



ST. MAC DARAS COMMUNITY COLLEGE
Code of Positive Behaviour Policy

October 2022

St Mac Dara's Community College Mission Statement

We, the community of this College, through a caring and collective approach, aspire to provide a broad based education for all, to foster respect and dignity and to promote a safe and just environment by positively encouraging all to realise their potential.

Introduction

Through co-operation and mutual respect between the partners in education, the students, the teaching staff, parents/guardians and the Board of Management we strive to ensure that each student achieves his/her full potential. The school reserves the right to adapt or modify this code in response to changing patterns of behaviour among students.

This policy applies to students of the school when they are in school uniform, whether in the school building, travelling to and from an organised event and/or on a school trip. The school code of behaviour will apply if there is a clear connection with the school and a demonstrable impact on its work.

The following legislation was considered in the creation of our Code of Behaviour:

- Article 42 of the Irish Constitution
- United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child
- Education Act 1998- Sections 28 & 29
- Education (Welfare) Act 2000-Section 23
- Equal Status Act 2000
- EPSEN Act 2004

This policy relates to, and should be read in conjunction with, other school policies including: • Anti-bullying Policy • Acceptable Usage Policy • Child Protection Policy

Restorative Practice

St Mac Dara' CC have signed up to a CPD 3-year Restorative Practice training programme in association with NUIM 2021-2024. At all times the school endeavours to employ a restorative approach to promote positive behaviour. Restorative practice is at the core of our school's policy. Restorative practice allows students to reflect on their behaviour and how it has affected them or others in the class. It helps develop and sustain a happy and caring school environment by actively developing positive relationships, preventing the escalation of conflict and handling conflict in a healthy way. It creates an ethos of respect and inclusion and gives students the opportunity to be accountable and take responsibility for their behaviour. See Appendix 1.

Inclusion of all students

St. Mac Dara's Community College places a high value on respect, tolerance and the acceptance of diversity which is central to the policies and practices in the school. Our activities address the needs of all of our students including those with special education needs.

Goals and Objectives of our Code of Behaviour

- to provide a learning environment in which students feel safe and secure
- to promote good behaviour, self-discipline and pride in our college
- to encourage students to take responsibility for their learning and work to the best of their ability
- to create an atmosphere of respect and tolerance for others
- to outline the procedures in place which allow for the effective running of the college and which meet with the demands of current legislation.

Promoting Good Behaviour

St. Mac Dara's Community College is committed to the promotion of positive behaviour. Some of the methods used include:

- Verbal praise for the student in private and in class
- Positive points on VS Ware
- Motivational assemblies
- Awards ceremony in May every year for hard work and attendance
- Leadership roles distributed to students such as Student Council, Prefects
- School trips and activities and Green School Committee
- Class prizes
- Use of the intercom system to acknowledge student achievement
- The display of student work throughout the college
- Use of the school website to recognise student efforts and successes

Responsibilities of our Students

Respect for each other and the school environment

- Students are expected to treat themselves, members of staff, fellow students and all visitors to our college with respect and courtesy. Students are expected to follow the instructions of staff at all times and respect the authority of the school. This includes online activity, via use of mobile phones and associated apps. and on social media as outlined in our Acceptable Usage Policy. Students are not permitted to use these to record or photograph any person or thing related to the school without prior permission.
- All incidents of bullying and cyber bullying are not tolerated as per our Anti-bullying Policy and Child Protection Procedures (DES 2017).

- Students are expected to work to the best of their ability at all times and not act in a way that might prevent teaching and learning.
- Students are expected to show respect for all property, lockers, bathroom facilities and equipment in school and on the school grounds. Graffiti is not tolerated and chewing gum is forbidden. The school should be kept litter free and students will assist in keeping the school clean and tidy. Smoking and the use of electronic cigarettes is not permitted. The use of drugs or alcohol is forbidden.

Attendance and Punctuality

- Students are expected to be punctual, not just in the morning and following break-time and lunchtime but for all classes. School begins at 8.40 am and finishes at 3.40pm. School finishes at 1pm on Wednesday.
- Parent/ guardian should notify the school prior to or on the day of absence. On their return, a note of explanation from a parent/guardian should be written into the student's journal to explain a late arrival or the absence of the student for a full or partial day. Parents are obliged under the Education Act (2000) to provide a note to explain each absence. The school is required by the Education Act (2000) to report to the NEWB any student who is absent for 20 or more school days in a year.
- A record of lateness is recorded by the tutor and reported on VS Ware. Students who are leaving early must get written permission in their journal from the Principal, Deputy Principal. Under no circumstances is a student permitted to contact home and arrange to be collected from school without going through the appropriate procedures. Students must sign out at reception before they leave.
- Students must attend school in full uniform.
- Lockers are allocated on a contract basis at the beginning of each school year by the appropriate Year Head and should be maintained in a clean and safe manner and locked when not in use. Students should only use their lockers before school begins in the morning, at lunchtime and at the end of the school day. Students are not permitted to go to lockers between classes. Students are responsible for property left in their lockers.
- See Attendance and Punctuality Policy

