

Meánscoil Iognáid Rís
Drinnagh Castle

DRIMNAGH CASTLE

Code of Discipline



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Code of Behaviour

This Code of Behaviour has been devised by the staff of Drimnagh Castle in consultation with the Board of Management, students and Parents' Council. It adheres to the guidelines set out in the NEWB/TUSLA publication - *Developing a Code of Behaviour: guidelines for schools*. Meánscoil Iognáid Rís is committed to establishing a caring community within the school based on respect. It is expected that pupils will behave in a manner that demonstrates the highest respect for themselves, their fellow pupils and the school staff. The support of parents is essential to achieving an atmosphere of care and discipline within the school. Each pupil and his parents must, on entry to the school, indicate in writing their acceptance of the policy on discipline. This acceptance must be renewed on registration for each new school year.

Rationale

In accordance with Section 23 (2) of the *Education Welfare Act 2000*, the Code of Behaviour shall specify the following:

- The standards of behaviour that shall be observed by each student attending the school.
- The measures that may be taken when a student fails or refuses to observe these standards.
- The procedures to be followed before a student may be suspended or expelled from the school.
- The grounds for removing a suspension imposed in relation to a student.
- The procedure to be followed relating to notification of a pupil's absence from school.

Aims of the Code of Discipline

The Code of Behaviour aims to:

- Create a climate that encourages and reinforces good behaviour.
- Create a positive and safe environment for teaching and learning.
- Encourage students to take personal responsibility for their learning and behaviour.
- Develop positive relationships of mutual respect and support amongst students, staff and parents.
- Ensure that behavioural expectations are widely known and understood.

Mission Statement

Meánscoil Iognáid Rís, Drimnagh Castle operates within the context of the Edmund Rice Schools Trust (ERST) Charter. The legacy of Edmund Rice, founder of the Christian Brothers, challenges our school to be inclusive and to be especially mindful of the disadvantaged. It challenges our school to focus on the importance of a value based, Christian education in the Catholic tradition. The school embraces the vision of promoting in its pupils full personal and social development in a caring Christian community of learning and teaching. It subscribes to a holistic vision of education which is expressed in the following five key principles:

- Nurturing faith, Christian spirituality and Gospel based values.
- Promoting partnership.
- Excelling in teaching and learning.
- Creating a caring school community.
- Inspiring transformational leadership.

Guidelines for Behaviour in the School

All members of the school community, students, teachers and parents should recognise that the quality of relationships is a powerful influence on behaviour in schools. Adults have more responsibility for building these relationships. Standards of behaviour should reflect values such as:

- Respect for self and others.
- Courtesy and good manners.
- Creation of a safe and positive environment conducive to learning.
- Readiness to use respectful ways of resolving difficulties and conflict.
- Behaviour that is hurtful (including bullying, harassment, discrimination and victimisation) will not be tolerated.

Roles, Responsibilities and Expectations

All members of the school community, teachers, students, staff, SNAs, parents and guardians will fully comply with Covid-19 measures and protocols that are implemented for the health and safety of all staff and students.

Parents

Parents and a supportive home environment play an important role in shaping attitudes which produce good behaviour in schools. It is incumbent on parents to:

- Ensure that their son attends school regularly and punctually.
- Encourage their son to adhere to the school's code of behaviour.
- Ensure that their son wears the school uniform in full.
- Ensure that their son has the correct books and materials.
- Co-operate with school authorities where their son's behaviour is causing difficulty.
- Encourage and support their son to complete his school work.
- Attend parent / teacher meetings.
- Regularly check their son's homework journal for information regarding their son's behaviour, progress and other relevant information.
- Positively support the teaching staff in the application of the code of discipline.

Good communication between school and home is actively encouraged in the best interests of the individual pupil, and every effort is made by the principal and staff to ensure that parents are kept well informed of their son's progress.

Teachers

Teachers' support and attitude are critical for the implementation of the code in a fair but effective manner. Each teacher has responsibility for the maintenance of discipline within his/her class, while sharing a common responsibility for good order within the school premises.

