

# **Errigal College**

# **Code of Behaviour**

**Updated/Reviewed/Approved 2012**

## **Introduction**

The Code of Behaviour helps the school community to promote the school ethos, relationships, policies, procedures and practices that encourage good behaviour and prevent unacceptable behaviour. The Code of behaviour helps teachers, other members of staff, students and parents to work together for a happy, effective and safe school. Code is based on NEWB Developing a Code of Behaviour: Guidelines for Schools.

The Code expresses the vision, mission and values of the school. It translates the expectations of staff, parents and students into practical arrangements that will help to ensure continuity of instruction to all students. It helps to foster an orderly, harmonious school where high standards of behaviour are expected and supported.

The Code of Behaviour of Errigal College is determined by the Board of Management in collaboration with staff, students and parents in the context of the school's Mission Statement. Errigal College has a Policy on Child Protection Welfare.

## **Mission Statement**

To enable each student to achieve his/her potential, in partnership with parents, guardians and staff, based on the principles of caring, dignity, mutual respect and equality.

## **Scope of the Code of Behaviour**

The standards of good behaviour in this code will apply to students when they are on school grounds, participating in a school activity off school grounds, (including all school trips) and under the supervision of school staff or representing the school at any time.

## **Promoting Good Behaviour**

Errigal College acknowledges positive contributions and rewards good standards of behaviour.

Good relationships, positive communication and mutual respect are expected between all staff and students.

Students are rewarded in the following ways:

- Personal word of praise.
- Written affirmation in student diary to parents/guardians.
- Displays of student work.
- Individual teachers will draw up their own reward system.
- An annual prize giving ceremony is held each school year. The talents, achievements and efforts of our students across all aspects of school life are acknowledged and rewarded.

## **Bullying and Harassment**

An Anti-Bullying and Anti-Racist Charter exists in Errigal College and is on display in all classrooms. (Please see Appendix 1) Discrimination on any grounds including the following gender, age, disability, race, sexual orientation, religion or membership of ethnic minority group will not be tolerated.

## **Restorative Justice**

Restorative approaches concentrate on restoring or repairing relationships when infringements of the Code of Behaviour occur. This approach encourages everyone to take responsibility for their actions. It involves listening to the views, moving on and restoring the relationship. Restorative Justice supports and strengthens our Code of Behaviour.

## **The Roles and Responsibilities of all Partners in the School Community in relation to Behaviour**

School management and staff shall actively foster a school ethos, policies and practices that help to promote positive behaviour.

Teachers and other school staff need a range of strategies for promoting good behaviour at class and school level. There shall be consistency across the teaching team as to how best to promote good behaviour.

### **Role of the Subject Teacher**

Positive Strategies include:

- Displaying classroom rules and teaching them to students.
- Having a seating plan in each classroom.
- Modelling behaviour that is expected of students.
- Having consistent class routines.
- Recognising and giving positive feedback on behaviour and effort.
- Insisting that homework is recorded in student diary.

Subject teachers may refer a student to the Form Teacher in the case of having exhausted positive strategies. This referral takes the form of a written referral form.

### **Student Responsibilities**

- Students are expected to maximise attendance in order to succeed in school.
- Attendance at school is a legal requirement in accordance with the Education (Welfare) Act 2000.
- All students are obliged to have a student diary in class at all times in which homework, class work, teacher and parent comments are recorded.
- All homework shall be completed to the best of a student's ability.
- School uniform is to be worn at all times and on school outings as required. School uniform consists of:  
**Boys:** grey trousers, grey shirt, royal blue crewneck jumper with the school crest and plain black shoes.

**Girls:** grey skirt/trousers/ grey blouse, royal blue crewneck jumper with the school crest, plain black tights/socks and plain black shoes and school jacket.

- No scarves, hats/gloves to be worn in the school building.
- Students shall follow teacher's instructions, thereby enabling all students to receive tuition without unnecessary interruptions.
- Students shall refrain from using abusive language towards any person.
- Students may not engage in fighting either in or outside school ground or encourage others to do so.
- **Mobile Phones:** See Rule in Appendix 2
- Smoking is prohibited, by law, on school grounds.
- Chewing gum is not allowed on school premises.
- Students shall not engage in vandalism or stealing.
- Students shall not be in possession of illegal drugs, alcohol, weapons, hazardous materials, knives, catapults, laser pens, fireworks or bangers.
- Students shall not interfere with members of the public or their property.
- Students must comply with health and safety standards at all times and when travelling to and from school, including wearing seat belts.

### **Form Teacher**

The role of the Form Teacher is primarily a pastoral one. In order to monitor progress, behaviour and effort, a Form Teacher may provide a student with a Daily Report Form. The Form Teacher will work closely with subject teachers, Pastoral Care Team and Year Head. The Form Teacher will ensure that student diaries are signed on a weekly basis by parent/guardian and Form Teacher. The Form Teacher may refer a student to the relevant Year Head, when breaches of discipline occur.

### **Year Head**

The role of the Year Head is to monitor progress, communicate with subject teachers, Form Teachers, Deputy Principal and Principal and decide on appropriate sanctions in cases of more serious or repeated breaches of discipline. He/she will contact home if and when the need arises. The Year Head will meet with a student on return from suspension. An apology will be given to the relevant party, thus restoring good relations. (see Appendix 3)

### **Principal & Deputy Principal**

In the event if a serious breach of discipline a student may be suspended from school. The decision to suspend a student requires serious grounds such as:

- The student's behaviour has had a seriously detrimental effect on the education of other students.
- The student's continued presence in the school at that time constitutes a threat to safety.
- The student consistently shows a lack of respect for the Code of Behaviour.
- A single incident of serious misconduct may be grounds for suspension.