Achievement in the Classroom

- All students have the right to learn and to progress in an orderly fashion. Therefore, all students' behaviour should contribute towards every lesson being a positive experience for every student, under the guidance and direction of the teacher.
- Students should line up quietly outside the classroom and should not enter the classroom, without being accompanied by a teacher. Students should enter and leave the classroom in an orderly fashion. Students are not permitted to leave the classroom without the permission of the teacher. Permission to leave the classroom should be recorded in the student's journal.
- Students must have all books, equipment and journals with them for each class. Journals and all equipment should be on the desk at the beginning of every lesson. Jackets should be removed at the start of each lesson.

- Mobile phones and other electronic devices including accessories must be switched OFF and out of sight as per our Mobile Phone Policy. Sending text messages or any other inappropriate use of electronic devices during class time is forbidden.
- Students are not permitted to use the toilet during class time or between classes, without the permission of the teacher.
- All homework should be recorded in the journal and journals should be signed every week by a parent/guardian.

Responsibilities of Teaching Staff and Management

Staff and Management will endeavour to uphold a fair and consistent approach to supporting good behaviour by

- Nurturing respectful relationships between students, parents/guardians and all school staff.
- Recognising and rewarding positive behaviour and learning achievements and effort.
- Implementing various teaching strategies and methodologies to facilitate the achievement of all students.
- Following clearly defined sanctions in a fair and consistent way.
- Supporting students through guidance, the Social, Personal and Health Education programme and psychological support services.
- Monitoring the students' school journals.

Responsibilities of Parents

We welcome the participation and involvement of parents in the education of their son/daughter. Through mutual respect and co-operation, we can ensure that all students achieve their potential while attending St. Mac Dara's Community College. We request all parents of children in our school to

- Ensure that their child adheres to our Code of Positive Behaviour
- Familiarise themselves with our policies on the website
- Ensure that their son/ daughter attends school on a daily basis, is on time and in full uniform
- Check their son/ daughter's journal every week to ensure all homework is done and to check for notes from teachers and sign the journal at the end of the week
- Provide a written note in the journal to explain all absences or when a student needs to leave early or is late to school
- Attend Parent/Teacher meetings.

The Stages in the College's Discipline Procedures are as follows:

a) Behaviour Comment Recording

All staff engage in School Self Evaluation (SSE) as part of the college development and improvement programme. Positive Reinforcement is embedded as part of the college SSE process for quality learning and teaching. Teaching staff are trained and encouraged to input records of student behaviour on VS Ware. VS Ware offers a choice of positive and negative behaviours where learners are encouraged to build their individual points by gaining positive comments as a result of their positive behaviour(s). Such comments inform the parent/guardian of their child's behaviour. Parent(s) and guardian(s) are encouraged to regularly check their child's behaviour comments on VS Ware. Recorded negative behaviour(s) inform the parent(s) guardian(s) of behaviour which is interfering with learning, teaching, health and safety. Such action would usually result when reasoning with the student or a verbal reprimand have proved ineffective. A series of recorded negative notes may lead to a complaint form and may also lead to detention. Parent(s) Guardian(s) may be notified also via a note to the parent(s) guardian(s) in the student's journal.

Examples of issues meriting a note on VS Ware and/or in the student's journal may include:

Positive Comments referring to :

Work written or orally which is well done;
Caring supportive actions towards fellow students or staff
Creative contribution to class learning and teaching;
Community action supporting other(s);
Merit award;
Positive progress;
Kindness actions to other(s)

Negative Comments referring to :

Improper or incomplete uniform;
homework incomplete or not attempted;
disrespectful / disruptive behaviour;
lateness to school or to class;
graffiti on journal;
complaint form;
lateness
no journal brought to class etc.
persistent actions interfering with learning and teaching.

a) Complaint Form

Three notes in a student's journal usually merit a complaint form being written. Three complaint forms usually merit a Detention. Parent(s)/guardian(s) are informed in advance of such detention and are given precise details of when the sanction is to be imposed. Three Detentions may result in a Suspension. A decision to impose a Suspension follows utilisation of the normal channels of communication between the school and parent(s)/guardian(s) and also follows discussion between the Class Tutor, the Year Head, the Deputy Principals and the Principal. A student may also be placed on a Daily Report which is signed by the class teachers and by the Parent(s)/Guardian(s) on a daily basis.