The teacher is responsible in the first instance for discipline in the class and most problems should be dealt with by the teacher in charge of the class. He /she should:

- Develop lively and stimulating teaching methods, with work well matched to pupils' abilities.
- Facilitate and encourage pupils to reach their full academic potential.

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- Insist firmly but fairly on honest effort and commitment from pupils, as well as high standards of behaviour.
- Seek to create an environment attractive for learning and conducive to good behaviour.
- Take into account the students' social and environmental contexts.

The Principal and Deputy Principal

The Principal and Deputy Principal have the responsibility to ensure that the school's code of discipline is administered in a manner which is consistent and fair to all pupils. It is incumbent on management to encourage a sense of collective responsibility among staff and a sense of commitment to the school among pupils and their parents. The Principal/Deputy Principal should provide guidance and support to all members of the school community in the implementation of the school policy on behaviour.

Year Head

The Year Head has management, administrative, disciplinary and pastoral duties/responsibilities. These include

- Liaising with and supporting class tutors
- Ensuring that class tutors have up-to-date student files containing contact details, academic records and disciplinary records (where relevant).
- Dealing with serious disciplinary issues: pupils in receipt of more than 3 reports and pupils engaged in a serious incident which may warrant suspension.
- Monitoring student academic performance
- Liaising with Principal/Deputy Principal
- Formal meetings with tutors

Class Tutor

The Class Tutor performs administrative, pastoral and disciplinary roles. These include

- Monitoring pupil attendance
- Signing all parental notes in journal (absentee notes, requests to leave school early etc.)
- Communicating with parents in respect of pastoral/disciplinary matters
- Liaising with subject teachers in respect of pastoral/disciplinary matters
- Dealing with disciplinary issues (up to and including third disciplinary report)

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- Maintaining student files – all reports to be given to tutor.
- Liaising with Year Heads in respect of pupils who receive more than three reports and in respect of incidents which may warrant suspension
- Weekly signing of class journal

Expectations of Pupils

- Pupils are required to be in class each morning by **8.55am** and each afternoon by **1.45pm**.
- All **absences** must be explained satisfactorily in writing to the Class Tutor by the parents/guardians in their homework journal. A pupil may not leave the school before the time of dismissal without presenting a written request from his parents/guardians.
- Pupils are expected to wear the full school uniform at all times in school and on the journey to and from the school. Any student who arrives in school without full uniform must have a note from a parent/guardian in his journal and this must be presented to the Deputy Principal on arrival. Earrings, nose rings, studs or any visible piercings may not be worn. Hairstyles, which in view of the school are extreme, are not permitted.
- Each pupil must ensure that he has his correct books/materials with him each day. He is expected to work diligently in school and perform his homework satisfactorily.
- Each pupil is expected to treat with respect the teaching and non-teaching staff of the school. Pupil behaviour that causes disruption or offence is unacceptable and will be treated as a very serious misdemeanour, which may result in suspension.
- Pupils are expected to show respect for each other. Any incident of fighting or bullying will be treated as a very serious offence, which may result in suspension.
- In compliance with the *Employment Equality Act (1998)*, the school recognises that all employees and students have a right to a workplace free from sexual harassment and is fully committed to ensuring that they are able to enjoy that right, and that sexual harassment will not be tolerated.
- Each pupil is responsible for the care of his own property and no pupil may interfere with the property of another. Pupils are expected to treat school property with respect and any damage to the school property will be treated as a very serious offence. The school cannot accept any responsibility for the loss/theft of a student's property. Lockers are available for the use of our pupils. It is the responsibility of each student to ensure his locker is secured with a suitable padlock. Lockers are the property of the school, they are rented to pupils

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and may be inspected by school authorities at any time with or without the students' consent.

