describes how we promote and celebrate positive behaviour and prevent inappropriate behaviour
- describes the school's expectations about how each member of the school community can contribute to ensuring the highest standards of teaching and learning are experienced by all stakeholders.
- encourages students to take personal responsibility for their learning and behaviour.
- makes clear that the educational needs of a student whose behaviour is unacceptable will be balanced with the educational needs of other students in the school.
- illustrates how the principles of natural justice are applied and ensures a consistent approach to behaviour on the part of all school personnel.
- acknowledges the critical role positive relationships developed on respect between parents, staff and students have on students' experiences and success in school.
- affirms the school's commitment to development and maintenance of positive relationships between students, parents and the school.
- makes clear that an orderly, harmonious school requires students to behave in accordance with the standards of behaviour found in this code.

#### **1.4. Rationale for a Code of Behaviour**

Promoting positive behaviour is the primary goal of the code of behaviour and the quality of relationships between teachers and students has a powerful influence on student behaviour. The school leadership team and school staff therefore actively foster a school ethos, policies, and practices that promote positive relationships.

This policy therefore seeks to afford students and staff at Portlaoise College a caring and respectful environment where teaching and learning flourishes, diversity is celebrated and all students are supported to achieve their full potential.

As professionals, Portlaoise College staff promote positive behaviour in a manner that balances empathy with objectivity, fairness and consistency. Integral to the Code of Behaviour and to the day-to-day implementation of the code are strategies that enable students to behave in a manner that supports their wellbeing, learning and development. Teachers and other school staff therefore use a range of strategies to promote positive daily interactions between teachers and students. These include positive feedback, good school and class routines, clear boundaries and expectations and providing clarification to a student when required on why their behaviour was below standards expected.

To enable students to recognise and choose positive learning behaviours, teachers and school leaders engage in strategies which include the following: dialogue with students on how to show respect to others; modelling respectful behaviour; involving students in the preparation of school and classroom rules; explicitly promoting the expectation that all members of the Portlaoise College community are committed to the following standard: 'Be Ready. Be Respectful. Be Responsible (the 3Rs)

## **1.5. Scope of Code of Behaviour**

This Code of Behaviour applies to all students at Portlaoise College, including students over the age of eighteen. It deals exclusively with student behaviour;

- while in school,
- on the way to and from school,
- on school buses,
- on the school premises
- on all school related activities while students are under the care and instruction of any member of school staff.

The Code of Behaviour may also apply outside of school where there is a clear connection with the school and a demonstrable impact on the work of the school.

## **1.6. Legislation**

Section 23 of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000 requires schools to provide each student with a Code of Behaviour that is prepared in accordance with the NEWB's Developing a Schools Code of Behaviour Guidelines. This Code of Behaviour has been developed in accordance with these guidelines and the requirements stated in Section 23(2) of the Education Welfare Act 2000.

The Code of Behaviour is in keeping with our responsibilities under the Education Act 1998, Equal Status Act 2000, Education of Persons with Special Needs Act 2004, Health and Safety Legislation and Data Protection Act 2018.

## **1.7. Links to other school policies and statements**

The code of behaviour, on its own, cannot create the environment that makes it possible for students to learn and behave well. Many other school policies directly relate to the Code of Behaviour which is essential in ensuring the effective implementation of the other policies in question where the strategies implemented by each individual policy have been exhausted, issues may be referred to the Code of Behaviour for resolution.

This Code of behaviour is linked to the following.

- Anti Bullying policy
- Internet Acceptable Usage Policy
- Admissions Policy
- Tablet Acceptable Usage Policy
- School Tours Policy
- LCA Admissions Policy
- Child Protection Statement
- Health and Safety Statement
- Attendance Strategy

## 2.0. Rules and Standards of Behaviour Expected

A school's standards of behaviour describe the kinds of behaviour it expects of all members of its community, while its rules define what its students, teachers, parents/guardians need to do to meet these expectations. Portlaoise College expects all students, teachers and parents/guardians to abide by these rules and standards in all dealings with each other, visitors to the school and with people whom they meet while representing the school.

As a student, in abiding by the school rules and meeting the standards of behaviour expected you are;

- Supporting your right to learn.
- Supporting the rights of your peers to learn, to achieve their best, to develop their interests and abilities in a secure and supportive environment.
- Supporting the maintenance of a positive, holistic, teaching and learning environment for you and your peers.
- Increasing your chance of achieving your full potential and receiving praise for those achievements.
- Ensuring your experiences in school are positive
- Ensuring all members of your school community are treated with respect and dignity
- Ensuring your school is a clean, tidy and safe environment for all
- Ensuring the health and safety of all members of the school community

## 2.1. Expected Behaviour

In order to create a positive, holistic, teaching and learning environment at Portlaoise College in which each student may develop to their full potential, the following standards of behaviour are expected:

- Be respectful to your peers, to your teachers, to visitors to the school and towards your environment.
- Be responsible for your learning and your actions
- Be ready to learn
- Be involved in your school community

This means;

- Students are encouraged to partake in at least one extracurricular activity
  - Attend and participation in all mandatory subject related trips and class trips
  - Do your best to work in class and at your homework each day
- This means;
- That your approach your work and homework with a 'Can Do Attitude'
  - That you participate in all class activities to the best of your ability
  - That you carry your homework journal with you and record your homework and key dates in it.

At Portlaoise College, respect, responsibility and readiness are demonstrated when the behaviours outlined below are delivered on, in the classroom, outside the classroom and when attending school activities.

**What does this mean for me as a student?**

**In the classroom**

| <b>Respectful</b>   | <b>Responsible</b>  | <b>Ready</b>  |
|---|---|---|
| <p>Line up outside and wait for your teacher</p> <p>Enter quietly</p> <p>Use normal voice and volume</p> <p>Follow the instructions of your teacher</p> <p>Listen quietly to your teacher and others as they answer questions</p> <p>Hand up to ask a question</p> <p>No eating or drinking during class time</p> | <p>Attend class every day</p> <p>Be on time.</p> <p>Have homework with you, uploaded and or submitted</p> <p>Actively participate in class</p> <p>Take ownership of your own behaviour</p> <p>Turn your phone off and leave it in your school bag</p> | <p>Have all your books and materials for class</p> <p>Tablet fully charged</p> <p>Homework completed and submitted or present in class</p> <p>Be aware of deadlines for CBA's</p> |

