



Coláiste Pobail Acla

Code of Behaviour

**Coláiste Pobail Acla,
Polranny,
Achill,
Co. Mayo.**

**Roll No.: 76150V
Phone: 098 45139
Email: info@cpacla.ie
Web: www.colaistepobailacla.ie**

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1. Introduction

1.1. What is a Code of Behaviour

The Code of Behaviour is the set of programmes, practices and procedures that together form our school's plan for helping students in the school to behave well and learn well.

The Code of Behaviour helps our 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/guardians to work together for a happy, effective, and safe school.

The Code expresses the vision, mission and values of our school and MSLETB. It translates the expectations of staff, parents/guardians 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 enables school authorities to strike an appropriate balance between their duty to maintain an effective learning environment for all and their responsibility to students whose behaviour presents a challenge to the teaching and learning process. The Code of Behaviour is a key tool in enabling the school authorities to support the learning of every student in the school.

Maintaining a harmonious environment can be challenging. A Code of Behaviour that has the support of the whole school community can go a long way to helping our school to meet this challenge successfully.

1.2. Rationale for Developing a Code of Behaviour

- A Code of Behaviour helps the whole school community to work together for a happy, effective, and safe school.
- An effective Code of Behaviour ensures that instruction to all students is not interrupted or adversely affected by unacceptable behaviour.
- The rights of parents/guardians and the child in matters of fair procedures in education are set out in the *Irish Constitution* and in the *European Convention on Human Rights (1950)*.
- The *UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989)*, ratified by Ireland in 1992, provides that school discipline is administered in a manner consistent with the dignity of the child, and that children have a voice in matters affecting them.
- The *Education Act 1998* and the *Education (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2007* contain several key provisions relevant to the Code of Behaviour.
- *The Education (Welfare) Act 2000* sets out the specific matters that must be included in a Code of Behaviour.

- *The Children First Act 2015* is for the purpose of making further and better provision for the care and protection of children.
- *The Education and Training Boards Act 2013* governs the operation of ETBs; Coláiste Pobail Acla is under the auspices of Mayo, Sligo and Leitrim ETB.
- *The Equal Status Acts 2000 and 2004* promote equality and prohibit discrimination, harassment, and sexual harassment.
- *The Ombudsman for Children Act* empowers the Ombudsman for Children to investigate actions taken when the school's complaints procedure has been exhausted.
- *The Education of Persons with Special Educational Needs Act 2004* (EPSEN) provides for the provision of education for students with special educational needs.
- *The Disability Act 2005* provides for matters related to the educational needs of persons with disabilities.
- *Health & Safety* legislation, and the *Non-Fatal Offences Against the Person Act 1997* provide for the health & safety of members of the school community.
- *Data Protection* legislation (1988 & 2003) require schools to protect the privacy rights of students about whom they maintain and/or store personal data.
- *The Age of Majority Act 1995* entitles persons aged 18 or over to the rights of an adult in matters relating to their education.

1.3. Principles Underpinning our Code of Behaviour

Clarity: an effective Code makes clear that an orderly, harmonious school requires students to behave in accordance with that Code.

Inclusivity: everyone's behaviour matters, including that of parents/guardians and teachers.

Good Behaviour: The Code should set high expectations and affirm good behaviour.

Balancing Needs: the educational needs of a student whose behaviour is unacceptable will be balanced with the educational needs of other students in the school.

Relationships: The Code fosters relationships of trust among students and between students and teachers. Adults have more responsibility than students for building these relationships.

Personal Responsibility: the value of being responsible, participating members of the school community.

Fairness and Equality: respects the principles of natural justice and ensures a consistent approach to behaviour on the part of all school personnel.

Equality: for all members of the school community.

Recognising Educational Vulnerability: the school is committed to providing positive support for those students who are more vulnerable to behaviour problems.

Welfare of Students: the school is committed to the welfare of every student, including the right to participate in, and benefit from, education.

Welfare of Staff: The Code helps to promote a positive and safe working environment for all staff, including a positive and safe classroom environment for teachers.

Safety and Freedom from Threat: for both staff and students

1.4. How our Code was Developed

This Coláiste Pobail Acla Policy was formed following consultation with all staff, members of the Board of Management, parents/guardians and the Student Council. It is recommended that this policy be reviewed every three years or whenever it is deemed necessary by School Management.

2. Aims in Developing our School Code

Our Code aims to:

- create a positive and safe environment for teaching and learning that facilitates students in developing in line with their ability and in respect of their needs.
- create a climate that encourages and reinforces good behaviour.
- encourage students to take personal responsibility for their learning and their behaviour.
- help young people to mature into responsible participating citizens.
- build positive relationships of mutual respect and mutual support among students, staff and parents/guardians.
- ensure that the school's expectations for the behaviour of all the members of the school community are widely known and understood.

