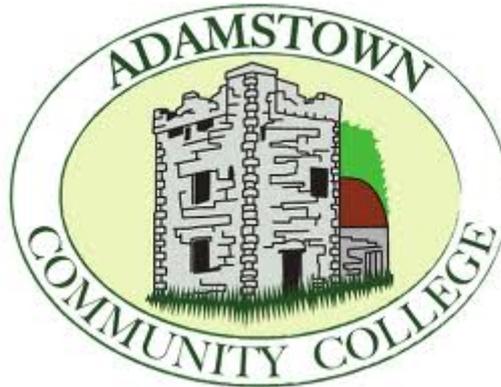


Adamstown Community College



Suspension and Exclusion Policy

General Statement and rationale:

This policy relates to sanctions that the school management may adopt when dealing with serious breaches of the Code of Positive Behaviour. The school community acknowledges the fact that sanctions affect a student's access to education and therefore must be applied having regard to the rights of the individual student. Furthermore students and staff have the right to be treated fairly and with dignity, in an environment free from disruption, intimidation, harassment and discrimination.

The school has adopted, as its philosophical stance in dealing with conflict, a Restorative Practice approach which is based primarily on a set of core values and the explicit promotion and enhancement of particular skills such as the ability to empathise and to find solutions to specific problems. This practice allows for building trust between and with people. It provides a structured approach in the form of a scaffold, which helps build and sustain relationships, and provides a focus which allows for the potential growth of positive relationships to become established between people. It also provides a platform for dealing with conflict in a healthy manner when conflict occurs.

The school is aware however that rights must be balanced and therefore it may be necessary in some cases of unacceptable behaviour for the student to be removed either for a period of time or completely from the school community. Such action may be in the best interest of the school community and/or the student involved.

Alongside these considerations our school acknowledges that our Code of Positive Behaviour aims to provide a safe, secure learning environment, free from disruption for all our students by promoting a sense of respect for oneself, for others and for our environment. By

enrolling in this school, each student and their parents/guardians agree to uphold the detail in and spirit espoused by our Code of Positive Behaviour .

For the purpose of this policy:

- **Internal suspension** is considered to be the withdrawal of permission from a student to attend timetabled classes during the school day. The student would be supervised by school management.
- **Suspension** is considered to be the withdrawal of permission from a student to attend this school for a specified period of time.
- **Exclusion** is considered to be the permanent exclusion of a student from this school.

Scope:

This policy applies to all our students:

- During the school day.
- While involved in school related activities. Including activities related to online/digital misconduct?
- On the way to and from school. (An important consideration in cases of doubt is the extent to which behaviour away from the school had a serious impact on the life of the school).

Suspension:

Suspension as a Restorative Practice approach allows students time to reflect on their behaviour, to acknowledge and accept responsibility for the behaviour which led to the suspension and to accept responsibility for changing their behaviour to meet the school's expectations in the future.

Suspension provides time for the school to put a plan in place to help modify or improve the student's behaviour. It also provides a period of respite for the student and the school. It also provides an opportunity, through post suspension meetings, to restore relationships and trust.

Procedure for Suspensions:

- The authority to suspend is vested in the Principal and Deputy Principals, subject to the right of the parents/guardians to appeal to the Board of Management. A student who is over 18 years old can lodge an appeal to the Board of Management.
- In most circumstances a maximum of three days suspension may be applied. The Board of Management has authorised the Principal, with the approval of the Chairperson, to

impose a suspension of 5 days where a meeting of the Board can not be convened in a timely manner.

- If it is proposed that a student be suspended for a period of more than 5 days, the matter should be referred to the Board of Management for consideration and approval. The Educational Welfare Officer attached to the school should also be informed.
- If a student is suspended for a cumulative total of twenty days or more in one academic year, the Principal must inform the Educational Welfare Officer in writing.
- The Board of Management may refuse attendance by a student at school until their next board meeting.
- Under Section 29 of the 1998 Education Act, parents/guardians must be informed of their right of appeal to the Board of Management.

Grounds for suspension

Suspension is a serious sanction and may be considered in the following circumstances:

- Verbal abuse of staff
- Damage to property
- Regular detentions
- Student's presence constitutes a threat to the safety of members of the school community.
- Student's behaviour is having a serious detrimental effect on the education and learning of other students.
- Serious breach of the Code of Positive Behaviour.
- Bullying of another student or other students

This list is not exhaustive. Reference should be made to the school's Sanction Policy for more details.

A single incident may warrant a suspension.

Examples would include:

- A serious threat of violence against a member of the school community
- Actual violence against a member of the school community
- Gross defiance
- Drug, alcohol, tobacco, vaping offences

This list is not exhaustive. Reference should be made to the school's Sanction Policy for more details.