- Students will have a responsibility
- towards the cleanliness and tidiness of their classrooms and the school environment. All litter should be placed in the bins provided and the school furniture must not be defaced or wilfully damaged.
- The authority of the school may extend beyond normal school hours. Pupils are expected to behave with care and respect on their way to and from school. When students are wearing the school uniform, are involved in school related activities or meet staff in passing, they are expected to be conscious of the fact that they will be seen as representatives of the school. As a consequence, students are expected to behave in a manner consistent with the standards set by the school.
- Smoking within the school building or its environs is strictly forbidden and may result in suspension.
- The consumption of alcohol and the use or possession of illegal non-prescribed drugs in the school building/ grounds, in school uniform or while representing the school is absolutely forbidden. Disregard for this regulation will warrant suspension or in some cases expulsion.
- Mobile phones/iPods/MP3/4 players may not be in view or in use in the school building. Any student found using such devices will have them confiscated by the teacher; these will then be passed on to the Principal or Deputy Principal. Refusal to hand over the device (including SIM card where applicable) will be regarded as a serious misdemeanour. The items will only be returned to students the following day upon receipt of a note from a parent/guardian. Meánscoil Iognáid Rís, Drinnagh Castle CBS cannot accept responsibility for any loss to any such items brought into the school.

Charter of Classroom Conduct

Pupils are expected to adhere to the following Code of Classroom Conduct:

- Be on time.
- Have the required books/equipment and homework.
- Listen to and follow instructions.
- Get down to work and stay on task.
- Do not distract others in any way.
- Raise your hand to speak.
- Keep your area clean and tidy.
- Remain quiet and seated between classes.
- Show respect to staff and other pupils.

Attendance and Punctuality

Students are expected to be present on every school day, and be punctual for school and all classes. School begins at 8.55a.m sharp and ends at 3.45pm or 1.05pm on Wednesdays. Lunch break is from 1.05pm to 1.45pm.

Punctuality

Punctuality is essential to the smooth running of the school. It is an important discipline that is vital to the teaching and learning environment in the school. If a student is late for the first class in the morning or first class in the afternoon, they are required to sign-in at the Deputy Principal's office. Upon accumulation of three lates per term, detention is imposed. If a student is late for any other class, this will be recorded by the Class Teacher and dealt with through appropriate disciplinary structures.

Absenteeism

Regular attendance is essential for effective progress at school. Following any absence, students must supply a note of explanation signed by a parent/guardian in their homework journal to explain their absence. Parents/guardians should note that in accordance with the *Education (Welfare) Act 2000*, when a student is absent for more than 20 days cumulatively in any school year for whatever reason or reasons, the school must report this to the Education Welfare Officer.

A student may only leave the school during school hours with a note in their homework journal from a parent/guardian and permission from his class tutor. He must sign out in the secretary's office when leaving the school. A student becoming sick during the school day must report to the class tutor who will, if necessary, contact his parents/guardians. Unauthorised departures from school within school hours are regarded as serious transgressions and students found in breach of this rule may be suspended.

Senior students (Transition Year, 5th Year and 6th Year) have permission to leave the school grounds at lunchtime only (1.05pm – 1.45pm). Senior students should note that late arrival for classes following lunchtime may result in the imposition of sanctions. Junior Cycle students (1st-3rd Year) who wish to go home for lunch may do so provided they have completed and returned to the school a lunchtime pass application form – subject to approval by the school authority.

Rewards and Sanctions

Promoting Good Behaviour

Drimnagh Castle is committed to a policy of recognition, encouragement and reward of positive behaviour and achievement. Among the methods for rewarding good behaviour are:

- Positive affirmation in the classroom from the teacher.
- An affirmation note in the student's homework journal.
- Positive and formative end of term reports.
- Individual teachers are encouraged to adopt an award system for their class.
- Annual prize giving awards ceremony focusing on rewarding students in each year group who made exceptional contributions to academia and sport.
- A Student of the Year award for each year group, whereby teachers nominate a student in each year for this award. The award goes to the student who receives the most nominations; these nominations are based on the student's overall contribution to the class.
- Awards for students who have excellent attendance records in each year.
- Achievements in extra-curricular activities are published on the website, notice boards, media screens and newsletters.
- Students are encouraged to involve themselves in extracurricular activities, social concern projects, mentoring programmes and seek membership of the Students' Council.