3. The Content of the Code of Behaviour

The Education (Welfare) Act 2000 sets out certain matters that must be included in a Code of Behaviour.

Section 23(2) of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000 says:

“A code of behaviour shall specify —

- (a) the standards of behaviour that shall be observed by each student attending the school.
- (b) the measures that may be taken when a student fails or refuses to observe those standards.
- (c) the procedures to be followed before a student may be suspended or expelled from the school concerned.

(d) the grounds for removing a suspension imposed in relation to a student.

(e) the procedures to be followed relating to notification of a child's absence from school."

To comply with these requirements, and to have the best chance of achieving its objectives, the Code of Behaviour should address:

- the standards of behaviour expected in the school
- the plan for promoting good behaviour
- the ways in which the school responds to unacceptable behaviour
- the plan for implementing the Code of Behaviour
- school procedures for the use of suspension and expulsion.

3.1. Our Vision for Respect

We expect respectful behaviour towards every person in Coláiste Pobail Acla irrespective of age, gender, disability, race, nationality, cultural background, religious beliefs, family status, and sexual orientation.

3.2. Mission Statement

We strive to motivate our school community to realise its full potential academically, spiritually, physically and emotionally in a safe, supportive learning environment.

3.3. Common Courtesies

All staff will have a common approach towards modelling respectful behaviour both inside and outside the classroom. Common courtesies will be explained to all incoming students. For example: how to meet and greet teachers, fellow students etc., how to enter a room correctly, how to ask for permission to leave the room, how to greet visitors to the school, how to behave in corridors, school grounds, on trips, on school outings, etc.

3.4. Promoting a Positive School

We in Coláiste Pobail Acla believe that mutual respect is the key to achieving a happy safe, co-operative working and learning environment which is positive to all involved. We believe a positive school is where behaviour promotes a culture of learning and doesn't hinder it. We should build positive relationships with each other. This includes all members of the school community: caretaker, classroom assistants, librarian, cleaning staff, management, office staff, students, teachers and visitors. Everyone has a role to play in the development of positive relationships and a respectful, friendly and welcoming attitude helps.

4. Roles and Responsibilities

4.1. Role of the Principal:

The Principal shall control the internal organisation, management and discipline of the school; he/she shall exercise supervision over the teaching and non-teaching staff. The Board of Management has authorised the Principal to suspend or exclude a student following/during an investigation. This decision may be appealed to the Board of Management.

4.2. Role of the Deputy Principal:

The Deputy Principal, as a member of the management team, assists the Principal in the internal organisation, management and discipline of the school. The Deputy Principal has a key role and responsibility for the implementation of the disciplinary process and the maintenance of general discipline within the school. The Deputy Principal is in charge of the school in the absence of the Principal.

In the absence of the Principal and Deputy Principal an Assistant Principal will be delegated responsibility and authority to be in charge of the school.

4.3. Role of the Year Head:

The Year Head has responsibility for the implementation of the school Code of Behaviour regarding the year groups assigned to them.

Duties involved include, but are not limited to:

- Reporting to and liaising with the Deputy Principal and the Principal regarding the year groups assigned to them.
- Checking and dealing with lateness, absenteeism, and uniform.
- Communicating with parents/guardians in relation to pastoral or behavioural issues.
- Liaise with class teachers and Pastoral Care Team regarding students.
- Placing students on detention/lunchtime duty.

4.4. Role of the Home School Community Liaison Officer:

The HSCL Officer's role is liaising with parents/guardians regarding issues or concerns they may have about their child's school experience or quality of education. The school may also deploy the HSCLO where teachers are concerned about any aspect of a student's performance in school. HSCL Officer has a role to play in relation to attendance issues.

4.5. Role of the Teacher:

The Teacher has responsibility for the maintenance of general discipline within his/her class while sharing a common responsibility for good order within the school. Teachers will agree standards of

behaviour for their classes (in keeping with our Code of Behaviour) and agree sanctions to be used when these standards are not met. Teachers may keep written records of all instances of misbehaviour as well as incidents of good behaviour. Teachers will use the online VSware system to document incidents of positive and negative behaviour and to outline briefly actions they have taken to address the issue if necessary. In some cases, teachers may also refer an issue to another relevant member of staff for further attention.

4.6. Role of Parents/Guardians:

- Regularly check VSware and the homework journal (*For notes from Teachers and Year Head, and to monitor behaviour*).
- Provide Reasons for Absence

When a student has missed a day in school a note must be provided and signed by the parent/guardian on the day of return to school. The Student Journal can be used for this purpose. Medical certification will be required for prolonged absences. This is in accordance with Education (Welfare) Act, 2000, Section 18, which imposes a duty on Parents/Guardians to inform the school of the reasons for the child's absence. Section 23, 2, (e) of this legislation obliges the school to notify the National Educational Welfare Board (NEWB) where a student's absence exceeds 20 days. The NEWB has a statutory function to ensure that every child either attends a school or otherwise receives an education. In particular, the Board has a key role in following up on children who are not attending school regularly, and where there is a concern about the child's educational welfare.

