St Augustine's Code of Behaviour

An Introduction to Our School

St Augustine's is a Youth Encounter Project school (YEP) under the trusteeship of the Diocese of Limerick.

The Code of Behaviour is based on Section 23 of the Education Welfare Act 2000. It is informed by and complies with the Education Act 1998, the Education Welfare Act 2000, and the Education of Persons with Special Education Act 2004. It is guided by 'Developing a Code of Behaviour: Guidelines for Schools' published by the National Education Welfare Board (NEWB).

The Code of Behaviour is implemented within the context of the school's Mission Statement, which states:

In partnership with parents, we aim to foster our students' intellectual, emotional, and social development in a mutually educational and respectful atmosphere.

We endeavor to:
- Provide a comprehensive, high-quality education that addresses the personal, social, and emotional needs of our school community.
- Holistically empower learners to participate in society and realise their unique potential fully.
- Provide a supportive, safe, healthy teaching and learning environment for our students and staff.
- Promote and enhance the well-being, resilience, and self-mastery of our students.
- Facilitate our student's self-development and transition to further education.

The Rationale behind our Code of Behaviour

The Code of Behaviour aims to ensure the effective and safe operation of the school, creating an environment of care and respect—respect for self, others, property, and the environment—so that a positive, safe, and cooperative atmosphere of pupil-centred learning is created. This Code of Behaviour encourages a spirit of partnership and mutual respect between parents, pupils, and students in accordance with the ethos of St. Augustine's.

How Our Code Was Developed?

The Board of Management is responsible for the Code of Behaviours. The Board prepared this policy in consultation with the Principal, staff, students, and parents of the school. This policy replaces all previous policy statements on student behaviour.

When And Where Does Our Code Apply?

This Code applies to all pupils of St. Augustine's YEP and concerns all school activities, including extracurricular activities, both during and outside normal school hours and on and off the school premises. Pupils must show respect toward school staff and each other both inside and outside of school hours. Courtesy and respect are expected from and by staff, visitors, and fellow students at all times.

Promoting Positive Behaviour

In keeping with the school's mission statement, we seek to promote and reward positive behaviours throughout the school. Praise and reward have considerable importance within the school. Such positive behaviour includes contributions during class, school activities, and adherence to the Code of Behaviour. The following strategies are implemented to promote positive behaviour:

- Verbal praise of students. Teachers will recognise the effort and improvement in students' work or behaviour at school and home.
- Positive written/oral feedback by base teacher on classwork or test
- Recording positive behaviour in the students supports internal reporting records.
- Assemblies with each class group will be used to reinforce expectations/attendance and reward positive behaviours and attendance. These assemblies can be facilitated by an ISM or a wellbeing member.
- Highlight achievement through JCSP awards in class and on school display boards.
- An annual reward ceremony occurs at the end of the academic year, where all levels of achievements are celebrated.
- Whole school approach to promoting positive behaviour with a positive intervention model (PI) for best practice (encouraging student's voice)
- Inter-agency supports are developed, nurtured, and maintained
- St. Augustine's school staff are encouraged to communicate with parents when students behave well (not just with challenges).
- Parents are encouraged to support staff in promoting good behaviour and helping students holistically, in accordance with the Student Optimal Support (SOS) plan.

School strategies to manage and promote positive behaviour.

Please refer to our managing behaviour response statement, Assessment Policy, and our overall behaviour model.

School Contracts/ Agreements

General Behaviour:

To ensure the best standards of behaviour in an environment of respect and good manners:

- Students are encouraged to behave respectfully at all times.
- Bullying, harassment, or threatening behaviour in any format is not tolerated and will be thoroughly investigated and appropriately dealt with. All students are required to sign the school's Anti-Bullying Code.

Classroom Behaviour:

To ensure a positive, cooperative, and focused learning environment:

- Students are encouraged to work well in class by positively contributing to the learning experience.
- Students and parents are aware of the agreed behaviour internal reporting system and how we record all behaviours
- All equipment provided in the class must be respected and not damaged.

Attendance and Punctuality

Because attendance is fundamental for success in education, the highest standards of attendance is required to prevent disruption to learning:

- Students should attend school each day it is open. If this is not possible, a phone call to the school would be very much appreciated.
- Students are encouraged to avail themselves of the well-being programme before classes commence in the morning.
- Permission to leave the school during the day must be obtained before leaving.
- Any student who feels ill and unable to remain in school must report to the Student Support Team or the Principal and ask for a parent/guardian to be contacted.
- Students and parents are expected to familiarise themselves with the Attendance and Punctuality Policy (Appendix)
- Please refer to St. Augustine's Internal attendance model.