Sanctions

Sanctions are essential to register disapproval of unacceptable behaviour. In instances of misbehaviour or a breach of school rules, a student may be liable to sanction. The sanction imposed will be appropriate to the misdemeanour committed.

Sanctions include:

- Reasoning with the student and reprimand, including advice on how to improve.
- Moving a student's position in classroom/separate from peers.
- Provision of additional written homework/corrective written work.
- Communication with parents e.g. note in journal, phone call or letter.
- Detention.
- For persistent or serious misbehaviour, a detailed report is submitted to the Class Tutor.
- Parents contacted and requested to come to a meeting.
- Referral to the Class Tutor/Year Head
- Being placed on report for a specific time: the student is placed on report and his parents are informed of this. It is the responsibility of the student to present the report form to the

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teacher at the beginning of each class period and to ensure that it is filled in at the end of the class period. The report form is to be shown to the Class Tutor at the end of the day.

- Referral to the Discipline Committee (consisting of the Deputy Principal, the Year Head and Class Tutor) which may impose a further period of suspension.
- Referral to the Principal.
- Referral to the Board of Management for a decision of expulsion.
- Refusal of a character reference.

Inappropriate sanctions include:

- Physical punishment or the threat of physical punishment: physical chastisement of a student is illegal under section 24 of the *Non-Fatal Offences against the Person Act 1997*.
- Ridicule, sarcasm or remarks likely to undermine a student's self-confidence.
- Public or private humiliation.
- Leaving a student in an unsupervised position while in the care of the school.
- Persistent isolation of, or ignoring, a student in class.
- Sanctions that are used in a discriminatory way: *the Equal Status Acts 2000 to 2004* require that schools do not discriminate in the use of sanctions.

Disciplinary Procedures

1. Each **Subject Teacher** is initially responsible for the maintenance of discipline in his/her classroom and every effort should be made to resolve difficulties at this level. Each teacher should keep carefully written records of an occurrence of indiscipline, together with a record of the sanctions imposed. Teachers are encouraged to communicate on minor matters with the parents through the school journal and standard formatted letters. Praise/reward should be used on an individual/class basis to encourage good behaviour.
2. In the event of a major grievance or the persistence of minor grievances, the matter should be referred to the **Class Tutor**. The Class Tutor should be furnished with a detailed **report** outlining the incident(s) and the action taken by the Subject Teacher. The Class Tutor should, if necessary, seek clarification from the Subject Teacher and may consult with the Year Head.
3. On receipt of a third report, the Class Tutor should contact the pupil's parents and arrange a meeting.
4. On receipt of four or more reports, the matter should be referred by the Class Tutor to the Year Head. **Detention** should be imposed after the fourth and fifth reports.
5. A sixth report should, at the discretion of the Year Head, in consultation with the Principal, warrant a **suspension (three days)**.
6. On returning from suspension, the pupil should be placed **on Report**.
7. Three further reports will warrant a **five day suspension**. The Year Head should arrange to meet the pupil's parents and they should be informed that a further report may warrant a meeting before the Discipline Committee.
8. The **Discipline Committee** (Deputy Principal, Year Head and the pupil's Class Tutor) may impose a further period of suspension.
9. Any further misdemeanours may entail the imposition of a further period of suspension and **referral to the Board of Management**.

Depending on the seriousness of the incident of indiscipline, **some or all of the above stages may be bypassed and a period of suspension immediately imposed. Detention may, at the discretion of the Class Tutor or Year Head, be imposed at various stages in the disciplinary procedures.**

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While every effort must be made to follow these procedures fairly and consistently, Class Tutors and Year Heads must, in exceptional circumstances, maintain the **right of discretion**. Where the need arises, certain pupils should be referred to the Guidance Counsellor.

While a pupil's reports are carried forward from year to year, **a long period of good behaviour should be taken into account in the implementation of the above procedures**.