- Sign a student into school if arriving after classes have started.
- Submit a note to request absence.

Parents / Guardians are expected to inform the school if a student is going to miss more than one day. Students are not allowed to leave the school until a parent/guardian collects them and signs the student absence book. Students may not leave without the prior written permission of the parent/guardian.

- Ensure student has the necessary books and equipment for each day.
- Ensure that the student wears the correct school uniform.
- Attend parent/guardian teacher meetings and other meetings concerning their child.
- Communicate effectively with the school.

Use the journal or other means to communicate with the school. The parent/guardian must have in place an up-to-date telephone number which can be relied upon for normal or urgent communication from the date of enrolment. The parent/guardian needs to be always contactable and must respond immediately when requested to be of assistance to school authorities and be available to attend at appointed times to avoid accumulation of issues. Parents/guardians must provide the school with notice in writing of a change of address; this should be submitted to the school office.

4.7. Role of Students:

The student has a significant role to play in their own emotional, social, and physical development as well as their academic performance. Students are expected to contribute to the overall quality of life in the school whilst developing their personal and interpersonal skills. Students have a responsibility in their role to develop their talents and reach their full potential. The Principal and staff, by acting in 'loco parentis', require students to:

- Behave in accordance with the rules of the school and respect the rights of others.
- Comply with the standards of behaviour outlined.
- Attend school regularly.
- Do assigned homework and study.
- Adhere to and immediately comply with any reasonable instruction given to them.
- Promote the positive and friendly atmosphere of the school.

4.8. Role of Other Staff:

Other staff have a general role in implementing the Code of Behaviour. Staff should support students by offering guidance or by being a positive role-model. Where necessary, staff should report behaviour to teaching staff/school management.

5. Structures to Support Positive Behaviour

5.1. The School Journal:

The school journal is the property of the school. Students must bring the journal to all classes and use it to record homework/work completed. The journal must be kept in good condition throughout the school year. If a journal is damaged/lost, the student will be required to pay for a replacement. The Year Head/Deputy Principal/Principal will determine if a replacement is required.

5.2. Parent/Guardian Teacher Meetings:

Parent/guardian teacher meetings take place at regular intervals to inform parents/guardians of student progress, application and behaviour. Parents/guardians are expected to attend. Parents/guardians will be notified in the school calendar and in advance of parent/guardian teacher meetings. Parents/guardians should request information from the Year Head relating to the progress of their child if they are not able to attend. The names of the teachers will be provided at the parent/guardian teacher meeting.

Note: See Appendix 1, Section 4, for further clarification in regard to students over 18 years.

5.3. Year Head:

All students are assigned to a Year Head who will be available to help, support and advise them on any issues that may arise. In this way students will have a point of first contact in the event of concerns or issues.

5.4. Guidance and Counselling:

The Guidance Counsellor in school assists students in developing self-management skills, which will lead to effective choices and decisions about their lives. This encompasses the separate but interlinked areas of personal and social development, educational guidance and career guidance.

5.5. Information Evening

An Information Afternoon/Evening for first year parents/guardians will be arranged early in the first term. Attendance - Punctuality - Homework - Behaviour will be the focus of this meeting.

5.6. Other School Supports:

The school has a wide range of supports and expertise built up over the years to assist parents/guardians and students where problems arise.

- Year Heads and Class Teachers may be available to meet parents/guardians. (Prior notice required)
- Home School Community Liaison Officer
- School Chaplain
- Pastoral Care Team
- SEN Coordinator
- Anti-Bullying Leader
- Inclusion Leader
- Learning Support
- Special Needs Assistants
- Confidential Guidance and Counselling
- School Completion Programme
- SENO – Special Education Needs Organiser
- Schools Psychological Service - National Educational Psychological Service Agency (NEPS)
- Student Awards Programme

6. School Rules

6.1. General Principles

At Coláiste Pobail Acla, students are expected to:

- Show respect for themselves, for all members of the school community and for any visitors to the school.
- Be polite, inclusive, helpful, and always use respectful and dignified language.
- Behave in a manner consistent with school standards whilst attending and representing the school.
- Look after and use appropriately the property of the school and that of members of the school community. This includes books rented under the Book Rental Scheme and material borrowed from the library.
- Maintain the school environment. Littering is considered a serious breach of the Code of Behaviour.
- Refrain from eating or drinking in classrooms, MUGA, library, practical areas or the computer room. Chewing gum is also strictly prohibited on school grounds.
- Students must not enter any classroom outside of class time without the supervision/permission of a teacher.
- Behave in a manner that does not endanger either themselves or others. Students must not, either on school grounds or during school activities:
 1. possess or use illegal or dangerous substances. (Refer to Substance Abuse Policy for more information)
 2. smoke or be in possession of tobacco products or e-cigarettes.
 3. drink or be in possession of alcohol.
 4. possess or use anything that can be used as a threat or a weapon.
 5. be under the influence of any illegal substance.