**On the school grounds**

| <b>Respectful</b>  | <b>Responsible</b>   | <b>Ready</b>   |
|--|--|--|
| <p>Respect yourself and your environment</p> <p>No loitering in the toilets</p> <p>Respect others rights to use the toilet</p> <p>Follow the instructions of all members of staff</p> <p>Move in an orderly fashion</p> <p>No running or rough play indoors.</p> <p>No loitering outside any rooms</p> | <p>Walk on the left hand-side of the corridor</p> <p>Queue in an orderly manner</p> <p>Put litter into the bins</p> <p>Remember the 4 r's respect for yourself, others, belongings and building</p> <p>Only use the toilets for the purpose they are intended for.</p> <p>Remind your parent/guardian to communicate absences on VShare.</p> | <p>Bring your lunch or money for the canteen</p> <p>Be aware of the times for your breaks</p> <p>Be prepared for the next set of classes</p> |

## Attending school activities

| <b>Respectful</b>  | <b>Responsible</b>   | <b>Ready</b>   |
|--|--|--|
| Listen and follow all instructions<br><br>Respect your environment<br><br>Welcome visiting teams and teachers<br><br>Encourage teammates<br><br>Be a good winner and loser | Wear the correct uniform<br><br>Catching up on schoolwork if missed<br><br>Have uniform with you to change back into at the end of training or matches | Be on time<br><br>Have all equipment ready<br><br>Ensure you have lunch or money for lunch<br><br>Bus fare paid<br><br>Permission slips returned on time |

**This is not an exhaustive list.**

## 2.2. School Rules

### 2.2.1. Co-operation

*Students are expected to co-operate promptly and courteously with all school staff as co-operation contributes positively to the maintenance of an orderly and productive learning environment.*

This means;

- At all times, follow the instruction and guidance of your teachers and other staff members as soon as they are given
- Show good manners in your communication with teachers and other staff members and avoid the use of aggressive behaviour or language
- Failure to co-operate with any member of staff is seen to be a serious breach of this code behaviour.

### 2.2.2. Attendance

At Portlaoise College we are committed to encouraging our students to develop a pattern of regular and punctual attendance at school, because regular and punctual attendance are essential if students are to reach their full potential.

*Students are expected to attend school every day unless due to illness or exceptional circumstances*

This means:

- Students should acquire the habit of punctuality. School commences at 8:56a.m. each day with registration taken during Tutorial at 8.56 a.m. Students are expected to be present for Tutorial.
- If a student cannot attend school due to illness, medical/dental appointment, bereavement or other, their parent/guardian must notify the school of their absence through the VSware app before 10am on the day of absence.

- If a student needs to leave school temporarily during the school day, e.g. for a dental visit, the parent/guardian of that student must submit and absence request through the VShare app before 10am on the day of the appointment.
  - If the absence request is approved by the Year Head, the parent/guardian will be notified through the VShare app.
  - The student **must** be collected by a parent/guardian (or another designated person over the age of 18 details of whom must be submitted to the school in writing by the parent/guardian) and signed out and back in by them at the main office (reception)

**Please note:**

- Students will not be permitted to leave school based on a phone call or record on VShare without a parent/guardian or designated person coming to collect them and sign them out.
- Students are not permitted to leave the school grounds during break times. Leaving school at any time during the school day is a major breach of this code of behaviour.

**2.2.3. Punctuality**

School begins at 8:56am with registration taken during Tutor time from 8:56 to 9:00 am each morning.

***Students are expected to be on time for school and all classes each day so lessons can begin promptly and unnecessary disruption to teaching and learning is avoided.***

This means:

- Arriving at school no later than 8:50 a.m. to allow sufficient time to prepare for the school day and get to Tutorial for 8:56 a.m. where registration will be taken.
- That you arrive at all classes on time and not delay on the way.
- If you arrive late to school in the morning, enter the school through the main entrance and sign in before attending class.
- Traffic will not be accepted as an excuse for regular lateness
- Students arriving late to class during the day will have their behaviour recorded on VShare by their teacher. Students that arrive late to classes on three or more occasions in a Term will;
  - Receive a lunchtime detention
  - Continued lateness will result in further sanction of school detention and/or in school suspension.
- Students who arrive late to school are expected to sign in at the main office before attending their first class.
  - Students arriving late for school on more than one occasion in the week, will be assigned a lunchtime detention for every day of lateness
  - Persistent lateness will have a note recorded on VShare, may be assigned an evening detention and or a meeting arranged with their parent/guardian.



#### **2.2.4. Contacting home during the school day**

As the school has a duty of care for its students during school time we have a responsibility and entitlement to know of their whereabouts during the school day, if it is required.

***Students must contact home through the main office, only.***

This means;

- If you need to contact home e.g. you are feeling unwell or left something at home you should;
  - Get a note from your Year Head/ Deputy Principal /Principal.
  - Go to reception with the note and reception will phone a parent/guardian.
  - If being collected, a parent/guardian (or another designated person over the age of 18, details of whom the parent must submit in writing to the school) **must** come to school to collect you and sign the Sign Out Book at reception.
  - Leaving school without permission and or being collected by a parent/guardian is a major breach of the Code of Behaviour.
- Making contact with home by other means (mobile phone or school tablet) is not permitted and will result in;
  - Lunchtime detention and an entry on VSware
  - Subsequent= further sanction

#### **Please note:**

As students are to contact home through the office only and contact by other means to home is not permitted, parents **must** use the school office number to contact their child during school hours.

#### **2.2.5. Use of Mobile Phone**

***Students are not permitted to use their mobile phone for any reason on the Portlaoise College campus because they are distracting to teaching and learning.***

This means;

- Mobile phones are to be switched off at all times, while in school and attending all school related activities including after school activities.
- If a student is observed using a mobile phone for any purpose during the school day;
  - They must hand over the phone to the teacher promptly and without argument. Refusal to hand over the phone will lead to an increased sanction.
  - Confiscated phones will be kept in the school office and must be collected by the parent/guardian from the Principal at the end of the school day.
  - An entry will be recorded on VSWare.
  - Students in breach of this rule two or more times may be recommended for detention/suspension and or have a meeting arranged with a parent.
- In cases where the mobile phone/recording device is used to breach the privacy of another student or teacher this will be treated as a major breach of the Code of Behaviour.

### **2.2.6. Bullying**

Bullying is ‘an unwanted negative behaviour, verbal, psychological or physical, behaviour by an individual or group against another person (or persons) and which is repeated over time’ (Anti Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post Primary Schools, 2013). There are many types of bullying, as are detailed in our Anti Bullying Policy.