For the purposes of these procedures a distinction is made between minor and major grievances. The lists below are not exhaustive or exclusive and may be added to at the discretion of the school authorities.

Minor Grievances

Homework incomplete or not presented.

Not having required books/materials.

Talking out of turn.

Being generally inattentive.

Other attention-seeking behaviour.

Major Grievances

Disrespectful or offensive behaviour towards staff member.

Fighting or other aggressive behaviour.

Serious forms of bullying behaviour.

Use of obscene or other inappropriate language.

Interfering with school property.

Detention

Detention is a fundamental element of the disciplinary structure and is regarded as a serious sanction for breach of discipline. It is essential that the school receives the full support of parents/guardian in this matter.

Detention is held every Wednesday between 1.15pm - 2.15pm and Fridays from 3.45pm – 4.45pm. Detention may only be imposed by the Principal, Deputy Principal, Year Head, or Class Tutor.

A student may only be placed in detention for:

- Incorrect uniform.
- Repeatedly being late for class/school.
- Misbehaviour in corridors/on grounds.
- Offences which a Class Tutor, Deputy Principal or Principal decide merit this sanction.

When a student is placed on detention his name and the reason for detention must be recorded on the detention list. The student's parents must also be notified of the detention in writing in the homework journal. At least one day's notice must be given to a student when placing him in detention. If a student is absent from school on the day of his detention he will have to do the detention on the next available date. A student who is in school but fails to turn up for detention will automatically receive two further detentions. Non-attendance of these may result in the student being suspended from the school.

Failure to fulfil a detention properly e.g. not wearing full school uniform, being late, lack of work, misbehaviour will not be accepted. At a minimum this will result in a further detention being imposed.

Policy on Suspension and Expulsion

All students have the right to learn in an orderly and caring environment free from disruption, intimidation, harassment and discrimination. The expectations governing student behaviour and the procedures for dealing with unacceptable behaviour are clearly set out in the school's Code of Discipline. There may be cases of unacceptable behaviour where it will be in the best interest of the school community and/or the student involved, for the student to be removed from the school for a period of time or completely. Suspension and Expulsion are the options available to the Principal and/or the Board of Management in these situations.

When proposing to suspend or expel a student, the school will apply fair procedures based on the principles of natural justice. Fair procedures have two essential requirements:

- The right to be heard
- The right to impartiality

Suspension

Suspension is one strategy within the School's Code of Discipline. As stated in the Code, a student may be suspended for persistent misbehaviour or for a serious incident of indiscipline. Suspension allows a student time to reflect on his behaviour, to acknowledge and accept responsibility for the behaviour which led to the suspension and to accept responsibility for altering his behaviour to meet the school's expectations in the future.

The Principal has authority to suspend any pupil for a limited period and to report any such suspension to the Board of Management at its next meeting. The Board of Management and the Principal will exercise this authority having regard to their responsibilities to the whole school community and to the Principles of Natural Justice. If a student is suspended for a period of six days or more, the Principal must inform the Education Welfare Officer.

Procedures for Suspending a Student:

- The Principal, in consultation with the Year Head, makes a decision to suspend on the basis of the reasons set out in the Code of Behaviour and the parameters set out by the Board of Management.
- Parents/Guardians are asked to come to the school for a meeting during which they are informed of the precise grounds for suspension. The student may also be required to attend this meeting. If the suspension is to be immediate (e.g. in the interests of health and safety), Parents/Guardians will be informed by phone with a written follow-up.

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- Students are supervised/in class until suspension takes place
- Parents/Guardians receive a written confirmation of the suspension by hand/post. This formal letter of notification includes notice of suspension, the effective date and duration of suspension and the reasons for suspension. It also includes a statement that the student is under the care and responsibility of the parents/guardians while on suspension and a statement that, where appropriate, the Education Welfare Officer has been informed. This letter also states the requirements which need to be in place when the student returns.
- Parents/Guardians are also informed of their rights of Appeal to the Board of Management of the school and/or the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Science (Section 29, Education Act 1998)
- Parents/Guardians are also informed, in accordance with the Code of Discipline, of the procedures for the formal re-introduction of the student into the school.