6.2. Attendance and Punctuality

- Full attendance is expected in Coláiste Pobail Acla.
- Students are to be punctual in attending all classes during the day.
- Students must proceed to class once the first bell rings in the morning or when instructed by a member of staff. Students must be in class by 9.00a.m.
- Students are expected to attend lockers and prepare for classes during breaks and not during class time or in between classes.

- A student who is absent from school, must give an explanatory note, signed and dated by a parent/guardian, to the school secretary or their Year Head upon their return to school (yellow note at back of school journal).
- A student who is late for school must 'sign in' at the secretary's office.
- Students must not leave the school grounds during the school day without permission from a member of staff. **The parent/guardian must present to the school office to 'sign out' a student.**

6.3. Uniform and Appearance

- Full school uniform must be worn at all times, except with the expressed permission of School Management. A student not in full uniform must present an explanatory note to the Deputy Principal/Year Head signed by a parent/guardian on their arrival in school.
- Students are expected to present themselves at school both neatly and appropriately. School management reserves the right to define appropriate presentation.
- Students may be refused permission to attend school activities if they are not presented appropriately.
- Items which are not part of the school uniform are not to be worn in class for the most part. There are times of exception with the permission of the teacher during periods of colder weather.
- Students are expected to dress appropriately for practical classes; these specific requirements will be clarified by the subject teachers.

6.4. Application to Studies

- Students are expected to always work to the best of their ability.
- Under no circumstances should students interfere with or undermine teaching and learning in our school.
- Students must have all necessary equipment, materials and textbooks for each lesson.
- Students must have their school journal in every class.

6.5. Mobile Phone and Digital Devices

The use of mobile phones, digital devices and headphones is strictly prohibited at all times, except under the direction and supervision of a member of staff. **For full details on the use of these devices please refer to our Mobile Phone and Digital Devices Policy.**

6.6. Rewards for Good Behaviour

- Awards for attendance – presented at end of each year.
- Positive notes in journals, copies and VShare.
- Praise and encouragement for effort as appropriate.
- Display of student work in classrooms and school environs.
- School support for in-class competitions (Provision of prizes, etc.).
- Awards system for various achievements at an end of year ceremony.

6.7. The Student Journal

- It is the responsibility of every student to always have the school journal in class.
- The journal must be used by the student to note homework and classwork given during the school day.
- Forgery of a note or signature will result in sanctions being applied.
- Each student is responsible for keeping their journal in good condition - the Year Head/Deputy Principal/Principal will define good condition.
- The student journal remains the property of the school.
- If a journal is damaged/misplaced, the student must report this to their Year Head. €10 must be paid for a replacement which remains the property of the school.

6.8. Serious Misbehaviour

As a guide for parents/guardians and pupils, the following is a list of some of the offences which are regarded as serious:

- Assault, threat or verbal abuse of a student, member of staff or a visitor by a student.
- Damage to property of staff, students, or visitors.
- Putting a person's health or safety at risk.
- Possession of knife or other weapons.
- Theft within the school.
- Serious misbehaviour on school-related activities or trips.
- Mithing from school or classes.
- Use or possession of cigarettes/e-cigarettes/alcohol or drugs in school or on school activities.
- Engagement in bullying/threatening behaviour or harassment of any kind, e.g. verbal, physical or cyber bullying. Bullying will be dealt with in accordance with our Anti-Bullying Policy.

7. General Sanctions

Sanctions for breaches of this Code of Behaviour may be applied, such as:

- Lunchtime Detention
- Separation within the classroom.
- Separation from class group.
- Additional homework.
- Internal suspension.
- Report to the Year Head.
- Students may be excluded from school activities.
- Students may be placed 'on report' to monitor behaviour, effort, and application during class.

A parent/guardian and Year Head must sign the report cards every day. If a student has been 'on report' twice, they may be issued with a suspension in place of a third period of being 'on report'. There are two types of suspension – internal and external. Internal suspension is when a student is not permitted into their normal classes and has different breaks to their peers.

External suspension is when a student is not permitted into school to attend classes.

- Other sanctions may be applied for offences which may or may not be included in this Code of Behaviour, this will be at the discretion of staff and school management.

