



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/guardians, we strive to nurture our students' intellectual, emotional, and social development in a mutually educational and respectful environment.

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 students' 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/guardians, pupils, and students following the ethos of St. Augustine's.



How Our Code Was Developed?

The Board of Management is responsible for the Code of Behaviour. The Board prepared this policy in consultation with the Principal, staff, students, and school parents/guardians. 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. It concerns all school activities, including extracurricular activities during and outside regular school hours, as well as those on and off the school premises. Pupils must show respect to school staff and to each other, both inside and outside 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 behavior includes contributions during class, participation in school activities, and adherence to the Code of Behavior. 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 at home.
- Positive written/oral feedback by the base teacher on classwork or a test
- Recording positive behaviour in the students supports internal reporting records.
- Assemblies with each class group will reinforce expectations and attendance, and reward positive behaviors. An ISM or a wellbeing member can facilitate these assemblies.
- Highlight achievement through JCSP awards in class and on school display boards.
- An annual award ceremony takes place at the end of the academic year, celebrating achievements at all levels.
- Whole school approach to promoting positive behaviour with a positive intervention model (PI) for best practice (encouraging students' voice)
- Inter-agency supports are developed, nurtured, and maintained
- St. Augustine's school staff are encouraged to communicate with parents/guardians when students behave well (not just when they face challenges).
 - parents/guardians are encouraged to support staff in promoting good behaviour and helping students holistically, following the Student Optimal Support(SOS) plan.
 - Graduation is celebrated in a bespoke, individualised, and family-centred way in our school. Each celebration is thoughtfully tailored to the needs of the student and their family, with care taken to ensure the experience is meaningful, inclusive, and not overwhelming for anyone involved.



School strategies to manage and promote positive behaviour.

Please refer to our Managing Behaviour Response Statement, Assessment Policy, and 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 participate actively in class by making positive contributions to the learning experience.
- Students and parents/guardians 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.

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 a full uniform at all times.
- 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 Tí prepares 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)
- Exam Pupils (Group 3) may leave the school building at lunchtime with parental permission.
- 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 per 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 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.



Bathroom Breaks:

- Students are encouraged to use the toilet during break times—before class, at morning break, and lunchtime—to minimise disruption during lessons.
- If a student has a medical condition or specific need that requires more frequent access to the bathroom, parents/guardians/guardians are asked to inform the school so appropriate support can be provided.

Mobile Phones

Circular 0044/2025 requires primary schools to implement a full ban on pupils' access to personal mobile phones throughout the school day. The rationale includes:

- Enhancing learning environments by reducing distractions and improving concentration.
- Strengthening pupil wellbeing by reducing opportunities for cyberbullying and exposure to inappropriate online content.
- Encouraging in-person social interaction, helping children disconnect from screens and engage more with peers during breaks.

Aligned with the Department's Digital Strategy, this measure complements curriculum aims around digital competence and online safety, providing a structured "phone-free" setting conducive to learning.

- Should a student arrive at school with a mobile phone, they will be required to hand it up to their 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 over a mobile phone, their parents/guardians will be contacted.
- The use of images and recordings is strictly forbidden. Failure to comply is a serious matter that 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, which is 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 others' 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/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/guardians to inform them. In accordance with the individual needs of the pupil and the specific circumstances, the Gardai may be contacted if the child has not been located within a reasonable timeframe, typically around 30 minutes."
- **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/guardians or the Gardai will be informed immediately. A member of the well-being team will offer the pupil support, 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/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/guardians are informed of the complaint, and
- parents/guardians and students are allowed to respond.

The school recognises suspension as a serious sanction and aims to use it only when all other interventions have been considered. Suspension may be applied for up to three school days in cases where it is deemed necessary to support the safety and wellbeing of the school community, or to uphold standards of behaviour. In exceptional circumstances, the Principal may consider a suspension beyond three days if it is necessary to achieve a specific and justifiable objective.

Where a suspension longer than three days is being proposed, the matter should be referred to the Board of Management. In instances where a timely meeting of the Board cannot be arranged, and with the Chairperson's approval, the Board may authorise the Principal to impose a suspension of up to five days, in line with relevant guidance.

The Board should normally apply a ceiling of ten school days on any single period of suspension that it imposes. Pupils should not be suspended for an indefinite period, and every effort will be made to resolve issues and support the student's return to school.

parents/guardians and students will be informed of any decision to suspend in writing. Upon the conclusion of a suspension, the school will develop a reintegration plan to support the pupil's return to class and promote continued engagement with learning.

In some circumstances, the Principal (or his/her Deputy on the Principal's authorisation) 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.

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

Appeal to the Board of Management

The principles of natural justice demand that a right of appeal to a higher authority is available. parents/guardians/guardians, or a student when the student is over eighteen, may appeal a suspension to the Board of Management. The school may insist that the pupil remain home while the appeal proceeds. The Board will hear such an appeal and will decide to either uphold the appeal or 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. The Educational Welfare Officer arranges consultations.
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 the agreed policy statement (Appendix)

The Board may, subject to relevant legislation and 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 in June 2025

Signed: _____

Chairperson, Board of Management,

St. Augustine's, Sexton Street, Limerick

Policies and statements embedded in this Code of Behaviour

"This Code of Behaviour is closely aligned with and informed by a range of the school's policies and frameworks, ensuring a consistent and integrated approach across all aspects of school life."