***Bullying of any form is totally unacceptable and will not be tolerated at Portlaoise College.***

This means:

- As a student you are expected to show good manners, respect and kindness towards your peers always.
- If you are being bullied or if you suspect that one of your friends/classmates is being bullied, you or your parent/guardian can report this to any member of staff.
  - The staff member will inform a member of our Anti-bullying Team who will investigate the matter in accordance with procedures detailed in our Anti-Bullying Policy. Our Year Heads, Deputy Principals and Principal are all members of this team.
- As a student, you can also email [anitbullying@portlaoisecollege.ie](mailto:anitbullying@portlaoisecollege.ie) to report if you are being bullied or if you suspect a friend/classmate is being bullied.

### **2.2.7. Prohibited substances and items at Portlaoise College.**

***The school strictly forbids the possession, use and or supply of prohibited items and substances.***

Prohibited substances include energy drinks, chewing gum, aerosol sprays, cigarettes, e-cigarettes, illegal drugs, alcohol, solvent based substances or substitute products e.g. snus, any substance deemed illegal for use by persons under the age of 18.

Prohibited items include lasers and any weapon or item that could be mistake as a weapon.

This means;

- Students should not have any of these prohibited substances or items with them on the school premises or at any school related activities.
- Students should not use any of these prohibited substances or items on the school premises or at any school related activities.
- Students should not supply any of these prohibited substances or items to another student or students.
- A breach of this rule is seen as a major breach of the Code of Behaviour that may result in the sanction of the suspension or expulsion.

### 2.2.8. Uniform

***Students are expected to be in full uniform everyday.***

This means;

- Students must wear the school striped shirt/blouse, grey school jumper, grey straight leg school trousers or tartan half-length green skirt.
  - Black shoes must be worn with the school grey uniform.
  - Skirts should be worn at knee level with black knee length socks or black or skin tone tights.
- Students must wear only the prescribed school jacket.
- The PE uniform is only worn for sporting events that take place off-site and on the day a student has PE. The PE uniform consists of a plain navy tracksuit bottom, a blue round neck crested t-shirt and a navy and blue crested have zip top.
  - No jeggings or leggings are allowed.
- All students with long hair are encouraged to tie it back in all classes. Students may wear slides or hair clips and discrete hairbands to keep hair tidy. Excessive sized hair accessories are not permitted.
- Hair must not be shaven with patterns.
- Students must be clean shaven.
- No facial jewellery is allowed e.g. eyebrows, noes, lip etc are not permitted. Students can wear earrings.
  - Under Health and Safety students may be asked to take out their earrings for some school related activities and therefore are expected to comply.
- Excessive make up is not permitted (at discretion of Year Head/Deputy Principal or Principal).

#### **Please note:**

Students presenting to school who are not in full uniform will;

- On the first occasion have a note recorded on VSware and a text will be sent home, requesting that the issue be resolved for the next school day.
- On the second occasion and subsequent occasions will have a note recorded on VSware and a parent/guardian will be contacted to collect the student from school and resolve the issue before returning.

### 2.2.9. Use of Tablets

***Students are expected to use their tablet, its features and apps for educational purposes only.***

This means:

- Students are expected to have their tablet fully charged each day for the duration of the day as students use their device for their textbooks and to gain access to google classroom and present their work.
- Students are expected to use the tablet for school purposes only.

- The tablet device is subject to routine monitoring by teachers, administrators, and the technology staff.
- Portlaoise College will periodically monitor tablet device wireless activity.
- Portlaoise College reserves the right to confiscate and search a student's tablet to ensure compliance with the schools Acceptable Use Policy.

**Please note:**

- Students in breach of the Acceptable Use Policy will be subject to disciplinary action. This may include the confiscation of the tablet for a period of time e.g. until the end of term. In the event of confiscation, the completion of all classwork remains the responsibility of the student.

***2.2.10. School Toilets & Changing Rooms***

***When using toilet facilities, respectful and responsible behaviour is expected of students at all times. Students must respect that others have a right to privacy and cleanliness.***

This means:

- Use the toilet before school starts and at break times. At other times, students may use the facilities with the permission of a teacher.
- Only one student at a time may occupy a cubicle. A breach of this expectation is a major breach of the Code of Behaviour, it will result in a 3 day suspension from school.
- Follow the instruction of teachers assigned supervision of the toilet blocks
- Do not eat or drink in the cubicles or in the public areas of the toilet
- Keep the toilets clean and tidy
- Do not congregate in the toilets to socialise
- Immediately report damage or shortage of supplies to a member of staff
- Do not vandalise, damage or graffiti the toilets A breach of this expectation is a major breach of the Code of Behaviour.
- Do not use a mobile phone/recording device in the toilets or changing rooms. A breach of this expectation is a major breach of the Code of Behaviour.

***2.2.11. The school environment***

***Students are expected to respect the school's grounds, facilities and buildings at all times.  
Everyone benefits from a pleasant environment.***

This means:

- Place litter in the appropriate recycling and waste bins
- Do not throw food or beverages.
- Place chairs on the table at the end of the last class of the day
- Immediately report damage to a member of staff.

- Do not vandalise school property. A breach of this expectation is a serious breach of the Code of Behaviour. Students that damage or graffiti any school property will be expected to pay for the repair or replacement of the same

***Portlaoise College management will have the final say in determining what is or is not acceptable under the Code of Behaviour and the sanction to be assigned.***

### **2.3. Health and Safety Considerations**

Where the school Principal or Deputy Principal acting on behalf of the Principal, forms the considered opinion that the presence of a particular individual in the school environment poses a threat to the health and safety of students, staff or school visitors, the student involved will be excluded from school until the next Board of Management meeting, where the matter will be dealt with. This measure is expected to be exceptional. The measure is a recognition that the needs and rights of the majority is of paramount concern at Portlaoise College. When an exclusion occurs, the student's file will record that they were excluded on health and safety grounds, to protect and prevent harm to any and all members of the school community.

Neither Laois Offaly Education and Training Board (LOETB) nor any member of Portlaoise College staff will be held responsible for injury to any student when the injury is caused by a student's negligence or disregard for the school rules.

Neither Laois Offaly Education and Training Board (LOETB) nor any member of Portlaoise College staff accept responsibility for loss or damage to any article left in the school by students.

### **3.0 Roles and Responsibilities**

Portlaoise College believes that the successful education of all students in our care depends on an active and collaborative three-way partnership between students, parents/guardians and Portlaoise College and actively works at building and maintaining these relationships.

The roles and responsibilities detailed below describe how each member of the school community can contribute to the development of these relationships.

#### **3.1. Role of the Student**

Students are the primary focus of all activities in Portlaoise College. The 'student-as-learner' is at the centre of all curricular & extra-curricular activity.