8. Procedures for Dealing with Behaviour

8.1. Recording Behaviour

Positive and negative behaviour can be recorded and monitored using VSware. A list of some types of behaviour is outlined below, along with the recommended number of points to be applied. This list is not exhaustive and other types of behaviour will be recorded in a similar manner. The Year Head, Deputy Principal and Principal have the authority to apply a greater number of points for more serious behaviour, this may include physical violence, threatening/intimidating behaviour, bullying, or other serious behaviour.

Positive Behaviour	Points Awarded
Showing good initiative	2
Promotion of Gaeilge	2
Outstanding effort in class	2
Commitment to extra-curricular activities	2
Contribution to positive ethos of the school	3
Improved classwork/homework	3
Helpful towards others	3

Showing strong leadership	4
Exceptional contribution to teaching & learning	5
Negative Behaviour	Points Deducted
Incorrect uniform	-2
Late for class (<5 mins)	-2
Incomplete homework	-2
No class materials	-2
No journal in class	-2
Unauthorised use of a mobile phone/digital device	-3
Lack of participation	-3
Inappropriate comments	-3
Truancy	-4
Disrupting teaching/learning	-4
Late for class (>5 mins)	-4
Littering	-4
Refusal to hand up device/other items when requested	-5

Note: The points listed above are a guide and are subject to change at the discretion of school management.

8.2. Applying Sanctions

Students will begin the academic year with 0 points. Sanctions will be applied when a student reaches certain thresholds. Details of these thresholds are listed below.

Threshold	Result	Details
-10 in one week	Student will be placed on lunchtime detention, lunchtime duty or another task to be assigned by school management.	This will occur whenever a student receives -10 points in one school week.
-10 or lower	Student will be placed on lunchtime detention, lunchtime duty or another task to be assigned by school management.	The student will remain on lunchtime detention/duty until they move back above -10 points.
-20 or lower	Student will be referred to the Year Head when they reach -20. Students will not participate in any extracurricular events organised by the school while they are at this threshold.	The student will be advised of the need to get their points to a positive number and how they can achieve this.

-40 or lower	Student will be referred to the Deputy Principal. Further Sanctions may be applied.	The student will be required to meet the Deputy Principal regarding their behaviour. A parent/guardian may be requested to attend this meeting.
-60 or lower	Student will be referred to the Principal. Further Sanctions may be applied.	The student will be required to meet the Principal regarding their behaviour. A parent/guardian may be requested to attend this meeting.
-80 or lower	If all measures are exhausted and the disciplinary problems continue, the issue may then be referred to the Board of Management.	All options up to and including expulsion may have to be considered.

8.3. Procedures in Cases of Immediate Suspension

- The parents/guardians will be contacted and will be notified in writing, informing them of the reason and the duration of the suspension. The written notification will be issued as soon as possible after the decision has been made.
- The parents/guardian and the student may be required to attend a formal disciplinary hearing with the Principal and others of his/her choosing, at this meeting the case will be reviewed.
- Parents/guardians may appeal the decision of School Management in accordance with the Education Act, 1998. This appeal is made in writing to the Board of Management. Further details on the appeals process may be sought from the Principal in their role as Secretary to the Board.
- Parents/guardians, together with the suspended student must meet with the Principal or his/her representative before the student is re-admitted to the school.
- Students who have been suspended for behaviour related offences may not be permitted to represent the school in any capacity until approved by School Management.
- Any work in preparation for state examinations missed through suspension is the responsibility of the student.

8.4. Low-Level Misbehaviour

A Teacher may deal with unacceptable behaviour initially by using the strategies listed below:

The following low-level strategies may be used by teaching staff:

1. Advising pupil of consequences of misbehaviour.
2. Note on VSware.
3. Move the pupil to a different seat.
4. Students may be assigned additional work to be completed during lunch time, supervised by the class teacher.
5. Withdrawal of privileges such as sports, outings, trips and or lunchtime clubs (to be approved by Year Head/School Management).
6. Confiscation of items prohibited by school rules, or which may be deemed dangerous.

8.5. Incident Reporting:

The Incident Reporting System (VSware) will be used to monitor and report behaviour. Incidents may be referred to the relevant person, i.e., Year Head, Deputy Principal or Principal.

8.6. Behaviour Report Form:

Students may be placed 'on report' by their Year Head or school management. Teachers will record the students' performance/effort using this form. This form must be signed by a parent/guardian every evening while on report.

8.7. Progress Report Form:

Subject Teachers can record the students' progress on this form, and it will be forwarded to parents/guardians.

8.8. Detention:

Detention will be used in the school as an intervention to remind students of the need to modify their behaviour in areas of concern and to act as a deterrent to further escalation of poor behaviour.