Suspension Procedure

1. When a suspension is being considered, the student is interviewed by the Principal/Deputy Principal/Year Head and is given the opportunity to respond.
2. If it is decided that a suspension should take place, the parents/guardians are informed by letter and/or by phone. It is best practise to post evidence of suspension home and

also to upload to VSWARE. Also when communication by phone cannot be made a text message may be sent.

3. Pending the implementation of the suspension, the student may be withdrawn from class.
4. It is best practice to have a return to school meeting where the student, parents and management can reflect on the reasons for the suspension and restore relationship and trust.
5. Parents will be informed of their right to appeal to the Board of Management.

Appeal to the Board of Management

1. A parent/guardian has seven days in which to lodge an appeal. If the student appealing suspension is 18 years or older, he or she may appeal in their own right.
2. The grounds for the appeal must be made in writing for the attention of the Secretary of the Board of Management.
3. The appeal will be considered at the next Board meeting or at an extraordinary meeting of the Board, which the parents/guardians can attend at a specific time, subject to giving two days notice of their intention to attend the meeting.
4. At the Board meeting, the Principal outlines the reasons for his/her recommendation.
5. The Parents' appeal is then heard by written submission and/or orally.
6. The Principal may take no further part in the discussion other than to clarify matters raised in the parents/guardians' appeal. The Principal and parents (if present) leave.
7. The Board makes its decision and communicates it to the parent/guardian.
8. The Board may agree that another sanction is applied.
9. If the appeal is heard and upheld after the suspension has been served then the suspension will be removed from the student's record.

Procedures for the reintroduction of the student into the school

The parents/guardians may be requested to attend a meeting with the Principal, or another member of staff delegated by the Principal, before the student returns to class. The purpose of this meeting is to emphasise the seriousness of the behaviour that gave rise to the suspension and also to ensure parental support for the school's Code of Positive Behaviour. It is also an opportunity to stress parental responsibility in supporting the school in its efforts to help the student behave well on their return to school.

In some cases students and parent/parents may need to agree to special conditions on return e.g. report, attendance to counselling etc.

Exclusions:

Grounds for exclusion

- The authority to exclude a student rests with the Board of Management.
- The grounds for exclusion may be similar to the grounds for suspension. A key difference is that where exclusion is being considered the school authorities have tried a series of interventions and believe they have exhausted the possibility of changing the student's behaviour.
- There may be exceptional circumstances where the Board of Management forms the opinion that a student should be excluded for a first offence. Examples of such circumstances could include (but are not limited to) cases where:
 - There is a serious threat of violence towards a member of the school community.
 - Actual violence or physical assault.
 - Supplying of prescription/illegal drugs or alcohol to other students.
 - Possession of illegal drugs or alcohol.
 - Using illegal drugs or alcohol in the school.
 - Sexual assault.

Exclusion Procedure

- A detailed investigation should be carried out under the direction of the Principal.
- The parents/guardians must be informed in writing of the grounds upon which exclusion is being considered.
- At least five days notice of the Board meeting must be given to the parents/guardians .
- The parents/guardians must be informed of their right to make representations to the Board of Management on behalf of the student.
- A report must be prepared for the Board containing all the relevant material relating to the case. A copy of this report must be posted to the parents/guardians of the student.
- Parents/guardians are expected to give two days notice to the Secretary of the Board of Management of their intention to attend the Board meeting. They will then be given a time at which to attend the meeting.

Meeting of the Board of Management

- The Board will examine the report and will seek clarification from the Principal where needed.
- The parents/guardians are given sufficient time at the meeting to respond to the report and make representations on behalf of the student.
- The Principal may take no further part in the discussion other than to clarify matters raised in the parents/guardians response. The Principal and parents (if present) leave.
- The Board makes its decision and communicates it to the parents/guardians.

Decision to exclude

- Decisions to exclude are subject to appeal under Section 29 of the 1998 Education Act.
- The parents/guardians must be informed of their right to appeal the decision to Dublin and Dun Laoghaire Education and Training Board.
- The board must inform the Educational Welfare Officer assigned to the school of its decision.
- The student shall not be considered excluded from the school before the passing of twenty school days from the receipt of such notification by the Educational Welfare Officer. The Board may decide to suspend the pupil from school during this period.

Decision not to exclude

The Board will define an alternative sanction in consultation with the Principal.

Appeals

A parent/guardian or a student aged over 18 years, may appeal a decision to exclude to Dublin and Dún Laoghaire Education and Training Board.

Monitoring and Review:

The number of days lost due to suspensions will be monitored by the school management to ensure that the use of this sanction is consistent with school policies and is used appropriately. The Board of Management will be provided with the findings at regular intervals.