A student's misbehaviour may be deemed sufficiently serious to merit an immediate complaint form rather than a note in the student's journal. Similarly, a Detention may be imposed, even

though the student has not received three complaint forms, if the Tutor or Year Head consider the sanction appropriate.

- b) Behaviour outside school environs – Any behaviour outside the school that is detrimental to the image of the school, that interferes with the running of the school, that adversely affects other students or undermines school discipline or good order is subject to sanction by the school authorities.

Students on educational tours or representing the college in sport or other extra-curricular activities have a duty and responsibility to maintain a high standard of behaviour and to observe the college's extra-curricular code of conduct, which is made available to all such representatives.

- c) Suspension – The school's policy on suspension is in line with Code of Behaviour Guidelines set down by Tusla (the Child and Family Agency) and is available, in its full detail, for inspection by parents/guardians at the college or online on the college website, www.stmacdaras.ie
- d) Expulsion – The school's policy on, and procedures for, expulsion are in line with the Code of Behaviour guidelines laid down by Tusla. The school's policy on expulsion, in its full detail, is available for inspection by parents/guardians at the college or on the college website.

SCHOOL UNIFORM (AS AGREED BY SCHOOL MANAGEMENT 3 MARCH 2020)

- All students of St. Mac Dara's Community College are expected to wear full school uniform in a clean, neat and tidy manner, reflecting positively on yourself and your school.
- P.E. uniform must be worn for all P.E. classes and consists of short sleeve, full length, plain, unprinted blue or white polo shirt; navy tracksuit bottoms; school-crested tracksuit top. For safety, jewellery must not be worn during P.E. / practical classes.
- Jewellery must be kept to a minimum (single pair of small earrings / ear studs permitted).
- Facial / body piercings, other than earrings, are not permitted for health and safety considerations.
- It is not appropriate for students to wear excessive make-up or extreme hairstyles. Students may be asked to remove make-up before attending class. Management will have the final decision in what constitutes excessive makeup and extreme hairstyle.

Shoes

- Black leather like shoes with no visible logos.

Positive Respectful Behaviour

Restorative Practice. Cultivating positive behaviour at school.

- Restorative questions to deal with a negative incident before or on return from suspension/detention. See appendix
- Student reports to Year Head and/or member of Senior Management
- Answers the question in written form and then discusses the answers with Year Head and/or member of Senior Management.

Health and welfare at work.

Introduction

Under the Safety Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005, the board of management/ETB of ST Mac Dara's Community College is required to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the safety, health and welfare at work of all employees of the school. The board is further required to manage and conduct the school in such a way as to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, that individuals at the place of work who are not employees, such as students, parents/guardians, visitors to the school, are not exposed to risks to their safety, health or welfare.

1. This policy is influenced by the need to minimise the risk of introduction of COVID-19 into the school community and to prevent its spread. Although it is acknowledged that no single action or set of actions will completely eliminate the risk of COVID-19 transmission, adherence to this policy will contribute to the reduction of that risk of transmission.

In accordance with this policy students are expected to comply with the standards of behaviour set out in this policy or as directed by the school to prevent the introduction and spread of COVID-19. The COVID-19 control measures are consistent with current advice from the HSE, the Health and Safety Authority, the Department of Education and Skills and the Department of Foreign Affairs and, as such, may be subject to change. Students and parents/guardians will be notified of any changes to the control measures.

Students are expected to comply with all directions from school staff in relation to the school's COVID-19 control measures. Any failure or refusal to comply with this policy or to follow instructions of school staff should be dealt with in accordance with the school's Code of Behaviour.

Parents/guardians are required to supply the school with a phone number/s of available person/s who can be contacted at all times and who will be available to collect a student from the school should the need arise.

2. Symptoms of COVID-19 Symptoms of COVID-19 are similar to symptoms of cold or flu. The most common symptoms are:

- fever
- cough
- shortness of breath

- loss of sense of smell or taste

More information regarding the most up-to-date signs and symptoms of COVID-19 is available on the HSE website, <https://www2.hse.ie/coronavirus/>.