### **Parental Responsibilities**

Parents play a vital role in promoting good behaviour in school and so effective home-school liaison is very important. It is very useful for the home to provide the school with any relevant information which may affect the behaviour of their child. By enrolling children in Errigal College, parents and guardians accept agreement with the aims, ethos and policies of the school. Parents are asked to sign students diary weekly.

## **Immediate Suspension**

In exceptional circumstances the Principal\* may consider an immediate suspension to be necessary where the continued presence of the students in the school at that time would represent a serious threat to the safety of students or staff of the school, or any other person. Fair procedures shall still be applied in all circumstances.

\*The BOM has devolved to the Principal the authority to suspend for up to 3 days and up to 5 days for more serious breaches.

## **Fair Procedures based on the Principles of Natural Justice**

Schools are required by law to follow fair procedures when proposing to suspend or exclude a student. The requirement for fair procedures derives from the Constitution of Ireland, International Conventions and case law.

Fair procedures have two essential parts:

1. The right to be heard.
2. The right to impartiality.

All parties will be kept fully informed by the Principal in writing.

## **'Automatic' Suspension**

In Errigal College the following behaviours warrant 'automatic' suspension:

- Initiating a fight.
- Abusive language.
- Being in possession of illegal drugs or alcohol.
- Bullying and Racism.

The BOM of Errigal College will offer an opportunity to appeal a Principal's decision to suspend a student if the proposed suspension exceeds 5 days.

## **Section 29 Appeal**

Where the total number of days for which the student has been suspended in the current school year reaches 20 days, the parents, or a student aged over eighteen years, may appeal the suspension under Section 20 of the Education Act 1998, as amended by the Education (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2007.

The Principal is required to report suspensions in accordance with the NEWB reporting guidelines (Education (Welfare) Act, 2000, Section 21 (4) (a)).

## **Exclusion of a Student**

The permanent exclusion of a student is made by the BOM in extreme cases of unacceptable behaviour.

## **Support Systems**

Good communication between all partners is the most important support system in dealing with Code of Behaviour issues.

The Pastoral Care System provides support for students. The following supports are available at Errigal College:

- Daily class group meetings for registration with Form Teacher.
- Frequent and on going contact with Year Head.
- Regular meetings of the Pastoral Care Team. (Head of Pastoral Care, Positive Behaviour Liaison Teacher, Home School Liaison Teacher, School Completion Co coordinator, Guidance Counsellor and Year Head as required. )

When the need arises some or all of the following supports are available to be accessed by students:

- Contact when required with Guidance Counsellor.
- Availability of the Care Team.
- Availability of the services of an outside counsellor.
- Availability of HSCL and SCP personnel and resources.
- Students may avail of the Student Council mechanism.



## **Other Agencies**

Errigal College will liaise with and use such services as:

- National Educational Welfare Board.
- NEPS
- HSE
- Visiting Teacher Service
- Local services such as The Pastoral Centre, Teen Between, Daybreak
- Other services which are deemed appropriate

## **Procedures for dealing with Absenteeism**

Parents are encouraged to support their children in arriving at school, on time, every day and to refrain from leaving school to attend appointments unless it is absolutely unavoidable.

An absence note, included in student diary, should be completed by parent/guardian when a student is unable to attend school. The School Completion Programme Tracker Secretary will contact home by telephone when an unexplained absence occurs. Letters are sent home by the School Attendance Co coordinator when there are repeated unexplained absences and parents are invited in to the school to discuss this. A text messaging service may be used to alert parents of an unexplained absence.

The Education Welfare Officer (EWO) liaises with the Principal in relation to absences and contact will be made with the family when absences exceed 20 days. Court proceedings may follow.

## **Reviewing the Policy**

All school policies are working documents which may need to be altered due to changes in law etc. This policy will be formally reviewed every two years and in line with best practice.

Approved by BOM: March 2012

## Appendix I

### **Anti-Bullying Charter (Student)**

### **Anti-Racism Charter (Student)**

- **Every student has the right not to be bullied**
- **Students should not feel guilty or embarrassed about seeking help or reporting incidents of bullying.**

**Errigal College promotes positive habits of self-respect, self-discipline and responsibility among its students.**

**Our school should be a safe place in which all students can feel comfortable.**

**Therefore, name-calling, physical abuse, intimidation or other such actions will not be tolerated.**

**All students and staff should work together to ensure that any incidents of undesirable behaviour be stamped out immediately.**

**Remember, nobody should be liable to treatment by their peers which is in any way degrading or liable to cause hurt, either physical or emotional.**

## **Appendix 2**

### **Rule**

**Mobile Phone use is permitted during the following times and in designated areas only.**

- **During morning break and lunch break in the school canteen.**
- **Outside the school building during morning break and lunch break.**

**The use of mobile phones at any other time may result in the phone been collected and given to the Principal or Deputy Principal. Students who continue to ignore the rule re mobile phone use may have their phones retained for a period of time.**

## **Appendix 3**

### **Guidelines for Students returning from Suspension**

- Report to the office on returning to school with/without parents, as requested in the letter issued regarding the suspension.
- Meet the Principal/Deputy Principal/Year Head
- Restorative Justice sheet to be filled in before going back to class.
- Principal / Deputy Principal or Year Head will take the student to the teacher at 9.30 a.m., if a verbal or written apology is due. If the teacher is not available, the apology will be given at the next available time.
- If the suspension was for:
  - Student v student, apology must be given.
  - Damage to property – letter to Principal
  - Possession of hazardous materials – letter to Principal
  - Theft – letter to those involved in the incident/re-imbursement to individual.

**SCHERING ; DO DETENTION IN SCHOOL FIRST, RATHER THAN SUSPENSION**