

Wesley College, Dublin

Code of Behaviour

ETHOS OF THE COLLEGE

This Code of Behaviour is designed to reflect the general ethos of the College.¹ When founded by the Methodist Church in 1845 the aim of the College was stated, “To provide a religious, literary, scientific and commercial education with sound moral training” and this remains true today. The College motto is “Prove all things; hold fast that which is good” (1 Thessalonians 5. v.21). While the College is a Methodist foundation pupils of all denominations and of none are welcomed and valued. Participation in worship at assembly, at other special services and in religious education classes is required except where exemption has been granted by the Principal. This Code applies to all College related activities, whether on the College campus, on an organised College tour or trip, or when pupils are travelling to or from the College.

The Code seeks to make a positive statement about the kinds of behaviour which the College wishes to promote among its pupils. Clear rules and procedures, consistently and fairly applied, are necessary in order to ensure that the College is a place where all pupils will be happy and feel secure. Although the responsibility for upholding the code rests principally with the management and staff, there is also an important role to be played by prefects and other senior pupils, who are often in the best position to prevent problems from arising or to notice any pupils who are at risk because of the actions of others. The support of parents for this Code is also crucial. The College expects that all parents/guardians will ensure that their son/daughter will comply at all times with the Code.

In drawing up the code, opportunity has been given to allow for the input of staff, parents and pupils, as their support is essential for its successful operation. Account has also been taken of the requirements set out in the Education Act 1998 and the Education (Welfare) Act 2000.

AIMS OF THE CODE

- 1.** That each pupil will acquire a high degree of self-discipline and the habits of good behaviour appropriate to the range of situations in which they find themselves.

¹ Reference should be made to the Ethos Statement which is available from the College Office.

2. That the College's teaching and learning programme will be supported by good order in classrooms, where pupils will not be denied their right to learn by any lack of consideration by others.
3. That the code will support the moral and social development of each pupil in all aspects of school life.
4. That pupils will demonstrate their respect for the rights, opinions, needs and cultural background of others.
5. That pupils will learn to value and respect school property and the general environment.
6. That pupils will acquire the necessary skills and attitudes to enable them to play their part as responsible members of society.
7. That pupils and their parents will be made aware of the standards of behaviour that are expected by the College and also of the procedures to be followed in cases where the requirements of the code are not met.

MANNERS and COURTESY

Acquiring habits of good manners and courtesy is an important training for life. **At all times emphasis is placed on politeness, courtesy, co-operation and respect for others and for their property.** Students should recognise the appropriate way of addressing teachers or other adults and observe the normal courtesies in matters such as standing back, holding doors, etc. Each student should acquire the habit of treating all persons, whether older or younger, with kindness and thoughtfulness. The use of improper and offensive language must be avoided at all times. Proper table manners are expected at all meal times.

BULLYING

Every student has the right to enjoy learning and leisure time in school.² This is a fundamental principle and the College seeks to promote a climate where pupils can relate in a positive manner towards each other. Through social education programmes, and by example, the aim is to foster understanding about the importance of establishing open relationships based on tolerance and respect. In this regard bullying in any form is always unacceptable and must never occur. It is essential that anyone who becomes aware of or suspects such activity on the part of any pupil or pupils should inform an appropriate person in authority (e.g. Year Head, Tutor, Guidance Counsellor, Chaplain or

²Reference should be made to the Anti-Bullying Policy which is available from the College Office.

Prefect). Such information, and its source, will be treated with the utmost sensitivity. In dealing with such matters the greatest care is shown in recognising the need to protect and support all victims and also to address problems encountered by those who engage in bullying.

Parents are requested to ensure that information regarding possible bullying is brought to the attention of the school as soon as possible to enable appropriate action to be taken.

IN-CLASS BEHAVIOUR

The classroom is a place where pupils have a right to learn and teachers have a right to teach. Each pupil has a responsibility for maintaining a high level of personal behaviour and co-operation. Arrival to class on time, organisation of books and materials, completion of homework and the acceptance of instructions contribute to a positive learning environment.

