

Coachford College

Discipline Policy

Scope

This policy applies to Students of Coachford College and relates to all school activities, including those taking place outside school hours. The Policy was drawn up in consultation with all the school partners, constituting Students, Parents, Staff and Board of Management.

This Policy has been developed in line with our school ethos and mission statement, which has at its core, care of the Student. The school strives to provide a safe and secure learning environment for the development of our Students. Our Discipline Policy is based on respect for oneself, for others, and for our environment, so that a positive and co-operative school atmosphere prevails and each Student can reach their potential.

Rationale

Many people work together in our school and therefore a high level of courtesy and consideration is necessary. Behaviour, which is ill mannered, annoying, dangerous or disruptive cannot be allowed or tolerated. Our policy is one which is based on the recognition of the student as an individual, and yet creates an environment in which the welfare of all is protected.

Aims/Objectives

Coachford College is an educational community which seeks to provide a pleasant learning experience for its Students and a caring, safe and secure environment for all its members – Staff, Students and Parents. Central to this is recognition of each person's human dignity through practising respect for ourselves and others.

Roles and Responsibilities

Our school acknowledges the contribution of all members of the school community. Each member has responsibility for the promotion of good behaviour and a role in dealing with and minimizing negative behaviour.

(a) Students

The school expects that Students will adhere to the school's Discipline Policy at all times. This is a vital life lesson in co-operating and adhering to a developed set of guidelines in School and ultimately other situations in later life.

(b) Parents & Guardians

The school acknowledges the role of Parents in the development and operation of the code of behaviour and expects them to support the code and encourage the Students to uphold it.

(c) Teachers

The school acknowledges the role of teachers in the development and operation of the Discipline Policy. The school recognizes that a teacher's main focus is in the area of teaching and learning, but that they also have a pivotal role to play in behaviour management. This pivotal role forms a core element of this Policy. Teachers have been assigned to each class and year group with special responsibility for implementing this Policy. Class Teachers, Tutors, Year Heads, Guidance Counsellor, Chaplain, Deputy Principal and Principal all have roles to play in upholding this Policy.

(d) Other staff

The school acknowledges the contribution of ancillary staff in the day to day running of the school. They too have a part to play in the successful operation of our Discipline Policy. In particular, they have a responsibility to report incidents of misbehaviour and examples of positive behaviour they witness.

(e) Board of Management

The Board of Management is the decision-making body of the school. The school acknowledges its role in the development and operation of our Discipline Policy. All policies are developed under the authority of the Board of Management and must be approved by its members before becoming official school policy.

Content

(a) Rules

The school expects that the Student will adhere to the following rules:

1. **Respect**

Students must show respect for themselves, the staff, other students and the general public at all times.

2. **Authority**

Students must respect the authority of the teacher at all times in the school environs and during out-of-school activities.

3. **Property**

Students must respect school property and the property of others.

4. **Uniform**

Students' uniforms must be as per the Coachford College Uniform Guidelines as issued by the School Office and are available on the school website www.coachfordcollege.ie. These guidelines will be updated annually and changes will be communicated to all partners.

5. **Punctuality & Attendance**

Students must attend on all school days and be punctual. Students must observe current school practice in respect of absences, late arrival and early departure. **Students must abide by the Schools attendance policy.**

- A note must be presented from Parent/Guardian the day after a student is absent, outlining the reason for absence.
- On arrival on school grounds, students must proceed directly to the school building. The following are the only areas that students may congregate before 9.00 am and at morning break:
 - The school building
 - The courtyard
 - The tarmac area in front of the B corridor
- Students travelling on Special School Buses must arrive in school and leave school on their designated school bus. They do not have permission to leave the grounds at any time. Students may only travel on the Special School Bus for which they have a pass.
- Students who arrive late must have a note from parent/guardian, sign in at reception, and present a "late slip" to their teacher. Failure to present a note when signing in will result in a sanction being imposed.

- Students who leave school early must present a note from their Parent/Guardian to the Deputy Principal or Principal, and sign the relevant book at reception.

6. Movement between classes

Students are expected to move to class in a purposeful and orderly manner, and at the *first* bell when relevant.

7. Class Work

Students must co-operate fully in class, have all necessary materials and must complete the work assigned to them. Students must keep journals in a presentable condition in all classes. All Homework and notes are to be written into the Journal. The Journal can be inspected at any time. **Students and Parents should read the school's Homework Policy.**

8. Out of Bounds

Students are expected to remain within areas assigned as inbounds by the school authorities. See Designated out of Bounds Areas which is available from the Student's Tutor and the School Office.

9. Health & Safety

Students must avoid engaging in any activity which poses a Health and Safety risk to themselves and/or others.

10. Banned Items

Banned items, as defined by the school authorities, are not allowed. Sanctions are imposed for Students found with Banned Items. Up to Date lists of Banned Items are available from the School and any changes are conveyed to the Student through their Tutor and Year Head.

11. Mobile Phones

Mobile Phones must be switched off and stored away for the full duration of the school day including Break times. This is to ensure minimal distractions whilst also counteracting possibilities of cyber bullying. Any Student found with a mobile phone will have the phone and sim card confiscated and returned to the Student after 7 calendar days. Further sanctions may be imposed if it is a repeat offence or if a discipline matter accompanied the confiscation.