Uniform:

To promote the good image of the school and of each student and to create a sense of pride in our school:

- Students are encouraged to wear full and correct uniform
- Jewellery of a bulky nature is not allowed to be worn during the school day, but it can be kept safe in the office

Lunchtime:

Procedures:

Our Fear and Ti prepare breakfast, lunch, and snacks for all school students, with the support of the Wellbeing Team if necessary.

- Lunchtimes per group: Foundation Group 12.30 - 12.50; Senior Cycle 12.50 - 1.10
- In the event of School PE activities needing additional time, all supports will be utilised to ensure this (Appropriate communication with ISM and, in particular, the Fear an Ti is necessary to avoid confusion and to provide adequate planning)
- With parental permission, exam Pupils (Group 3) may leave the school building at lunchtime.
- Students are encouraged to sit for the first ten minutes of their allocated lunchtime; permission to use the Games Room or to go outside to the yard will not be permitted during the first ten minutes of all lunch times. Supervising staff will use professional discretion in line with health and safety and child safeguarding procedures.
- Students are encouraged and supported to clear their eating area. Compost and waste bins are provided

Supervision

The Wellbeing Team the school Principal (if required) will supervise lunchtime periods with the school wellbeing team. It is the responsibility of the staff timetabled for supervision duties to organise a replacement if they are not in a position to be present.

All other staff who are not on supervision duties at these times are asked and encouraged to use the staff room or their choice of other space at this time.

If a staff member is leaving the building, a hangout will be sent through the school's internal messaging system.

Health and safety:

Please refer to our health and safety policy.

Bathroom Breaks

- Students are encouraged to visit the toilet before class begins, during break and lunch to avoid classroom disruption.
- Parents should communicate with the school about any medical conditions requiring additional support.

Mobile Phones

- Should a student arrive at school with a mobile phone, they will be required to hand it up to their base teacher, and it can be collected at the end of the day when it is home time.
- If a student is seen with a phone, they are gently reminded to hand the phone to their base teacher.
- If students refuse to hand up a mobile phone, their parents will be contacted.
- The use of picture images and recordings is strictly forbidden. Failure to comply is a serious matter, and it may result in school suspension or expulsion.
- In the event of an emergency, students may request to use the school phone

- Please refer to the **Internet acceptable use policy**

Food and Drink/Kitchen

To promote a healthy, safe, and hygienic environment

- Food and drink is only to be consumed in the kitchen area except water permitted in classrooms if required
- Flexibility/professional judgment and sensitivity fostered by all staff where the need for food/drink is provided outside of break times
- Eating areas must be left tidy, and rubbish put in appropriate bins
- The kitchen can be a hazardous area with equipment and boiling water. No students are to enter the cooking area but are to remain in the seating area at all times for their and other's safety

Absconding

- Once pupils enter the school premises, they are to remain there until the formal end of the school day unless permission has been granted by parents/guardians and communicated to all staff through the internal hangout system where possible.
- If a pupil appears missing, a hangout is sent to all staff, the well-being team is immediately notified, and a thorough building search is conducted.
- If there is no doubt that the pupil has absconded, the school office will contact their parents/guardians to inform them and call the **Gardai after 30 minutes** if the child has yet to be located.
- **Staff do not follow a pupil** if they abscond. The above procedure must be adhered to
- Suppose the pupil returns of his/her volition, parents or the Gardai will be informed immediately. The pupil will be offered support by a member of the well-being team, and a decision will follow on a case-by-case basis as to whether the student will be integrated back into the classroom setting (to keep normality) or a parent is called into the school to support with the transition from school to home. Parents/Guardians will be invited on the following day to meet with the well-being team to revisit the policy for clarity and further reinforcement.
- If the Principal and Deputy Principal are out of the office, the next senior staff member will respond accordingly.

How the School Responds to Breaches in the Code of Behaviour

St. Augustine's school is fortunate to have an on-site well-being Team consisting of the school community worker and the student support worker under the guidance of the Principal. Together, the team aims to ensure every student is treated fairly, listened to, and supported in integrating into school life at St. Augustine's.

As part of a whole school approach to responding to inappropriate behaviour staff will deal with incidents of misbehaviour directly and keep agreed records (Internal staff recording)

Please refer to St. Augustine's model for managing behaviour.

The Wellbeing Team

See the well-being team model of work/framework.