HOMEWORK and PRIVATE STUDY

Pupils need to develop good routines with regard to homework and private study. Homework provides an opportunity to review and reinforce work carried out in the classroom and helps *each* individual to take personal responsibility for his/her own learning and to practise good time management. *Students should* record tasks to be done in the appropriate homework record book or diary and have a clear understanding of what each task requires.

Study is an essential requirement of all students. Parents/Guardians are requested to ensure the availability of all necessary books and materials. All students are expected to study in a quiet, distraction-free environment.

OUT-OF-CLASS BEHAVIOUR

The school environment should be kept in good order and pupils should feel safe at all times while on the school premises. Any form of behaviour which may result in damage to property or place others at risk through undue rowdiness, or as a result of thoughtless or dangerous actions, must be avoided.

All day students must leave the school premises by 4.15pm (1.35pm on Wednesdays) unless they are taking part in some official school activity or where special permission to remain has been given by the Principal. When travelling to or from school pupils should always behave in a manner which will reflect well on both themselves and the College.

FIELD-TRIPS AND TOURS

School field trips and tours offer opportunities for pupils in terms of general education, personal and social development, travel and new experiences.³ The success of such events depends, to a large extent, on responsible behaviour, co-operation and a willingness to join in positively. Pupils who engage in serious misbehaviour on a tour, may be sent home early at their parents' expense and may be forbidden from participating in future field trips or tours. The Principal has the right to prevent any student from participating in a trip or tour based on the previous behaviour of that student.

In general, written permission is required from a parent/guardian of a pupil before she/he is permitted to go on a trip. It is understood, however, that pupils who are part of a team representing Wesley College have on-going parental permission to travel to all away matches and other school related events.

SPORT

Physical Education and Games are an essential part of the school curriculum.⁴ There is much to be gained by participating, for both general fitness and the development of a good sporting spirit. All pupils are expected to play their part willingly, unless excused on medical grounds. Those selected to represent the College in competitive matches should respond readily and with commitment. Selection for a College team should take priority over other commitments, including selection for club games. Students selected to represent the College should regard this as an honour. They should be aware that they are role models for others and should act accordingly.

The Wesley College PE and Sports Departments use video and ICT equipment to assist pupils to perfect skills and performance in a range of areas. This digital imagery is of considerable use in PE and sports generally. The College will take all necessary steps to ensure that any images produced are used solely for the purposes for which they are intended and will not be retained without due reason. Parents/guardians who object to the use of digital imaging should inform the Principal in writing.

EXTRA-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

The College encourages all pupils to participate in the many extra-curricular activities available. It is important that students give a high level of commitment and loyalty to whatever activity they take on. Activities which take place after 4pm normally end at

³ Please also refer to the College Trips Policy, available from the College Office.

⁴ Reference should also be made to the Statement of Good Practice for Sport, available from the College Office.

5.30 pm, although time will vary depending on the activity in question. Students must leave the premises when the activity ends.

Music lessons are offered to students as an extra, and normally take place on a rotating basis during one day of the week to minimise disruption to academic work.

ATTENDANCE

Regular and punctual attendance is essential to the continuity of learning. It is vital that full explanations are offered for any absences or lateness. Where possible, medical or dental appointments should be arranged outside class hours. Regular reporting of student attendance is made to the National Education Welfare Board (NEWB). All students who are absent for 20 days or more must be reported to the NEWB in accordance with the Education Welfare Act (2000).

Parents are asked to remember the importance of co-operating with the College in the matter of ensuring that excuse notes for absence or requests for permission to leave school early are provided in good time. It is particularly important to remember to give reasons for absence or for an early exit in all cases as the College is obliged by law to keep a record of these under the terms of the Education Welfare Act (2000).

In this context it should be noted that pupils should not be taken out of school during term time for the purpose of holidays. This causes difficulties for the continuity of class teaching and is particularly upsetting when such absences result in pupils missing important school examinations. It is emphasised that the onus is on pupils to catch up on work missed whenever they are absent from school.