Detention will be given when students meet the criteria set out in section 8.2. It is important to note the following:

- Refusal to attend detention will be considered a serious breach of school rules and may lead to suspension.
- Students must be punctual when attending detention, failure to comply may lead to further sanctions.

Lunchtime Detention/Duty takes place from Monday to Thursday. (13:15 - 13:45)

8.9. Suspension, Exclusion and Expulsion:

The purpose of removing a student from school/activities is to provide the student with time for reflection on their misbehaviour.

Serious and persistent breaking of the school rules will result in exclusion from class/activities, suspension, or expulsion.

Some examples of such behaviour are:

- vaping/smoking (or being in possession of such items).
- being under the influence of, or in possession of alcohol or other prohibited substances (see Substance Misuse Policy for further information).
- violence by a student.
- persistent or serious disruption of teaching and learning.
- offensive language to a teacher or others.
- damaging or vandalising school property or the property of others.

These types of behaviour will be considered serious breaches of the school rules and may result in immediate suspension, exclusion, or expulsion. Bullying will be dealt with in accordance with our Anti-Bullying Policy.

Internal suspension is another form of exclusion where the student will be separated from their normal class for a period decided upon by school management. The student will complete assigned work during this period in a supervised location.

Procedures for these Sanctions

- In all cases of suspension this is a decision of School Management having considered the case. In the absence of the Principal, the Deputy Principal will make the decision. In the absence of both the Principal and Deputy Principal, the Assistant Principals will agree on a temporary decision, which will be reviewed upon the return of the Principal or Deputy Principal.
- All suspensions will be reported to the Board of Management.
- Parents/guardians will be notified by telephone and/or formal letter if a student is to be suspended and the reason for the suspension, in advance of the date of the suspension. They may be required to attend a meeting with a Year Head and/or Management to discuss the matter. A teacher may be asked to attend the meeting. Every reasonable effort will be made to contact the parent/guardians and to facilitate the meeting.
- If the parents/guardians cannot be contacted or fail to attend the meeting the matter will be determined in their absence and the suspension put into effect. A letter outlining this decision will be sent directly to the parent/guardian.
- Parents/guardians (Or students over 18) have the right to appeal the decision to the Board of Management. All appeals must be made in writing to the Board of Management within 3 working days of receipt of the letter of suspension.

- Suspensions of six or more consecutive days, or cumulative suspensions of 20 days or more in one school year, will be reported to the Education Welfare Officer.
- Parents/guardians (or students over 18) will be required to meet with the Principal and/or his/her nominee(s) before the student can return to school.

A formal letter of suspension will include:

- Notice of the suspension as well as the effective date and duration of the suspension
- Reason(s) for the suspension
- A statement informing parents/guardians of their right to appeal the decision within 3 working days of receipt of the letter.

Grounds for removing a suspension may include:

- School Management or the Board of Management may agree that an alternative sanction be applied after discussion with parents/guardians.
- New circumstances or evidence may come to light because of further investigation.

Please view Appendix 1 for further information on the procedures surrounding suspension and expulsion.

8.10. Shortened School Day:

Where a student has repeatedly been involved in incidents of serious misbehaviour, a reduced school day may be put in place for a period. The reduced school day can be based on appropriate times of the day or access to specific subjects which may motivate the student to behave appropriately. This time should be a reflection period for the student hopefully culminating in the student's full reintegration into the school. In this situation a parent/guardian will be required to collect the student at the appointed time and are responsible for their safety outside of the newly timetabled times.

8.11. Expulsion:

Expulsion is the ultimate sanction and will only be resorted to when all other avenues of intervention and sanctions have been exhausted. It will also apply for repeated or serious single breaches of the Code of Behaviour, extreme cases of indiscipline; including violent behaviour and or incitement to violence and where expulsion is considered the only viable option. All expulsions must be approved by the Board of Management.

Expulsion may occur due to:

- significant and continuous disruption to the learning and/or teaching process.
- a serious threat to the health and safety of the student, other students, or members of staff.
- possession of weapons and/or items which could be considered dangerous to the health and safety of the student or to others.

- behaviour which is detrimental to the school ethos.
- any of the following: violence, physical assault, harassment, continuous bullying behaviour, supplying tobacco/electronic cigarettes/alcohol or drugs to students, extortion of money, sexual assault, severe damage to property, online abuse or harassment, serious negative misuse of technology and/or social media platforms to intimidate others or incitement/inducement of others to any of these acts, etc.

Due process and fair procedures will be followed in all cases and the principles of natural justice will apply. In some instances, the Board of Management may decide to expel for a first offence. The Board will use its judgement in determining if an offence not included in this document warrants expulsion.