- Students are expected to follow the rules outlined in Section 2.2 of this Code of Behaviour in order to help create a healthy, safe & happy environment in which everyone can learn & develop.
- Students have an obligation to uphold the good name of the school; they should not engage in any conduct that would bring the good name of Portlaoise College into disrepute.
- Students are expected to act with consideration for the rights & feelings of others.
- Students are expected to take individual responsibility for their own behaviour & learning, to listen respectfully to teachers and not to disrupt lessons.

### **3.2. Role of the Parent/Guardian**

It is crucial that to support our students in their education and life at school, parents and guardians:

- Ensure excellent attendance and punctuality.
- Arrange medical appointments outside of school time where possible.
- Ensure their child wears the correct uniform.
- Provide their child with the necessary equipment for classes.
- Create a home environment where their child can study.
- Check their child's journal every day.
- Contact the school with any concerns regarding their child's learning or well being
- Respond to all communications from the school.
- Attend student parent/guardian teacher meetings
- Be fully familiar with, accept and sign, the Code of Behaviour
- Cooperate with the implementation of the Code of Behaviour for the duration of their child's time at Portlaoise College
- Check their child's VSware record regularly
- Write a note of explanation in the school journal (or VSware) when the student
  - is late.
  - needs to leave school for an appointment.
  - is returning to school having been absent.
  - is missing an item of uniform.
  - could not complete homework.

### **3.3. Role of the Teacher**

It is crucial that to support our students in their education and life at school, teachers

- Actively work at building and maintain relationships with students and parents.
- Model expectations for behaviour and routines to create a safe and predictable learning environment that builds trust.
- Acknowledge and praise students for their behaviour and efforts.
- Make every effort to resolve behaviour issues within the classroom before formally recording negative behaviour on VSware.
- Take responsibility for the management of their classroom. They will maintain a positive learning environment in which all students can participate and achieve their potential.
- Take responsibility for the implementation of the Portlaoise College Code of Behaviour in the classroom, during extra-curricular activities, on corridors, at lunchtimes, on the campus and on trips/excursions.
- Follow the ladder of referral when dealing with or reporting incidents or breaches of the code of conduct.
- Be aware of the needs of students in their care.

### **3.4. Role of the Tutor**

The Class Tutor works to create a positive rapport with their tutor group. The tutor supports the Year Head and the Assistant Year Head in fostering a positive and orderly learning environment.

### **3.5. Role of Assistant Year Head**

The Assistant Year Head has responsibility for assisting the Year Head with their role.

### **3.6. Role of the Year Head**

The Year Head is responsible for the pastoral, behavioural and academic needs of their year group and is committed to fostering an environment in which all students are encouraged to reach their potential.

### **3.7. Role of the Deputy Principal**

The Deputy Principals are members of the school's management team and therefore support the Principal in the day to day management of the school.

### **3.8. Role of the Principal**

The role of the Principal is to ensure the fair and equitable implementation of the Code of Behaviour.

### **3.9. Role of the Board of Management**

The Board of Management has statutory responsibility for preparing (in consultation with principal, teachers, parents and students) a Code of Behaviour for the students registered at the school. The Board of Management makes the final decision regarding expulsion, and is responsible for overseeing the monitoring of the code of behaviour.

### **3.10. Role of Pastoral Care Team**

Pastoral Care is an integral part of the mission of Portlaoise College. All aspects of school life are informed by pastoral care. Our Pastoral Care Principles are informed by a Mission Statement that stresses the need to guide and nurture all of our students in a caring environment. In Portlaoise College, we facilitate the development of all members of our school community and we foster relationships based on respect so that each individual is valued in an atmosphere that is caring and positive.

At the centre of our pastoral framework are the pastoral roles, each of which contributes to the pastoral care nature of the school community. While every staff member has a pastoral dimension to his/her role we recognise that certain people fulfil key roles in this area. These include the Principal, the Deputy Principal, Year Heads, Class Teachers, the Home-School Community Liaison Coordinator, School Completion Team, the Care Team, Special Needs Assistants and the Guidance Counsellors.

### **3.11. Role of the Behaviour for Learning Teacher**

The 'Behaviour for Learning' teacher is responsible for the delivery of the Behaviour for Learning Programme in the school. It is primarily delivered to junior cycle year groups, with a focus placed on improving behaviour for learning. The programme involves planning, implementing, and evaluating effective responses to challenging behaviour at three different levels:

- Intensive individualised intervention (Level 3 support)
- Targeted support for some students (Level 2 support)
- Preventive strategies and early intervention approaches (Level 1 support)

The 'Behaviour for Learning Teacher' works with identified students individually or in groups to help them to succeed in school. The process involves targeting the social, emotional, behavioural, academic and well-being needs of the students.

### **3.12. Role of the Guidance Counsellor**

Guidance counsellors work within a continuum of support model (NEPS, 2010), and are part of a whole-school approach to supporting wellbeing in schools (NEPS, 2013). Implementing the continuum of support, the guidance counsellor provides for the educational, social, emotional and learning needs of all, some and a few students to ensure their continued wellbeing. Guidance counsellors are available to meet students and parents/guardians by appointment. A referral to the guidance counsellor can be made by any member of the school community formally and in writing.

## **4.0 Positive Behaviour Management**

Portlaoise College promotes desirable individual and collective behaviour by acknowledging, rewarding and celebrating all forms of pupil attainment. Portlaoise College recognises and affirms positive behaviour, effort and excellent work.

### **4.1 Rewarding Positive Behaviour**

Acknowledging & celebrating good behaviour and achievement includes:

- Verbal praise
- Written praise
- Acknowledging student achievements with displays of work in classrooms and around the school building
- Acknowledging student achievements on our official Facebook page and or in our annual Yearbook.
- Phone calls or text messages home from the Year Head, Deputy Principal or Principal.
- Letter home
- Exceptional work visit to Principal/Deputy Principal
- Awards
- Prizes
- School events that celebrate student achievement
- VSware Points

## **4.2 Awards at Portlaoise College**

### **4.2.1. Star Awards**

In each term, staff and students come together to acknowledge student achievement with star awards for attainment, community spirit and extracurricular achievement



#### ***4.2.2. Class Attendance Prize***

Fortnightly, the junior cycle class and the senior cycle class with the best overall attendance is acknowledged and rewarded. The winning classes are entered in a draw for a class day trip at the end of the school year.

#### ***4.2.3. Individual Attendance Awards***

These awards are given to students with excellent attendance as recorded on VS ware. Attendance is the first step to succeeding. We want to encourage a culture of full attendance and so rewarding students who have excellent attendance is very important.