The SST is responsible for linking in and responding to classroom teachers (PI Model) and recording data under the school model to promote adherence to the Code of Behaviour. The SST is also responsible for weekly preventative interventions agreed upon at the behaviour management meetings. Contact with a parent/guardian at home may be required to discuss the student's behaviour. Students may be provided with a Report. All behaviours are seen as an opportunity for learning, and staff will try to support pupils to make better choices for an overall positive experience.

The Principal

The Principal is responsible for the school and will make informed decisions where necessary. Where a suspension period is over three days, the Board of Management must intervene.

SUSPENSION:

Overview

A decision to suspend a student requires that:

- The student and parents are informed of the complaint, and
- Parents and students are allowed to respond.

A student should be suspended for up to three days, except in exceptional circumstances where the principal considers it warranted to achieve a particular objective. Where the principal proposes a suspension longer than three days, the board should refer the matter. A board of management may wish to authorise the Principal, with the board's chairperson's approval, to impose a suspension of up to five days in circumstances where a board meeting cannot be convened in a timely fashion, subject to the guidance concerning such suspensions. The board should normally place a ceiling of 10 days on any one period of suspension imposed by it. Pupils should not be suspended for an indefinite period.

Schools should notify parents and students of decisions to suspend in writing. When the suspension ends, a plan should be made to reintegrate the student into the class, and pupils should be given the opportunity and support for a fresh start (INTO)

In some circumstances, the Principal (or his/her Deputy on the principal's authorization) may suspend a student immediately (HI).

A behaviour contract signed with the well-being team may be required of the students upon reintegration into the classroom.

The Educational Welfare Officer will be informed if a student is suspended for six days or more or has accumulated twenty days or more of suspensions in a school year.

Appeal to Board of Management
The principles of natural justice demand that a right of appeal to a higher authority is available. Parents/guardians, or a student when the student is over the age of eighteen years of age, may appeal a suspension to the Board of Management. The school may insist that the pupil remain at home while the appeal proceeds. The Board will hear such an appeal and will decide to either uphold the appeal or to approve the suspension. If an appeal is successful, the suspension will be lifted.

In the event of a successful appeal against a suspension, the Board will delete any reference to it from the student's file. It may impose another sanction on the student instead of suspension or no further sanction.

External appeal

Under Section 29 of the Education Act 1998, an appeal can be made to the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Skills where a student is, among other things, suspended from attendance at the school for a period which would bring the cumulative period of suspension to 20 days in any one school year. Further information and the Appeals Application Form are available from the Section 29 Appeals Administration Unit, Department of Education and Science, Cornamaddy, County Westmeath – telephone (0906) 483600 – www.education.ie.

Grounds for removing a suspension

A suspension may be rescinded in the following circumstances:

- Successful appeal to the Board of Management or successful External Appeal.
- New circumstances come to light after the suspension has been applied that would have mitigated the sanction had they been known beforehand.
- Other mitigating factors are consistent with applying the principles of natural justice.

EXPULSION

Overview

The board of management of a school has the authority to expel a student. As a matter of best practice, this authority should not be delegated. Expulsion should be proportionate to the student's behaviour and only invoked in extreme cases of unacceptable behaviour. The school should have taken significant steps to address the misbehaviour and be satisfied that they have exhausted all possibilities for changing the student's behaviour. There may be exceptional circumstances where a board believes the student should be expelled for a first offense, e.g., actual violence or physical assault.

Decisions to expel should follow fair procedures, including:

1. A detailed investigation was carried out under the direction of the principal.
2. A recommendation to the board of management by the principal.
3. Consideration by the board of management of the principal's recommendation and the holding of a hearing.
4. Board of Management deliberations and actions following the hearing, including informing the Education Welfare Board of its opinion. (the student cannot be expelled before the passage of 20 days from the date that the NEWB receives this written notification)
5. Consultations arranged by the Educational Welfare Officer.
6. Confirmation of the decision to expel.

Expulsion decisions are subject to appeal under Section 29 of the Education Act.

REVIEW OF THE CODE OF BEHAVIOUR POLICY

In consultation with the relevant partners, the Board of Management of the School will review this policy at the end of each academic year. See agreed policy statement (Appendix)

The Board may, subject to relevant legislation and subject to Department of Education and Skills regulations, alter or amend any section of this policy as appropriate.

The Code was reviewed and approved by the Board of Management on June 2025

Signed: _____

Chairperson, Board of Management,

St.Augustines, Sexton Street, Limerick

Policies and statements embedded in this Code of Behaviour

Assessment Policy

Managing behaviour model

Wellbeing Team Framework

Absconding Policy (mentioned)

Mobile Phone

Internet Acceptable Policy

Attendance

Lunchtime (mentioned)

Mission Statement