Procedures for Expulsion:

- School Management or other nominees investigates the allegations.
- Student's parents/guardians are informed of the alleged misbehaviour and that it could result in expulsion.
- Students and parents/guardians can respond to the complaint at an arranged meeting with school Management.
- The Board of Management is supplied with the records of the allegations and details of the investigation.
- Parents/guardians are notified of the grounds on which the Board is being asked to consider expulsion.
- Parents/guardians will be notified of the date of the meeting and invited to attend the part of the meeting that deals with the proposed expulsion.
- Parents/guardians will be invited to make a written and oral submission to the Hearing of the Board of Management.

8.12. Procedures for an Appeals Hearing:

- The Board of Management must remain impartial.
- All parties involved will present their case to the Board of Management; parents/guardians, Principal or his/her nominee, or a student who is eighteen or over.
- Parents/guardians are not entitled to legal representation at the hearing.
- Parents/guardians, the student, Principal, and anyone directly involved in investigating the incident will withdraw while a decision is being made.
- Where expulsion is decided by the Board, they must notify the Education Welfare Officer in writing of their opinion and their reason therefore, in accordance with Section 24(1) of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000.

Following the Board decision according to Section 24(4) of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000

... A student shall not be expelled from a school before the passing of 20 school days following the receipt of a notification under this section by an educational welfare officer.

In the interim the Board may suspend the student to ensure that good order and discipline are maintained in the school as per Section 24 (Subsection 5) (4) of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000

It ... is without prejudice to the right of a Board of Management to take such other reasonable measures as it considers appropriate to ensure that good order and discipline are maintained in the school concerned and that the safety of students is secured.

- If the Board after 20 days remains of the view that the student should be expelled a letter will be sent informing the parents/guardians of the decision.
- Parents/guardians and students over 18 will be told of the right to appeal the decision of the Board of Management. This appeal is made to the Secretary General of the Department of Education.
- See Appendix 1, Section 4, for further clarification in regard to students over 18.

9. Scope of the Code

The code applies to all students of Coláiste Pobail Acla and relates to all school activities both during and outside of normal school hours; it applies both on and off the school grounds. It also applies anywhere students are identified or identifiable as students of Coláiste Pobail Acla. The Code of Behaviour also applies to all outings and to tours, whether they involve an overnight stay or not.

The plan for reviewing the code:

There should be a full review of the Code of Behaviour every three years. More frequent reviews may take place as required. The Code of Behaviour will be included on the agenda of staff meetings when appropriate.


10. Related Policies and Documents

- Strategy for School Attendance
- Attendance Policy
- Homework Policy
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- SPHE Policy
- RSE Policy
- Pastoral Care Policy
- Child Protection Policy
- Policies Concerning the ASD Unit
- SEN Policy
- Data Protection Policy

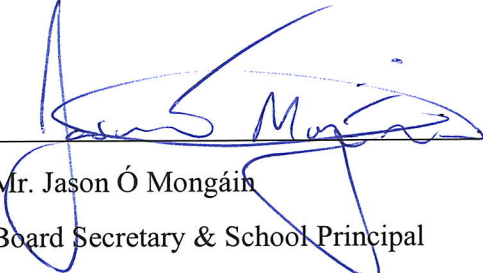
- Substance Abuse Policy
- ICT Policy
- Mobile Phone and Digital Devices Policy
- Education (Welfare) Act, 2000
- Education Act, 1998
- Uniform Policy
- Out of School Activities Policy

11. Declaration

This Coláiste Pobail Acla Policy was formed following consultation with all staff, members of the Board of Management, Parents, and the Student Council. It is recommended that this policy be reviewed every three years or whenever it is deemed necessary by School Management. It was adopted by the Board of Management of Coláiste Pobail Acla on:

Signed: 
 Ms. Bina Munnelly
 Chairperson of the Board of Management

Date: 8/11/2023

Signed: 
 Mr. Jason Ó Mongáin
 Board Secretary & School Principal

Date: 08-11-2023

12. Appendices

Appendix 1:

Procedures for the use of Suspension and Expulsion

1. The legal context: The entitlement to education is protected in a range of constitutional and legal provisions and in human rights Conventions. These legal protections for the individual student's right to education mean that decisions to suspend or expel a student are open to appeal and may be subject to judicial review by the High Court.

Schools are required, under section 23(2) of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000, to include their procedures for suspension and expulsion in their Code of Behaviour.

2. The Responsibility of the Board of Management

The Board of Management should:

- ensure that the school has a policy on, and procedures for, the use of suspension and expulsion that are in line with these Guidelines.
- ensure that fair procedures are used for suspension and expulsion.

Time and timeliness: The Board of Management and Principal have a duty to ensure that there are no undue delays in an investigation and in making decisions about the imposition of suspension or expulsion.

Confidentiality: Great care should be taken to ensure that all matters to do with an investigation of alleged misbehaviour are dealt with in confidence.