#### ***4.2.4. Tutor Student of the Month***

Because it is important to recognise and affirm positive behaviour and excellent work of students on an ongoing basis, a 'student of the month' certificate is awarded in each tutor group based on performance, improved effort, community spirit, participation or behaviour.

#### ***4.2.5. Annual Awards***

At the end of each academic year the follow awards are presented;

- Junior Subject Awards
- Senior Subject Awards
- Work Experience Award
- NEART Awards
- Ethos Awards
- Extracurricular Awards
- Student of the Year award for each year group
- Exceptional Student of the Year Award.
- School Spirt Award
- Leadership Award
- Overall contribution to extracurricular award

#### ***4.2.6. Annual Scholarships and Bursaries***

Our scholarships and bursaries serve as a testament to our commitment to fostering academic excellence and ensuring equal access to education for all students, regardless of their circumstances. Through them we empower students to dream big and realise their full potential. Scholarships and bursaries offered to students include:

- Gaeltacht and Euro Languages Scholarships
- Entrance scholarships presented to incoming first students who achieve the highest marks in our annual scholarship assessment.
- Two 3<sup>rd</sup> Level bursaries presented to Leaving Certificate students annually by our Parents Council who fundraise for these bursaries.

#### ***4.2.7. Portlaoise College Evening of Excellence***

In the second last week of the summer term, the school community comes together - parents, teachers and students to celebrate student achievement:

- Students are presented with awards and have their photo taken.
- Students' achievements are featured in the yearbook and our Facebook page. They may also be published in local newspapers.

### 4.3 The Point System

The point system exists to acknowledge and encourage, on an ongoing basis, academic attainment, respect, hard work, commitment, enthusiasm, leadership qualities, sporting skills, artistic flair, musical talent or any other laudable quality a student demonstrates in the course of a school day.

Portlaoise College has high expectations for students, values them and understands that all students have positive attributes, can make a valuable contribution to the school community and want to do well. This is why all students are given 100 Points at the beginning of the school year. Throughout the year, students with few or no demerits will be invited to participate in special events and activities.

Teachers, tutors and Year Heads award points for positive behaviours and subtract points for negative behaviours.

A 100+ Award will be awarded to the students who can maintain or improve their points during the academic year.

| <b>Positive Point Descriptors</b>                      | <b>Value</b> |
|--|--------------|
| Good class test  | +2           |
| Co-operative with teacher/other students               | +2           |
| Example of positive leadership                         | +2           |
| Excellent homework or project                          | +2           |
| Excellent progress/positive attitude                   | +2           |
| Exemplar teamwork                                      | +2           |
| Good class work  | +2           |
| Good participation in class                            | +2           |
| STAR award winner                                      | +5           |
| Once off<br>*awarded after consultation with Year Head | +5           |

## **5.0 Responding to inappropriate behaviour**

It is the responsibility of our school to maintain a classroom and school environment which is supportive of the learning of every student in the school and which ensures continuity of instruction for them. We are constantly striving for excellent behaviour, but sometimes despite our best efforts, inappropriate behaviour occurs. Where a student's unacceptable behaviour impacts negatively on teaching and learning or has potentially a negative effect on the health and safety of other students, the school authorities must address the impact of this behaviour.

It is our policy that we will intervene early and positively when a student's behaviour is not in keeping with the expectations and rules set out in our Code of Behaviour. The school expects the support of students' parents and guardians when it has to respond to inappropriate behaviour. Some measures that can help prevent inappropriate behaviour taking place are outlined below.

### **5.1. Preventative measures**

- Emphasis on positive behaviour at school and at home.
- As a condition of enrolment students, parents/guardians are asked to read and sign the code of behaviour.
- At the beginning of the school year, the code of behaviour is explained to all students in their classroom
- Code of behaviour in each student's journal to be signed by parents/guardians and the student.
- Parents / guardians of new students are issued with a separate copy of the code.
- Our behaviour expectations relating to Respect, Responsibility and Readiness are displayed in every classroom and affirmed by class teachers and tutors at the start of each school year
- Tutors and Year Heads through Tutor time, Google Classroom and Assemblies regularly reiterate and remind students of the standards of behaviour expected of them.
- There is a culture of telling and openness in Portlaoise College, where issues occur in relation to bullying, harassment or other inappropriate behaviours. Students are encouraged to tell an adult with whom they feel comfortable.

### **5.2. Sanctions**

In dealing with misbehaviour, sanctions are sometimes necessary to discourage the same. The objective of a sanction is to help the student learn that; their behaviour is not acceptable or in keeping with the standards expected of them, they have choices about their behaviour and all choices have consequences and they must take responsibility for their actions and choices.

Every effort is made to ensure that the sanctions used are graded according to the seriousness of the misbehaviour and take account of individual circumstances. From time to time, it can emerge that the pupil causing difficulties in class, does so in response to significant problems outside the school. While this will be taken into consideration, the priority is that the behaviour of students should not impinge on the learning process of other students. See below the sanctions linked to each negative point descriptor on VShare.

**Table 1: Point descriptors and sanctions**

| Negative point descriptor                 | Use(s)  | Sanctions  |
|---|---|--|
| 0 student teacher meeting                 | First conversation with a teacher about a behaviour of concern  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Possible verbal warning</li> </ul>  |
| -1 Inappropriate behaviour                | Examples of its use; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Disrespectful behaviour towards a peer in the classroom</li> <li>Refusal to follow instruction</li> <li>Any disruption to the running of the class</li> <li>Any disruption that hinders others learning</li> </ul>  | Possible Sanctions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Additional homework</li> <li>Lunch time detention (supervised by class teacher)</li> <li>Instruction to move seat</li> <li>Assigned additional work/ worksheet</li> <li>Reflective essay</li> <li>Removal of privileges e.g. participation in a practical</li> </ul> |
| -1 Late to class                          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Student arrived late to class</li> </ul>   |  |
| -1 No homework/class materials            | Examples of use <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Homework not completed</li> <li>Homework not submitted on time or present in the classroom</li> <li>Tablet is not charged</li> <li>Materials required for class are not present e.g. ingredients for cooking, books, calculator</li> </ul>   |  |
| -1 Misuse of tablet/headphones/air pods   | Examples of use; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Being off task on the tablet</li> <li>Using the tablet without permission</li> <li>Wearing headphones or air pods in class without permission of the teacher.</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Removal of tablet, headphone or air pods for the duration of the class</li> </ul> Responsibility: TEACHER   |
| -2 Persistent lateness                    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Student has arrived late to a subject class on <b>three or more</b> occasions</li> <li>Student has arrived late to three or more classes in a term</li> <li>Student is regularly late for school</li> </ul>  | Possible Sanctions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Evening detention</li> <li>Placed on a red card to monitor targeted behaviour</li> <li>In-school suspension</li> </ul>   |
| -2 Persistent no homework/class materials | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Student has arrived to a subject on three or more occasions without materials/homework attempted</li> <li>Student has arrived to a number of subjects in a fortnight without homework/materials</li> <li>Student continues to arrive without h/w and materials despite previous intervention by class teacher/tutor</li> </ul> | Additional Supports; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Referral to Year Head/Assistant Year Head</li> <li>Referral to Care Team</li> <li>Contact with parent/guardian</li> </ul>  |
| -2 Persistent inappropriate behaviour     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Student has behaved inappropriately 3 or more times in one subject despite previous interventions</li> <li>Student has behaved inappropriately 3 or more times in a number of classes in a week/fortnight</li> <li>Student continues to behave inappropriately despite previous intervention by class teacher/tutor</li> </ul> | Responsibility: TUTOR  |
| -3 Uniform/PE gear violation              | Examples of use: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Student is not wearing the uniform as described in this Code of Behaviour</li> </ul>  | Sanctions; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Occasion 1: Text message to home asking the issue to be resolved for</li> </ul>  |