Expulsion

Expulsion is the ultimate sanction imposed by the school and may be exercised by the Board of Management in extreme cases of indiscipline. In advance of any hearing, which could result in expulsion, the school will investigate the matter in accordance with the Principles of Natural Justice.

Procedures for Expelling a Student

- Expulsion may be recommended by the Principal to the Board of Management after all disciplinary options under the Code of Discipline have been applied and documented and all available procedures, referrals and supports have been pursued.
- The Principal must ensure that discussion has occurred with the student and parent regarding specific behaviour which the school considers unacceptable and which may lead to expulsion.
- Parents/Guardians are informed of the Principal's intention to recommend expulsion as an option to the Board. They are provided with a full written description of the allegations against the student and the case being made to the Board.
- Parents/Guardians are invited to make a written submission in advance of the Board Meeting and are invited to attend the meeting.
- The Board will ask the Principal to report on the details of the case. It will then give the parents an opportunity to respond.

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- Having heard all of the parties, it is the responsibility of the Board to decide whether or not the allegation is substantiated and, if so, whether or not expulsion is the appropriate sanction.
- The Board of Management will inform the parents in writing about its conclusions and the next steps in the process. Where expulsion is proposed, the parents will be told that the Board of Management will inform the Educational Welfare Officer.
- Where the Board of Management, having considered all of the facts of the case, is of the opinion that the student should be expelled, the Board must notify the Educational Welfare Officer in writing of its opinion, and the reasons for this opinion. The student cannot be expelled before the passage of twenty school days from the date on which the Educational Welfare Officer receives this written notification (*Education (Welfare) Act 2000, s24(1)*).
- The Board may consider it appropriate to suspend the student during this twenty day period to ensure that good order is maintained and that the safety of other students is secured.
- When the twenty day period following notification to the Educational Welfare Officer has elapsed, and where the Board of Management remains of the view that the student should be expelled, the Board of Management should formally confirm the decision to expel. Parents will be notified immediately in writing that the expulsion will now proceed. They will also be told of their right to appeal and supplied with the standard form on which to lodge an appeal.
- A parent, or a student over eighteen years, may appeal a decision to expel to the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Skills (Education Act 1998, Section 29).

Reference to other policies

Other school policies that have a bearing on the Code of Discipline include:

- Admissions
- Anti-Bullying
- Attendance
- Substance abuse
- SPHE
- Pastoral care
- Counselling
- Child Protection
- Extra-curricular activities
- Internet Acceptable Use Policy

Where parents or students can get help if problems arise

- Meeting between the student and class teacher.
- Referral to the Class Tutor, Year Head, Deputy Principal, Principal.
- Referral to the Guidance Counsellor.
- Involving the Pastoral Care Team.
- School Completion Programme.
- Referral of parents/guardians to an outside agency e.g. counselling, anger management.

When and where behaviour outside the school will be subject to the Code of Discipline

The standards and rules contained in the Code of Discipline of Drimnagh Castle apply in any situation where the student, although outside the school, is still the responsibility of the school. Examples include, travelling to and from school, lunchtime, school tours, extra-curricular activities and attendance at events organised by the school. Pupils should at all times behave in a manner that reflects well on themselves, their parents and their school. Both the letter and the spirit of the school's code of good behaviour should be observed.

Monitoring and reviewing the code of behaviour

The Code of Behaviour will be monitored and reviewed by the Principal and Deputy Principal in conjunction with staff on an annual basis.

Adopted by the Board of Management on the 18th August 2020

Student's Agreement

On registration, students and parents are asked to sign the following agreement.

I, (*student's name*) _____ have read the school's code of behaviour, suspension and expulsion policy. I agree to abide by these and to co-operate with the Board of Management, Principal, Deputy Principal and all staff with regard to these and all school policies, programmes and activities.

Student's signature _____

Parent's (Guardian's) signature _____

Date: _____