SCHOOL UNIFORM AND APPEARANCE

Uniform provides each pupil with a Wesley identity and it should be worn correctly and with pride.⁵ All clothing should be neat, tidy, and neither torn nor crumpled. Parents and pupils should familiarise themselves with the Uniform and Appearance Policy and the appropriate uniform list, obtainable from the school office. Uniform must be worn in school, on the way to and from school, to away matches and on formal school occasions.

Where correct uniform is not worn, the College reserves the right to send students home.

⁵ Please refer to the College Uniform and Appearance Policy. In addition, all parents/guardians are sent uniform requirements prior to the start of each academic year. Additional copies are available from the College Office.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

It is in everyone's interest that the College should be a safe and healthy place. Every member of the school community has a responsibility to take the greatest care in avoiding accidents or putting others at risk by thoughtless behaviour. Pupils must acquaint themselves with safety procedures, recognising that there are particular dangers present in specialist areas such as laboratories or workshops. The greatest care must always be shown on the sports field to minimise the risk of accident. Any pupil who becomes aware of any unusual dangers should bring these immediately to the attention of the Deputy Administrator or any of the other College authorities.

Parents should not send any pupil to school where there is a danger that they may spread an infectious or contagious disease. Full details of any specific medical condition, which may affect a child's performance or behaviour, must be supplied to the College.

REWARDS and SANCTIONS

A system of rewards and sanctions underpins the operation of the Code of Behaviour. The College places particular emphasis on recognising the achievements of students when this is merited.

Rewards include:

1. Personal praise of a pupil by a teacher.
2. The issuing of a 'commendation', which is signed by parents/guardians and returned to Year Heads for record purposes.
3. The awarding of special 'honour badges' where pupils in 5th or 6th Year make a positive contribution to some particular school activity.
4. Special mention in Assembly where exceptional achievement is shown.
5. A small number of special medals are awarded each year for outstanding achievement.
6. The award of prizes for high achievement or effort at the annual Prize Distribution.

Sanctions include:

1. Being given a verbal warning.
2. Being given minor impositions.
3. Being detained after school, either for poor work or conduct. Where this happens repeatedly a special extended detention will normally be imposed.
4. Being reported to the Year Head, Faculty Head, Deputy Principal or Principal who decide on appropriate punishments.
5. Meeting with parents to outline difficulties which have occurred and to seek parental support where necessary.

6. Being suspended from class or school either temporarily or permanently. This may be imposed where the Principal is satisfied that this is warranted by serious offences such as bullying, theft, damage to persons or property or where a pupil has failed to respond to other forms of sanction for repeated misbehaviour. In many cases suspension is imposed for a limited number of days at the expiry of which the pupil may return to the College. In certain cases it is required that a meeting with parents will be held to discuss whether or not it is appropriate for the offending pupil to return to the college and, if it is, to determine the conditions under which such return may be permitted. Students may be requested to give a written commitment to good behaviour before being permitted to return to the College.

It is the policy of the College to keep parents/guardians informed of all serious cases of misbehaviour and to give appropriate advance warning in any case where a pupil is being kept in after school. Where necessary, parents are asked to come to the College to discuss a particular problem. Where pupils fail to respond to the basic sanctions they and their parents may be required to sign a specific contract agreeing to co-operate with the rules of the College. If the terms of the contract are broken the pupil in question may be asked to leave the College.

The Board of Management reserves the right to remove from the school register any student who puts the health and welfare of other students or staff at risk, or any student who engages in persistent or serious misbehaviour which undermines the ethos of the school, undermines the education of other students or the work of the school staff. Where expulsion may be the outcome of a breach of school rules the Principal, Deputy Principal or other appropriate person, may conduct investigations into any reported misbehaviour or breach of school rules. Parents/guardians will be written to and will be informed of the allegations which their child faces and the level of punishment which may result subject to consideration by the Board. Parents (and students over the age of 18) will also be informed of their right to appeal to the Board of Management a decision to suspend and to the Board of Governors in the case where a decision to expel has been made by the Board of Management.