## Portlaoise College Code of Behaviour

|  |   |  |
|--|---|--|
|  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Student is wearing PE uniform on a day they do not have PE.</li> </ul>   | <p>the next school day</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Occasion 2, 3 etc: Parent/guardian will be asked to collect their child and only to return to school when the problem is resolved.</li> </ul> <p>Possible supports;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>HSCL intervention</li> </ul> <p>Responsibility: Year Head &amp; Tutor</p> |
| -3 Failure to follow contact home procedures   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Student makes contact with home by other means other than through the front office</li> </ul>  | <p>Sanction:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lunch time detention</li> </ul> <p>Responsibility: Year Head</p>   |
| -3 Use of the mobile phone                     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Using the phone for any purpose during the school day, including reading the time, making payments</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Occasion 1: Confiscation of the phone to the front office by the teacher.</li> <li>Occasion 2, 3 etc: Confiscation of the phone to the front office by the teacher, with detention/suspension, meeting with parent/guardian assigned by the Year Head</li> </ul> <p>Responsibility: Teacher &amp; Y. Head</p>       |
| -3 Significant Breach of the Code of Behaviour | <p>Examples of use;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Incident of misbehaviour over and above what is deemed inappropriate</li> <li>Absent from class without permission</li> <li>Damage to property</li> <li>Rough play</li> <li>Failure to complete a sanction assigned for a -2 or -1 entry</li> </ul>  | <p>Possible sanctions;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Evening detentions</li> <li>In-school suspensions</li> <li>Recovery of the cost of repair</li> <li>Removal of privileges e.g. attendance at extra-curricular activity or school trip</li> </ul> <p>Responsibility: Year Head</p>   |
| -5 Major breach of the code of behaviour       | <p>Examples of use;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Leaving school without prior approval from the Year Head and sign out by a parent/guardian</li> <li>Bullying or threatening another student or staff member</li> <li>Failure to complete a sanction assigned for a -3 entry</li> <li>Fighting</li> <li>Assault of any person of the school community</li> <li>Setting of the fire alarm</li> <li>Abusing a member of staff</li> <li>Use of mobile phone or tablet to record or capture images that breaches privacy</li> <li>Stealing or interfering with the property of another student, staff member or visitor to the school.</li> </ul> | <p>Possible sanctions;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>External suspension</li> <li>Recovery of the cost of repair</li> <li>Removal of privileges e.g. attendance at extra-curricular activity or school trip</li> </ul> <p>Responsibility: Year Head/ Deputy Principal/Principal</p>   |
|  | <p>Vaping/Smoking</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In possession of a vape/cigarettes</li> <li>Using a vape/cigarettes</li> <li>Sharing a vape/cigarette</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3 day suspension from school</li> </ul> <p>Responsibility: Year Head/ Deputy Principal/Principal</p>  |
|  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Multiple occupancy of a toilet cubicle</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3 day suspension from school</li> </ul> <p>Responsibility: Year Head/Deputy Principal/Principal</p>   |

### **5.2.1. Lunch time detention**

- Lunch time detention takes place Monday to Thursday from 13:15 - 13:45 in the school and is supervised by a member of staff. Lunch time detention can be assigned as a consequence of minor breaches of the Code of Behaviour including; arriving late to school and persistent inappropriate behaviour.
- Students are expected to attend lunch time detention on the day it is assigned, arrive punctually and complete any work assigned during this time. Students assigned a lunch time detention will be notified by their Tutor or Year Head or Deputy Principal.
- Failing to attend a scheduled lunch time detention is a breach of the code of behaviour that can result in the assignment of further lunchtime detentions or an evening detention.

### **5.2.2. Evening Detention**

- Evening detention is scheduled several evenings after school from 4:00 - 6:00 pm and or 1:15 to 3:00.
- Evening detention can be assigned because of persistent breaches of the code of behaviour, significant breaches of the code of behaviour and or other breaches of the code of behaviour as decided by the Tutor/Year Head/Deputy Principal/Principal.
- Students are expected to attend evening detention on the day it is assigned unless under exceptional circumstances and prior approval is sought and agreed with the Year Head. Parents/Guardians of a student assigned an evening detention will receive a text message from the school informing them of the same.
- Students are expected to arrive punctually to evening detention and complete any work assigned during this time. Students that fail to follow the rules of the school while attending detention may be assigned a further evening detention or in school suspension.
- Failing to attend a scheduled evening detention is a breach of the code of behaviour that can result in the assignment of further evening detentions or in school suspension.

### **5.2.3. In school suspension**

- In school suspension takes place weekly at Portlaoise College. When a student is placed on in school suspension, they are removed from the traditional classroom environment and put into a separate classroom, which is supervised by a staff member. For the duration of in school suspension, the student is expected to follow the rules of the school and complete all work or activities assigned to them.
- In school suspension is given to students for continued or significant or major breaches of the Code of Behaviour as outlined above and or decided by the Year Head/Deputy Principal/Principal.
- Parents/Guardians will be informed in writing of an in-school suspension.
- Failing to attend a scheduled in school suspension is a breach of the code of behaviour that can result in a recommendation for an external suspension from school.