3. Standards of Behaviour expected of students to help prevent the introduction or spread of COVID - 19 in the school

Standards of Behaviour expected of students Students are expected to comply with any control measures directed by the school to prevent the introduction and spread of COVID-19, including, but not limited to:

- maintaining a social-distance of at least 1 metre and where possible, 2 metres, from other students and staff;
- wearing a face covering (applicable at post-primary level). All students at post-primary level, are required to wear a face covering subject to a limited number of exceptions set out in relevant Department of Education guidance. Face coverings must not contain any 3 Page | 3 slogans/logos/images that may cause upset or be deemed offensive to any member of the school community.
- performing hand hygiene with a hand sanitiser on entering the school.
- repeating hand-hygiene at regular intervals throughout the school day and when directed by school staff;
- maintaining good respiratory-hygiene. In this regard students should:
 - cover nose/mouth with a tissue when coughing/sneezing and dispose of used tissue in waste bin and perform hand hygiene
 - cough or sneeze into the inner elbow (upper sleeve) rather than into the hand, if no tissues are available.
 - keep contaminated hands away from the eyes and nose o carry out hand hygiene after contact with respiratory secretions and contaminated objects/materials o not spit or deliberately cough or sneeze at or towards any other person in the school
- not attending school if displaying COVID-19 like symptoms and remaining out of school for such period as is required in accordance with HSE/GP advice
- not attending school where tested positive for COVID-19 and remaining out of school for such period as is required in accordance with HSE/GP advice
- not attending school if identified by the HSE as a person who has been in contact with another person who has contracted COVID-19 and remaining out of school for such period as is required in accordance with HSE/GP advice;
- not attending school if a member of the student's household is displaying COVID-19 symptoms and remaining out of school for such period as is required in accordance with HSE/GP advice
- telling a teacher or other member of staff where a student feels unwell at school. In that regard the student will require to be collected from the school as soon as possible by a parent/guardian or a person designated by the parent/guardian for such purpose. o parents must ensure that the school has up-to-date contact details so that they can be contacted by the school if required.

- complying with any other such directions as advised by the DES and/or HSE and communicated to the school community. Note – schools should review the above list and adjust or add items where necessary having regard to its own particular circumstances. Students should be aware that the above is a non-exhaustive list. Students are expected to follow all instructions from staff which aim to prevent the introduction of COVID-19 into the school and minimise its spread.

4. Failure to comply with the standards of behaviour

Failure by a student to comply with the standards of behaviour expected to help prevent the introduction and spread of COVID-19 will constitute a breach of the Code of Behaviour of St Mac Dara's Community College and s/he may be subject to sanction up to and including suspension or permanent exclusion. Any actions or sanctions taken in respect of alleged breaches of the code of behaviour will be carried out in accordance with the provisions of the school's code of behaviour, the requirements of the EWS Guidelines on Developing a Code of Behaviour and relevant requirements of the Education and Welfare Act 2000. Sanctions will be proportionate to the nature, seriousness and context of the behaviour.

A student engaging in aggressive, threatening or unacceptable behaviour that creates or increases the risk of COVID-19 infection for staff, other students or visitors to the school may be removed from class and, if necessary, from the school premises with immediate effect, pending any further action to be taken in accordance with the school's code of behaviour.

Sanctions and Interventions

Not all breaches of the Code of Positive Behaviour will incur sanctions although they may earn disapproval. However, specific serious breaches or repetitive minor breaches will result in sanctions being imposed. This will encourage and promote a good learning environment which respects the rights of all students to achieve their best. Some or all of the following strategies may be employed;

- Every effort will be made to resolve the difficulty with the co-operation of a parent(s)
- The class teacher is responsible for their own classroom management. This may include reasoning with the student, a firm reprimand, and/or a letter of apology from the student
- Serious breaches will be referred on to the appropriate Year Head who may have to report the matter to parents/ guardians, following investigation and/or interview(s)
- A class teacher or Year Head may deem it necessary to report a student directly to the Principal or Deputy Principal
- All staff on supervision or substitution duties are authorised to ensure full compliance with our code of behaviour by imposing recommended sanctions.

The following strategies may be used to show disapproval of unacceptable behaviour;

- Reasoning with the student
- Reprimand, including advice on how to improve behaviour
- Move place in class
- Removal from a class, or for a more serious breach, a block of classes
- Parents/ Guardians will be notified by phone of serious indiscipline when a Year Head or member of Senior Management feels that notification is warranted

- Loss of privileges
- Detention before or after school or during lunch-time. Parents will be given at least 24 hours notice
- Placement on Conduct/Behaviour Sheet
- In-House Suspension from a particular subject for a limited time
- External suspension (in consultation with the Principal).