If, having considered an appeal, the Board of Governors decides to uphold a suspension or expulsion, parents (and students over the age of 18) will be advised of a right of appeal to the Secretary of the Department of Education and Science under section 29 of the Education Act 1998.

Parents/Guardians should be aware that a student may be removed from class while an incident or situation is being investigated, and prior to any formal sanction being imposed.

ILLEGAL DRUGS, DANGEROUS OBJECTS, ALCOHOL, SMOKING

Any involvement with

(a) the possession, use or supply of illegal drugs or substances

(b) the possession of dangerous objects, weapons or harmful substances

is seen as an extremely serious offence likely to lead to prolonged suspension or expulsion. Smoking or the consumption of alcohol is also strictly forbidden and offences in this regard are likely to lead to suspension. Punishments may also be given to other pupils who may not be directly involved, but who nevertheless indirectly facilitate or support these who engage in any of the above practices.

MOBILE PHONES

Mobile phones should be switched off and left in a pupil's locker during class time.⁶ They also may not be used to make calls between consecutive classes. If any pupil is found to have a mobile phone in class then it may be confiscated and will not be returned until the end of term unless collected in person by the pupil's parent.

Please note that phones brought to school are brought at the owner's risk and the College will not accept any responsibility for loss or damage.

CAMERA PHONES

It is accepted that mobile phones are widely used by students and may be brought onto the College campus.⁷ This is permissible, but it is understood that all students must use mobile phones in a responsible and mature manner. Camera phones must never be used to bully or intimidate others. Permission to take a photograph of a person should always be sought in advance.

COLLEGE RULES AND PROCEDURES

A College Rules and Procedures Sheet is produced each year and sent to parents prior to the beginning of the academic year. The Rules and Procedures are produced to facilitate the smooth running of the College and it is expected that students will co-operate and work positively with the College at all times. The Rules and Procedures supplement the Code of Behaviour and other College Policies.

⁶ Use of mobile phones is covered under the Policy on the Appropriate Use of Technology, copies of which are available from the College Office.

⁷ Use of camera phones is covered under the Policy on the Appropriate Use of Technology, copies of which are available from the College Office.

ROLE OF PARENTS/GUARDIANS

The support of parents/guardians is vital to the success of the Code. If a pupil detects conflict between home and school, major difficulties are likely to follow. From the College's point of view it is important that information is given by parents about any concerns they may have about their children's work or behaviour. It is also essential that information be given to the College (in confidence if necessary) about any problem or reasons for anxiety, which a child may be encountering in school, at home or elsewhere.

REVIEW OF THE CODE

This code will be subject to regular review and revision. The views of parents are always welcome about any aspect of the code and of its operation. These can be channelled through the Parent-Teacher Association or directly by letter to the Principal.

APPEALS

If parents consider that an action taken by the College is unreasonable or in breach of this code, they may appeal to the Principal. Such an appeal must be of a substantial nature and not relate to a trivial matter. An appeal should be made in writing and must be submitted to the Principal within 14 days. The Principal will have the matter investigated and consult with the parents and others as he/she considers appropriate with a view initially to resolving the matter by agreement. If agreement is not possible the Principal shall decide on the matter. The Principal's decision will be notified in writing to the parents (and any other affected party) within 14 days of receipt of the appeal.

If parents are dissatisfied with the decision of the Principal they may appeal further to the Board of Management. Such a further appeal is made in writing and must be submitted to the Secretary of the Board of Management within 7 days of receipt of the Principal's decision. The Board of Management may appoint an appeals sub-committee to consider an appeal and to meet with the parties to any dispute should this be thought necessary. The decision of the Board, or appointed sub-committee shall be final and binding on the parents and all affected parties subject only to a right of further appeal being available to any party pursuant to the Education Act, 1998.

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