#### **5.2.4. External Suspension**

- This is an extremely serious sanction. Its purpose is to make a statement to a student that their behaviour has placed them outside the school community as their behaviour has fallen below the standards expected of all students.
- It also allows time for the student to reflect on the impact of their behaviour on themselves and others and the choices that they made and could make in the future to ensure they meet the standards of behaviour expected of them.
- The procedures and grounds for suspension are outlined in Section 6 of this Code of Behaviour.

#### **5.2.5. Final Exclusion/Expulsion**

A student is expelled from Portlaoise College when the Board of Management makes the decision to permanently terminate the student's attendance at the school. A student that is expelled from Portlaoise College cannot apply to enrol in the school in the future. The procedures and grounds for expulsion are outlined in Section 7 of our Code of Behaviour.

### **5.3. Dealing with inappropriate behaviour**

As part of the whole school approach Portlaoise College has an agreed ladder of intervention in response to inappropriate behaviour. Primarily, the teacher manages behaviour at classroom level. However, the more serious the breach of behaviour is, the higher up the ladder it is dealt with. The ladder of intervention also sets down the possible sanctions applicable to all students in Portlaoise College during the school year. Parents/Guardians and students are requested to study it carefully. See in Table 2 the different levels in the operation of our ladder of intervention.

#### **Please note:**

The Principal, the Deputy Principals, or a Year Head may choose to intervene at any stage of the discipline process when this is deemed to be necessary or helpful.

In cases where serious misbehaviour has occurred some of the stages may be omitted. Suspension, expulsion or other sanctions at the discretion of management may be considered as a first option.

Examples of serious misbehaviour include;

- When the authority of a teacher or the school is seriously challenged
- If the school has been brought into disrepute
- If normal civil law has been breached while in school
- Bringing drugs, illegal substances, alcohol, aerosol sprays or dangerous weapons into school for use and or selling or distributing the same any time when school rules apply.
- Serious physical or verbal assault, sexual assault of any member of the school community
- Wilful and serious damage to the school property
- 

**This list is not exhaustive.**

**Table 2: Ladder of Intervention**

| Level | Who              | Action  |
|-------|------------------|---|
| 1     | Teacher          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>First offence:</b> Teacher meets with student and records discussion as a student teacher meeting on VShare.</li> <li>● <b>Second offence:</b> Recorded using a -1 descriptor AND sanction assigned by the teacher.</li> <li>● <b>Persistent misbehaviour (3 or more times):</b> Recorded using a -2 point descriptor, REFERRED to Tutor</li> <li>● <b>Significant incident of misbehaviour:</b> Recorded using a -3 descriptor, REFERRED to Year Head</li> </ul>   |
| 2     | Tutor            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Referral 1 &amp; 2 for the same issue:</b> Meet with the student/consults with the Year Head/assigns a lunch time/evening detention/records detention on VShare /updates Year Head on progress.</li> <li>● <b>Referral 3 3rd -2 entry for the same issue:</b> REFERRED to Year Head by the Tutor</li> <li>● Monitor and recommend a sanction and or intervention for all students in their Tutor group in receipt of 3 -1 descriptors for the same issue in several classes in a fortnight period.</li> </ul>   |
| 3     | Year Head        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Referral from a Tutor relating to any -2 entry:</b> Meet with student/liase with Tutor/call or meet with parents/possible referral to Pastoral Care Team/ direct to Assistant Year Head/ issue a sanction</li> <li>● <b>Referral for any -3 entry:</b> conduct investigation/call or meet with parents/possible referral to Pastoral Care Team/issue a sanction</li> <li>● <b>Referral for any -5 entry:</b> conduct investigation/call or meet with parents/ consult with management, if necessary, refer to DP to oversee investigation/ possible referral to Pastoral Care Team/ issue a sanction/ monitor progress post suspension using a red card for two weeks.</li> <li>● <b>After intervention and serving 3 external suspensions for the same breach of the Code of Behaviour or breaking a contract of behaviour, the Year Head will in consultation with the Deputy Principal decide on further sanctions and interventions that may be appropriate.</b></li> </ul> |
| 4     | Deputy Principal | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Meet the student, parent/guardians with the Year Head, discuss further sanctions and interventions including a contract of behaviour, referral to the Care Team or external agencies and external suspension.</li> <li>● <b>If after intervention and a number of external suspensions a student's behaviour continues to be a significant disruption to teaching and learning/ breaks a contract of behaviour a referral to the Principal will be made.</b></li> </ul>  |
| 5     | Principal (DLP)  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● In consultation with the Year Head review the student's behaviour record to date, meet with the parent/guardian and student.</li> <li>● Recommendation for further sanctions and interventions up to an including a recommendation of expulsion to the BOM</li> </ul>  |



## **6.0. Suspension Procedures**

In formulating the suspension procedures for Portlaoise College, the NEWB Guidelines were consulted and guidance given under sections 10.3 and 10.4 were adhered to.

### **6.1. Authority to suspend**

The Principal and the Board of Management of Portlaoise College have the legal authority to suspend a student. The Principal has written authority from the Board of Management to suspend a student for up to five days without immediate reference to the Board.

### **6.2. Grounds for suspension**

The decision to suspend a student requires serious grounds such as;

- The student's behaviour has had a serious disruptive or detrimental effect on the education of other students
- The student's continued presence in the school at this time constitutes a threat to safety of others
- The school has exhausted the process outlined above in relation to a student's behaviour and application in class.
- The student is responsible for serious damage to property.

A single incident of serious misconduct may also be grounds for suspension.

At Portlaoise College incidents of serious misconduct that result in an automatic recommendation to suspend are outlined below. They are recorded as a -5 entry (major breach of the Code of Behaviour) on a student's VSware behaviour record.

- Bullying or threatening another student
- Abuse of a member of staff
- Assault of any kind on any person in the school community
- Smoking or vaping
- Stealing from or interfering with the property of another student, member of staff or the school.
- Leaving school without permission from both a parent/guardian and a Year Head/Deputy Principal or Principal.
- Bringing vapes, drugs, illegal substances, aerosol sprays or dangerous weapons into the school for use or distribution or sale.
- Reasonably suspected of being under the influence of drugs, alcohol, un-prescribed drugs or illegal substances.
- Causing deliberate damage to school property.
- Refusal to hand up a mobile phone.
- Use of a mobile phone or recording device to;
  - take inappropriate images and/or put on social media platforms
  - compromise the dignity and privacy of others.

### **6.3. Suspension Procedures**

At Portlaoise College, the procedures followed when investigating a serious incident of misbehaviour that may lead to suspension and the decision-making process follow the principles of fair procedure, that is, the right to be heard and the right to impartiality.