Procedures for Suspension

As required under the Education (Welfare) Act 2000, Section 23 (2) the following procedures will apply in the case of suspension;

- The Principal and/or Deputy Principal can suspend a student from school for a serious breach of discipline or in circumstances of continuous failure to conform to school rules.
- Parents have the right to appeal the decision to suspend their son/daughter to the Board of Management.
- The Principal will inform Tusla if a student has been suspended for more than 20 days in any school year.
- Suspension will always be considered in matters that involve bullying, fighting, unauthorised absence, substance abuse, possession of illegal instruments, possession of illegal substances, serious disrespect for all managerial, teaching and ancillary school staff, school property and repeated breaches of the Code of Behaviour.
- Parents will be notified of a serious breach of the code of behaviour and will be given the opportunity to meet with a member of the Senior Management to discuss the decision to suspend and the duration of the suspension. Please note that a suspension from one or two or up to ten school days may be imposed for very serious breaches of discipline.
- Students are expected to follow a programme of study while suspended.
- The student must report to the Principal, Deputy Principal or Year Head upon his/ her return to school.
- All supports available in the school will be offered to help students to reflect on the impact of their behaviour.
- The Principal may refer the student to the relevant authorities, including the Gardaí.

- **The Grounds for suspension:**

Suspension shall be a proportionate response to the behaviour that is causing concern. Normally the College will have tried other interventions before suspension, and College staff will have reviewed the reasons why these have not worked.

The decision to suspend a student requires serious grounds such as that:

- The student's behaviour has had a serious detrimental effect on the education of other students.
- The student has engaged in a serious breach of the Learning Code
- The student poses a Health and Safety concern
- The student's continued presence in the school at this time constitutes a threat to safety.
- The student is responsible for serious damage to property.
- A single incident of serious misconduct may be grounds for suspension.
- Repeated breaches of the Learning Code in spite of warnings and counselling by staff.
- Failure to recognise and adhere to the legitimate authority of the College.
- Behaviour which is considered to interfere with the right to learn of other students.
- Particularly serious incidents which endanger the welfare of others or themselves
- The student has engaged in activity contrary to the lunchtime arrangements.
- Inappropriate behaviour outside the school environs.

This list is not exhaustive of the possible grounds for suspension

Exclusion

- In order to ensure the safety of all our students and uphold discipline and good order in the school it may be necessary to permanently exclude a student from the school.
- Where the Principal considers that the safety of other members of the school is at risk or where the teaching and learning of other students is being seriously disrupted by another student, the Principal will refer the matter to the Board of Management.
- The rules of natural justice shall be adhered to and pupils (over 18) and parents will be given an opportunity to respond prior to any decision being made.
- Where the Board of Management is of the opinion that the student should be excluded, it shall notify Tusla, in writing, of its opinions and decisions.
- Parents may appeal the decision of the Board of Management to DDLETB (Dublin & Dun Laoghaire Education Training Board).
- Should DDLETB uphold the decision of the Board with regard to the exclusion of the student then parents may appeal this decision to the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Science.

APPENDIX 1

RESTORATIVE PRACTICE

Cultivating positive behaviour at school

Date _____

Name _____ Class _____ Year _____

RESTORATIVE Questions to deal with a negative incident.

1. What happened? Describe the incident.
2. What were you thinking of at that time?
3. Did you think about the incident since then? What did you think?
4. Who did the incident influence or affect? How did the incident influence/affect those others?
5. Would there be another way to influence an incident like this in the future? Describe how?
6. What actions should we do now as a result of this incident.

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2. What were you thinking of at that time? _____

3. Did you think about the incident since then? What did you think? _____

4. Who did the incident influence or affect? How did the incident influence/affect those others? _____

5. Would there be another way to influence an incident like this in the future? Describe how? _____

6. What actions should we do now as a result of this incident? _____

This policy has been made available to school personnel, published on the school website (or where none exists, is otherwise readily accessible to parents and pupils on request) and provided to the Parents' Association (where one exists). A copy of this policy will be made available to the Department and the patron if requested.

This policy and its implementation will be reviewed by the Board of Management every school year. Written notification that the review has been completed will be made available to school personnel, published on the school website (or where none exists, be otherwise readily accessible to parents and pupils on request) and provided to the Parents' Association (where one exists). A record of the review and its outcome will be made available, if requested, to the patron and the Department.

This policy was adopted by the Board of Management on 4 Oct 2022

Signed: Pamela Keen
(Chairperson of Board of Management)

Signed: Derek Ward
(Principal)

Date: 4th / Oct / 2022

Date: 4 Oct 2022