12. Lunch Time Activities

Students are generally allowed on the grass areas during lunch time only for the purposes of playing non-contact sports. If Student's are not engaging in such activities they must not be on the grass area and can use the tarmac areas in front of the school or remain indoors for the duration of lunch.

At certain times of the year, the grass areas will be unusable due to rainfall or muddy conditions following rainfall. In the interests of Student Safety coupled with cleanliness of uniform and the school, School Management or Supervisors

may deem it necessary to make the Grass Area out of bounds for particular periods. Students must obey these instructions and remain on the tarmac areas or if inclement conditions persist, to remain indoors.

13. Student Parking

Students are permitted to park on School grounds if they have agreed to the Parking Rules, filled out the appropriate form and returned the completed form to their Year Head. Failure to comply with the Parking Rules may result in a disciplinary sanction and withdrawal of privilege of onsite parking either temporarily or permanently.

(b) Preventative Measures

In keeping with the school ethos, every effort is made to provide a secure and caring environment for all. Students are welcome to discuss issues of concern to them with members of the Pastoral Care team.

(c) Rewards

In our school the following methods are used to reward Students for good behaviour:

1. Verbal praise to student either in class or privately.
2. Positive comment to class Tutor/Year Head.
3. Communication with parents/guardians via homework journal, phone-call, letter, parent/teacher meetings, etc.
4. Occasional homework concession.
5. Display of students' work.
6. Student of the Year/Endeavour awards, etc.

(d) Sanctions

The following sanctions are used so that our Students understand the consequences of misbehaviour. They are intended to take account of the nature of the incident and the situation leading up to the incident.

(i) Classroom Sanctions:

- 1) Verbal reprimand.
- 2) Note to parents/guardians in journal.
- 3) Phone-call to parents.
- 4) Educationally directed extra work.
- 5) Teacher detention

- 6) Withdrawal of classroom privileges in practical subjects.
- 7) Withdrawal of lunchtime privileges.
- 8) Withdrawal from extra/co-curricular activities.
- 9) Placement on a Homework/Classwork card.
- 10) Placement on a Probation card.
- 11) Other measures which the teacher deems appropriate.
- 12) Referral to Year Head/Deputy Principal/Principal.

(ii) Sanctions following Referral:

- 1) Verbal reprimand.
- 2) Note to parents/guardians in Journal.
- 3) Phone-call to parents.
- 4) Educationally directed extra work.
- 5) Withdrawal of classroom privileges in practical subjects.
- 6) Withdrawal of lunchtime privileges.
- 7) Withdrawal from extra/co-curricular activities.
- 8) Placement on a Probation card.
- 9) Year Head detention.
- 10) Placement on Attendance card or an Interim Review card.
- 11) Referral to Disciplinary Committee.
- 12) Placement on a Disciplinary Committee Card.
- 13) Referral to Deputy Principal/Principal.
- 14) Suspension.
- 15) Probationary period.
- 16) Expulsion.
- 17) Other measures which Year Head/ Deputy Principal/Principal/Disciplinary Committee may deem appropriate.

(e) Structure of Discipline

There is a structure of referral in Coachford College which deals with items of misbehaviour:

- Class Teacher
- Tutor
- Year Head
- Disciplinary Committee (consisting of Deputy Principal, Year Head and Teacher)
- Principal & Deputy Principal
- Board of Management

(f) Interventions:

The Pastoral Care structure facilitates early intervention, and therefore has a fundamental role in preventing unacceptable behaviour. Students may be referred to any member of the Pastoral Care Team to discuss underlying reasons for their behaviour.

(g) Record-Keeping:

Records of acts of indiscipline will be kept by Year Heads and/or Deputy Principal.

(h) Appeals:

The principles of Natural Justice demand that there should be a right to appeal to a higher authority. The practicalities of school life mean that having a formal appeal to the Board of Management on short suspensions imposed by the Principal may be inappropriate, very time-consuming, and render the suspension meaningless.

It may also be appropriate to formalise a meeting before the suspension is actually imposed, perhaps comprising of the Principal, Deputy Principal, Guidance Counsellor and the Parents, in an attempt to resolve matters and/or to explain the reasons for the long suspension.

An appeal may be made to the Board of Management in the case of

- (a) a suspension of six or more consecutive days;
- (b) a suspension which brings the cumulative suspension to twenty or more days.

The school may insist that the student remain at home while any appeal on a suspension is in process.

It is possible that suspension may already be served before the appeal is actually heard. If the appeal is successful, the only remedy may then be to have the suspension removed from the Student's file/record.

All appeals should be heard as soon as is practically possible.

Success Criteria/Monitoring

This policy was drawn up in consultation with the parents, students, staff and management of our school and was ratified by the Board of Management. It will be reviewed in one year after its implementation.

Any amendments which need to be made will be in keeping with the general philosophy of our code of behaviour and will be communicated to all members of the school community.

A major review of the Policy will be carried no later than five years after the date of implementation.

Timeframe

The initial development of this Policy was begun in January 2004, and the resulting Discipline Policy was piloted in the school year 2005/06. This version was reviewed during the school year 2010/2011.

Implementation

As the official code of discipline of Coachford College, all registered Students of the school will be given access to a copy of this Policy, and parents/guardians will be required to sign an agreement that they will uphold it and that their Child will abide by it. This occurs in September each year.

The Policy is also available from the school on request and on our website www.coachfordcollege.ie

Amendments to the Policy will be communicated to the stakeholders.