In keeping with a student's right to be heard, before making a decision to proceed with a suspension the following steps will be adhered to:

- 1) The student will be informed of the complaint, how it will be investigated and that they may be suspended.
- 2) The parent/guardian will be informed by phone call or at a meeting of the complaint, how it will be investigated and that they may be suspended.
- 3) An investigation will then commence.
  - The investigation will be conducted by the Year Head, Deputy Principal or Principal.
  - As part of the investigation the student will be interviewed about the incident and their responses to the allegation noted. Other members of the school community e.g. staff, other students may also be interviewed.
- 4) The student and their parent(s)/guardian(s) will be given the opportunity to respond before a final decision to suspend will be made.
- 5) Final decision to suspend will be made and decision informed to the student and parent/guardian in writing.

### **6.4. Notification of suspension**

A letter of suspension from the Principal will be sent to the parent(s)/guardian(s) stating the following;

- the period of the suspension and the dates on which the suspension will begin and end
- the reasons for the suspension
- any study programme that may need to be followed
- the arrangements for returning to school, including any commitments to be entered into by the student and the parent(s)/guardian(s)

### **6.5. Immediate suspension**

In exceptional circumstances, the Principal may determine that an immediate suspension from school is necessary, particularly where the continued presence of the student in the school at the time would represent a serious threat to the safety of the student, other students or staff of the school, or a visitor to the school.

In the case of immediate suspension, parent(s)/guardian(s) will be notified and arrangements made with them for the collection of the student. The decision for an immediate suspension will be based on the preliminary investigation conducted by school management, with the formal investigation commencing immediately after the imposition of the suspension.

## **6.6. Failure to comply with a notified suspension**

A student and parent(s)/guardian(s) who fail to comply with a notified suspension is a further breach of the schools Code of Behaviour.

## **6.7. Right to appeal**

All suspensions of more than 5 days' duration may be appealed by the student themselves (if over 18) or the student's parents/guardians, by writing a letter to that effect to the Secretary of the Board of Management. The Board may invite the student and their parents/guardians to a meeting to consider the matter.

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 eighteen years, may appeal the suspension under section 29 of the Education Act 1998, as amended by the Education (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2007.

## **6.8. After suspension**

On return from suspension, the student will meet with their Year Head or member of the Care Team to support them with their return to school.

The student will be expected to apply themselves diligently to their work and to follow the Code of Behaviour. A student may be asked to sign a behavioural contract on return from suspension or be provided with a red card to monitor progress following their return.

## **7.0. Expulsion Procedures**

In formulating the expulsion procedures for Portlaoise College, the NEWB Guidelines are fully adopted and adhered to as well as guidance relating to fair procedures outlined in Section 10.3 and 10.4.

### **7.1. Authority to Expel**

Only the Board of Management of Portlaoise College have the authority to expel a student.

Where the Principal considers that a pupil should be excluded from school, the matter will be referred to the Board of Management for decision.

### **7.2. Grounds for expulsion**

A student can be recommended for expulsion and, on foot of a Board of Management decision, excluded permanently from the school, in the following circumstances:

- Where there is an ongoing refusal by a student to abide by the regulations of the school and the Principal, in consultation with the Board of Management, has, in his/her considered judgement, exhausted all reasonable options.
- The student's continued presence in the school constitutes a real and significant threat to safety.

- Bringing drugs, illegal substances including Vapes, alcohol, aerosol sprays or dangerous weapons into the school for use, sale or distribution of the same at any time when school rules apply.
- Serious physical, verbal or sexual assault or the threat thereof of any member of the school community.
- Wilful and serious damage to the school property.
- Breaking the law of the land while in school.

**This list is not exhaustive.**

There may be exceptional circumstances where the Board of Management forms the opinion that a student should be expelled for a first offence, at Portlaoise College these circumstances include:

- The actions of a student in whatever manner brings the name of the school or the reputation of the school into disrepute
- A serious threat of violence against another student or member of staff.
- Actual violence or physical assault
- Supplying illegal drugs to another student in the school
- Sexual assault

### **7.3. Procedures for Expulsion**

Where a preliminary assessment of the facts confirms serious misbehaviour that could warrant expulsion, the procedural steps will include:

1. A detailed investigation will be carried out under the direction of the Principal.
2. Where the Principal forms the opinion, based on the investigation that a recommendation for expulsion may be warranted, the Principal makes a recommendation to the Board of Management to consider expulsion.
3. Where the Principal forms a view, based on the investigation of the alleged misbehaviour, that expulsion may be warranted, the Principal will make a recommendation to the Board of Management to consider expulsion.
4. The Board of Management will consider the Principal's recommendation of expulsion and will arrange a hearing at which the student with their parents/guardians may put forward their case.
5. After the hearing, the Board of Management will deliberate in private in the absence of the Principal, the student and their parents/guardians.
6. The Board of Management will then;
  - Inform the parents/guardians of the student in writing of their decision and the next steps.
  - As required by law, notify the Educational Welfare Officer (EWO) if the Board does decide to expel, in writing of its opinion and the reasons for this opinion. The expulsion cannot take effect for twenty school days from the date the EWO receives the notification.
  - The Board may take steps to ensure that good order is maintained and the safety of students is secured in the school during the twenty-day period.
7. The EWO engages in consultations with all parties.
8. If after the twenty-day period of notification to the EWO has elapsed, the Board remains of the view that the student should be expelled, the Board will formally confirm the decision. Parents/guardians will be notified immediately, and told of their right of appeal and provided with the standard form on which to lodge an appeal.

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

These procedures are in accordance with TUSLA guidelines available at:  
[http://www.tusla.ie/uploads/content/guidelines\\_school\\_codes\\_eng.pdf](http://www.tusla.ie/uploads/content/guidelines_school_codes_eng.pdf)

**Please note:**

A student that has been expelled from Portlaoise College is not eligible for enrolment in the school in the future.

**7.4. Right to Appeal**

A parent/guardian or a student aged over eighteen years, may appeal a decision to expel to the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Science (Education Act 1998 section 29).

Further details about the appeal process, including documentation, is available on the DES website.

**8.0. Conclusion**

This Code of Behaviour should enable teachers to teach and students to learn in a structured, orderly environment. It will be subject to on-going review in light of the changing environment the school may find itself in. The school reserves the right to modify this Code of Behaviour at short notice. Any change(s) made will be communicated to parents, guardians and students as soon as is realistically possible after the change(s) is made.

I have read the Code of Behaviour policy for Portlaoise College and I agree to abide by it.

**Signed:** \_\_\_\_\_  
*Student*

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Parent/Guardian*

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

***The Policy is available on the school website and in the homework journal.***