3. Applying fair procedures in school

In a school, fair procedures apply to:

- the investigation of alleged misbehaviour that may lead to suspension or expulsion.
- the process of decision-making as to whether the student did engage in the misbehaviour and what sanction to impose.

The way in which fair procedures are applied will take account of the seriousness of the alleged misbehaviour and will have regard to what is reasonable in the context of a school.

The principles of fair procedures always apply, but the degree of formality required in implementing fair procedures will depend on the gravity of the alleged misbehaviour and on the seriousness of the possible sanction. The level of formality required, for example for a suspension of fewer than three days, would be less than that required in the case of a longer suspension or in circumstances that might lead to an expulsion.

Even informal processes, however, must be fair and be seen to be fair. The principles of ensuring the right to be heard and the right to impartiality apply in all cases.

The right to be heard means that a student and their parents/guardians are fully informed about an allegation and the processes that will be used to investigate and decide the matter; and that they must be given an opportunity to respond to an allegation before a decision is made and before a serious sanction is imposed.

Absence of bias in the decision-maker would mean, for example that if the child of the Principal was accused of misconduct that might warrant suspension or expulsion, the Principal would not be involved in the decision. Similarly, if the child of a member of the Board of Management was accused of misconduct, that parent/guardians would absent themselves from the Board for any consideration of the matter by the Board.

The principle of impartiality in decision-making means it is preferable that, where possible, the Principal arranges for another member or members of staff to conduct the investigation and to present a full report on the facts of the case and any other relevant information to the Principal. The Principal is then free to take a view about whether the student did engage in the behaviour and about the sanction, based on the report of the investigation.

Where circumstances require the Principal to conduct the investigation as well as making a finding and proposing the sanction, he or she must not only act fairly but be seen to act fairly. It is incumbent upon the Principal to review the investigation to ensure that it has been fully and fairly conducted. It should be evident to the student, parents/guardians, staff and other students that the Principal, as decision-maker, is basing their decision, in an objective way, on the findings of the investigation.

The person alleging the misbehaviour, or who is a victim, or a witness should not usually conduct the investigation.

Thoughtful application of professional judgement and knowledge of the requirements of fair procedures will generally guide decision-making about suspension and expulsion. However, in circumstances of particular complexity, school authorities may need to seek legal advice to support their decision-making.

4. Students aged eighteen years or more

The provisions of the Guidelines relating to parents/guardians apply to the student, where the student has reached eighteen years (Age of Majority Act 1985). Occasions may therefore arise when an adult student requests the school to restrict or limit communication with their parents/guardians or to limit parental/guardian involvement in matters relating to their education. In such circumstances, schools are advised, particularly in relation to suspension and expulsion matters, to inform the parents/guardians of the student about the change in practice and the reasons.

5. Involving the Gardaí

Where allegations of criminal behaviour are made about a student, these will usually be referred to the Gardaí who have responsibility for investigating criminal matters. The Juvenile Liaison Officer can be a significant source of support and advice for the school and the student.

Appendix 2 – Abbreviations and Acronyms

Below is a list of abbreviations used across several Colaiste Pobail Acla policies and documents.

ACE	Autism Centre of Excellence
ASC	Autistic Spectrum Condition
BOM	Board of Management
BSP	Behaviour Support Plan
CAMHS	Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services
CAT	Cognitive Ability Test
CPNS	Child Protection Notification System
CSPE	Civic, Social and Political Education
DDLp	Deputy Designated Liaison Person
DEIS	Delivering Equality of Education in Schools
DES	Department of Education
DLP	Designated Liaison Person
EP	Education Plan
EPSEN	Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs
ETB	Education and Training Board
GRT	Group Reading Test
HSCLO	Home School Community Liaison Officer
HSE	Health Service Executive
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
IEP	Individual Education Plan
JCSP	Junior Certificate Schools Programme
LCVP	Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme
LGBT	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender
MUGA	Multi Use Games Area
NBSS	National Behaviour Support Service
NCBI	National Centre for the Blind Ireland
NCSE	National Council for Special Education
NEPS	National Educational Psychological Service
NEWB	National Education and Welfare Board
NLN	National Learning Network
OT	Occupational Therapy
PC	Pastoral Care

PE	Physical Education
RACE	Reasonable Accommodations at Certificate Examinations
RE	Religious Education
RSE	Relationships and Sexuality Education
SCP	School Completion Programme
SEN	Special Educational Needs
SENO	Special Educational Needs Officer
SESS	Special Education Support Service
SETS	Special Education Teacher Support
SNA	Special Needs Assistant
SPHE	Social, Personal and Health Education
SSE	School Self Evaluation
TUSLA	Child and Family Agency
TY	Transition Year

